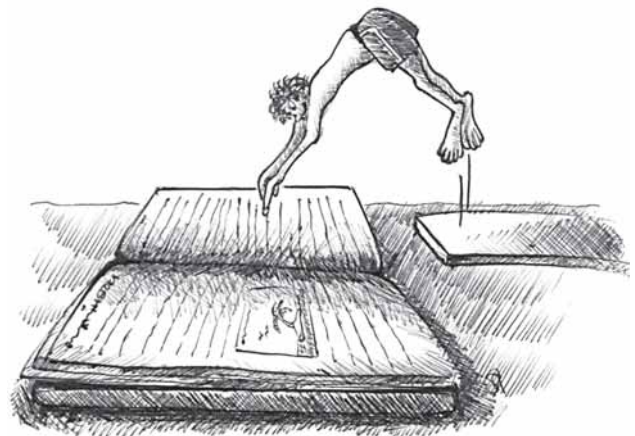


# Journal of Pacific Adventist History

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ISSN 1445-3096



Differences -  
Oral and Written

Diving into Reading

History

Effects of Culture

Fiction - Myth  
- Legend



Accessing the past  
Living the present

## Journal of Pacific Adventist History

Also known as

**Pacific Adventist Heritage**

### Statement of Mission

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

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\* The editing and reviewing of manuscripts by volunteers of experience has not only enhanced the quality of expression, but also enriched the content of articles appearing in this edition of the *Journal*

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## Editorial

### God's Providential Leading



"We have nothing to fear for the future except as we shall forget the way the Lord has led us," {Testimonies to Ministers 31.1} is a familiar quote in Adventist circles. While in context it relates to our doctrinal positions, it can equally apply to the church's mission activity, particularly in the South Pacific. When the challenges were overwhelming and the financial cupboard was bare; when hostile tribes and sometimes Government officials made the task seem formidable; when supply and health problems seemed to confront to the point of despair; God showed the way through and provided a way out and on to the success we see today. When the going is tough, our dependence on God is likely to be more intense and the relationship between the missionary and the One who said, "Go ye into all the world and teach," becomes more personal. Ask any of the retiring band of veteran missionaries and they will gladly recall God's guiding and enabling hand in their pioneering adventures for the Lord.

Unfortunately human memory is finite and the generation of early pioneering missionaries is fast disappearing, so the *Journal of Pacific Adventist History* is of more than casual interest; it is a documentation of what God has wrought through his human servants in circumstances as challenging as when He told twelve men to "Go! and make disciples." While the memories of the early days remain, those who shared in them would be doing a favour to current and future missionaries, if they recorded these events, particularly now that the *Journal* is providing a medium for the preservation and circulation of these evidences of God's leading.

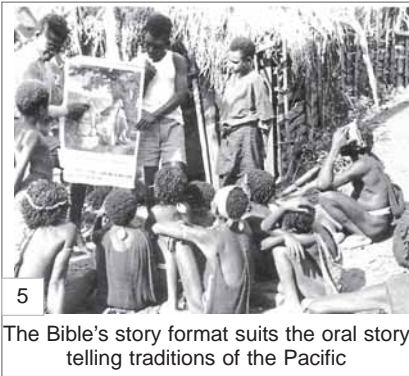
The social and political climate in the Pacific has changed dramatically since most of the events chronicled in the pages of the *Journal* took place, but the need for divine guidance and blessing is just as real. New challenges are arising in the territories of the Pacific. A new sophistication is providing barriers to the advance of the gospel which are just as real and formidable as was the old heathenism. We still need to be reminded, as we face the perils of the last days, that "we have nothing to fear for the future except as we forget the way the Lord has led us", as well as His promise that "this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world... and then shall the end come". (Matthew 24:14 KJV)

Ron Taylor (retired church administrator)

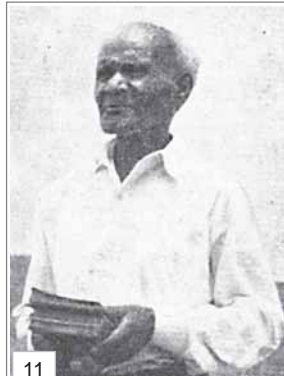


The headquarters of the South Pacific Division of the SDA Church in Wahroonga NSW Australia

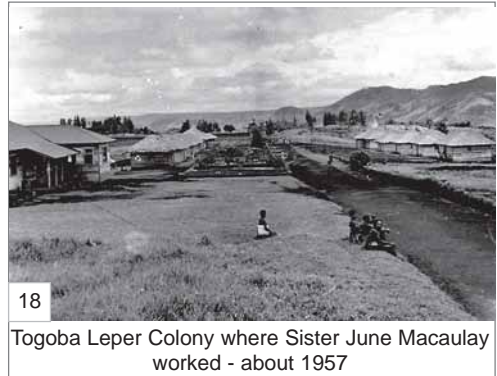
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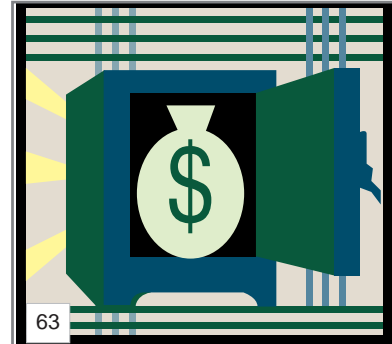
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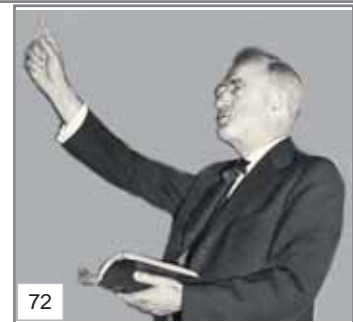
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# South Pacific Cultures and the Concept and Practice of History

DANIEL REYNAUD



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## INTRODUCTION. HISTORY AND CULTURE:

The practice of history is often assumed to be transparent and universal, but in fact it is a highly specialised phenomenon which exists only in certain societies. This raises problems for those writing about cultures where the practice of history has not traditionally existed, one such region being the South Pacific. A better understanding of the oral nature of Pacific societies and the way in which this affects one's understanding of the past will be helpful to the historian of this region, and others like it.

A number of scholars have made pertinent observations about the essential differences between oral and chirographic, or written, cultures, drawing on studies as varied as ancient Middle Eastern cultures and more recent African ones.<sup>1</sup> What this suggests is that there are generic characteristics of oral cultures across time and place. This paper will apply to the South Pacific the work of Abdul Janmohamed,<sup>2</sup> who has neatly summarised the main findings on oral literature in the introduction to his article on the writings of Nigerian novelist Chinua Achebe, and the work of Pilch, Malina and Esler on the values of Biblical Israel, an ancient, largely oral culture with strong parallels with Pacific island cultures.<sup>3</sup>

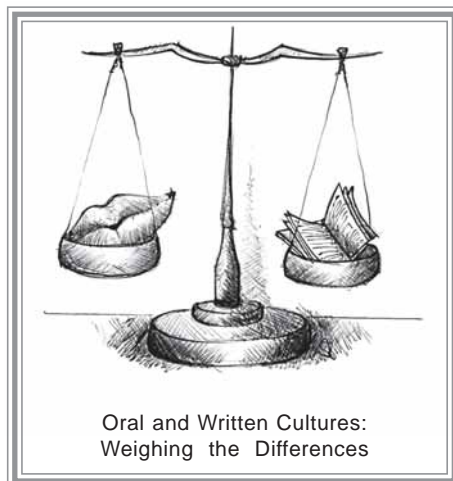
Oral cultures have been the most common in history; prior to the invention of the printing press, written cultures emerged only in pockets of history, where an elite had the leisure and resources to develop chirographic, or written, forms of thinking. These cultures often existed only by exploiting a slave class to

serve the needs of the educated elite. Such pockets of history include the Greeks, who produced philosophers like Plato, who tried to define absolute truth, and Aristotle, who promoted the virtue of reason. The Greeks also produced scientists, such as the mathematician Archimedes and the astronomer Aristarchus. The first recognizable histories were written by Herodotus, Thucydides and Xenophon.

Up until then, histories were a mix of myth, hagiography and fact. For the Egyptians, 'history and religion was the interplay of the gods', from which 'mankind is absent.' The purpose of history in the Egyptian world was 'to maintain and enhance the established order of the world,'<sup>4</sup> hence actually being mythic rather than historic. It was common, for example, for the Pharaohs to modify accounts of their wars so that they would always appear to be the victors, as failure was not an option for the god-Pharaoh.<sup>5</sup> The Jewish scriptures contain considerable historical material, but are still not strictly history, given the emphasis on a divine perspective on events, and the lack of concern for chronology evident in some of their records. 'We lack the means to test [the Old Testament's] historical statements, and the actual facts and their chronology are a matter of complex controversy.'<sup>6</sup>

The Greeks were the first to follow historical practices which we would accept today, with an 'objective study of history and the need to establish an accurate chronology.'<sup>7</sup> While Herodotus, the first historian, included myth in his work, and used a strongly oral style of narrative, with frequent interruptions of chronology, his work is recognizably history for its emphasis on cause and effect, the researching of sources, and the discounting of myth as an adequate explanation of events.<sup>8</sup> Similarly, the Roman ruling class was educated and literate, and produced distinguished writers like Cato the Elder, Seneca and Cicero, and historians like Livy and Tacitus. The romanised Jewish historian Josephus also wrote during this period.

In popular usage, the word 'history' is loosely used to indicate everything that has happened in the past. Under that definition, history is universal. However, the discipline of history as carried out by historians is not



Oral and Written Cultures:  
Weighing the Differences

merely what happened in the past, for much of it has never been recorded and therefore cannot be known. Even so-called histories that merely record 'facts' are really just almanacs, not true histories at all. The work of the historian goes beyond the gathering of facts and information, to the sorting and ordering of evidence according to a particular purpose, keeping some facts as relevant to the point and discarding many other equally true facts on the grounds that they are irrelevant. The final product is teleological, revealing purpose and design. In other words history is always interpretive. It is the 'why', not just the 'what' of the past.

History differs from other teleological work, such as theology, literature and myth, however, because of its dependence on external evidence. While theology, literature and myth can convey truth or knowledge, none necessarily depends on producing evidence for its credibility. The theologian can receive divine revelation, the novelist can invent, and myth simply is, without resorting to proof. The great cry in history however, is 'What are your sources?' Historians seek out evidence, then weigh it according to accepted methodologies, comparing it with rival evidence, and sifting it for inaccuracy, biases, and other distortions which may hide truth. From the weight of evidence, they are then free to draw conclusions.<sup>9</sup>

When historians work in oral cultures like those of the South Pacific, they need to recognise that these notions of history cannot be taken for granted. Historians must take into account the cultural differences towards the evidence and documents between themselves and the cultures under study. The cultural features of oral societies do not immediately disappear upon the introduction of reading and writing, but remain influential even generations after literacy has been introduced.

Oral cultures, both ancient and modern, are marked by distinctive modes of thinking, products not of a lack of intelligence or deficient genetic make-up, but simply because a lack of writing inhibits certain thought patterns. These distinctive modes of thinking have implications for the historian, which need to be explored.

**Contextual meaning:** Oral cultures tend to define meaning contextually through stories or proverbs, as opposed to the abstract definitions of written cultures. Stories are used to organise a world-view in a way that is memorable.<sup>10</sup> The cultures of the South Pacific traditionally use stories to explain the origins of the world and their place in it. Take for example the man-god Maui in Polynesian legend. In New Zealand, in Maori versions of his legend, Maui tames the sun, draws up the land

Aotearoa from the sea with a fishing line, and steals fire from the underworld for mankind, giving the Maori accounts of the origins of features of their world. From such stories, the culture is able to deduce indirectly the nature of the gods and that of humanity from events, rather than defined in the clinical way common to modern scientific cultures. The stories have the typically oral features of episodic plots, with repetition used to highlight key features, and little concern for chronology. Oral stories usually do not make overt links between units of a story, links being made simply by placing two related events or statements side by side, and inviting the listener to draw a connection. Characterisation also is usually flat, represented almost entirely from external actions and speech, with little examination of the internal psychological state or motivation of people in the stories.<sup>11</sup> The historian needs to note the importance of the stories of oral cultures, and the wealth of information they offer about the core values of the society. An understanding of the formal characteristics of oral narrative will also help the historian recognize the value of oral accounts of events, despite lapses of chronology and of internal motivation.

**Integrated worldview:** Oral cultures also possess an integrated worldview, fusing the spiritual and material worlds, whereas scientific written cultures separate the spheres. Virtually all phenomena, from the weather to tribal warfare to the conception of children, have a connection with the divinity, whereas written cultures separate those with a perceived natural cause, such as drought or infertility, and those with a political-economic cause, such as the rise and fall of empires. There would be very little left under the banner of divine intervention.<sup>12</sup> In Melanesian cultures, for example, the belief that spirits affected daily life was widespread, and spirits were associated with good or bad harvests, success at fishing, cyclones and death. Sorcerers able to influence the spirit world were feared.

Propositional logic is typical of written cultures, where statements A and B can be compared, but this form of logic is rare in oral cultures, because without writing to fix an utterance, it is difficult to reflect on it and draw comparative conclusions. Linear, or syllogistic logic is replaced by general immediate context, and permits mutually exclusive beliefs to exist without causing tension in the believer. Contradictory evidence does not constitute a difficulty in oral cultures.<sup>13</sup> For example, a pastor's wife in Tahiti refused to live in a house next to the cemetery because she was afraid of the ghosts. She could



The Bible's story format suits the oral story-telling traditions of the Pacific



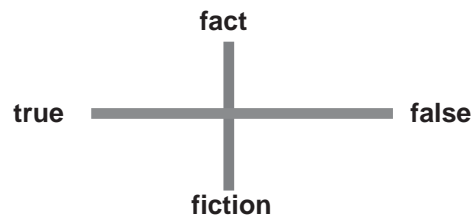
In Pacific oral cultures, dead ancestors live on through the spirit world

believe in both the Adventist doctrine of the state of the dead and the traditional Tahitian ghosts without a sense of their mutual contradiction.<sup>14</sup> These features affect the way historians will perceive motivation and cause, which in oral cultures will often lack the kind of linear logic expected in Western cultures. That does not render oral cultures illogical; it merely means that their logic operates according to different principles. In one incident a Melanesian man lied to police about a robbery his brother had committed. In order to get his brother freed, the man tried to persuade the police that he himself had committed the crime, despite the evidence clearly showing that the brother was responsible. Instead, he was jailed for perjury and the brother for theft. By Western standards, in the face of incontrovertible evidence, the man was foolish and deserved his punishment; by Melanesian standards, he was admirable in wishing to preserve his brother's honour.<sup>15</sup>

**Belief:** Oral cultures differ from written ones in their approach to belief. In a written culture, critical thinking becomes possible, as scholars collect facts, scrutinise documents, question sources, and search for facts and truth. Oral cultures cannot do this. Sources cannot be examined, and knowledge exists only through oral traditions passed down through the generations. There is no way of verifying the factuality of stories, which in turn means that the concept of factuality itself does not exist. In effect, critical thinking as we understand it is possible only in a written culture. Oral cultures are systems of faith, where beliefs are not questioned simply because they cannot be, whereas chirographic cultures are marked by scepticism, requiring things to be proved before they are believed.<sup>16</sup> While historians will be sceptical of oral sources, they will also recognise that the stories represent truth for the teller and the listener within the culture.

**Fact, fiction, truth and falsehood:** Modern culture has a very different understanding of what constitutes facts or realism. Until very recently, the notion of realism was hazy even in the English language, and the distinction between news and fiction is less than 300 years old. The differentiation between the two began in earnest with the development of regular newspapers, themselves made possible by the printing press (and many would cynically note that the press still struggles to differentiate).<sup>17</sup>

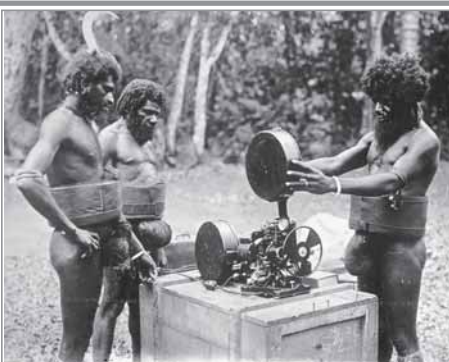
A written culture has the potential to categorise information in two ways. On one spectrum we can oppose truth and falsehood, and on another we distinguish between fact and fiction.



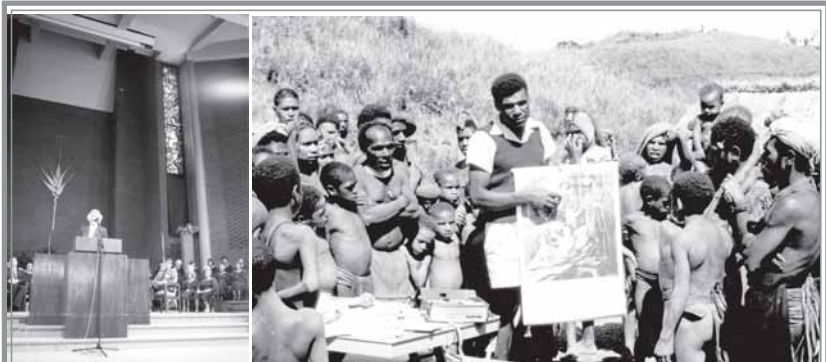
In the upper left hand quadrant we can identify things we would label as true facts, for example, the law of gravity. On the other hand, in the lower right hand quadrant we might consider Superman or Mills and Boon novels as fictional and false. Literature provides many examples of fictions that are true (lower left quadrant), stories which have never literally occurred, yet which represent truth. One might point to the psychological insights of the works of Jane Austen or of South Pacific novelists Albert Wendt and Epeli Hau'ofa. Wendt's dark novels and short stories explode the Western myth of the Pacific as paradise, while Hau'ofa's witty satires ruthlessly expose hypocrisy in both Polynesian and Palangi (White) culture. It is also possible to identify facts which are false (upper right quadrant), things whose existence is a fact, but which represents a moral falsehood. The most obvious example is statistics, facts which are used to opposite and self-seeking ends by politicians, among others. While the terms 'fact' and 'truth', and 'fiction' and 'false', are not completely separated in written cultures, we can still make these distinctions, although without pen, paper and diagrams these fine distinctions would probably be lost — which is precisely the point. Such reasoning is possible only in written cultures.

The desire to separate facts from truth is a heritage of the Western development of objectivism, which has claimed that emotional disengagement is essential to fair and balanced scholarship. Until recently, the scientific method insisted on clinical external observation without the participation of the observer. Such thinking is alien to oral cultures. Objectivity is virtually unknown in oral cultures, where everything known is immediate, and intimately connected to everything else.<sup>18</sup>

Oral cultures are not usually interested in facts as externally verifiable, objective data. The notion of factuality as distinct from truth is hazy, and there is a strong tendency to overlook historicity in favour of myth. In effect this thinking is best characterised by only one axis: the true-false axis. Therefore all true fictions are treated in precisely the same manner as true facts — they are usually indistinguishable; similarly, false facts are treated in the same manner as false fictions. Anything that reveals truth is treated as truthful, whether it is historical or not. Many myths and legends, for example, lack historical foundation, yet function as important guides to socially and



Oral cultures explain technology through magical powers; Western cultures explain it through rational science.



Western objectivity is emphasised by the distance of speaker from audience, while in the oral culture, speaker and audience are close.

morally acceptable behaviour, and therefore are regarded in the same light as other truths which have scientific or historical support. To a written culture this presents a potential problem. Oral stories which can be demonstrated to be not factual may be discounted, thus losing the truth which was present to the oral culture that generated them.

A proper understanding of the role of myth can benefit the historian of the South Pacific. Historians working with Aboriginal oral traditions have found that while many myths can be discounted as literal truth (for example, some Northern Territory Aboriginal tribes tell stories of their personal contact with Captain Cook), they are repositories of moral truth that reveal key values of the society that tells the story. Stories with a basis in fact tend to coalesce around single characters, who become the archetypes representing the significance of the past. In the Northern Territory, Captain Cook has become the focal character in stories explaining the origin of the European takeover of Aboriginal land, even for Aboriginal groups which never had contact with Cook. While the literal contact with Cook is not true, the moral meaning is.<sup>19</sup>

The oral societies of the South Pacific tend to share certain cultural values with other oral societies, ancient and modern. These shape their perception of events, and are in many ways different from those common in Western countries.

**Community:** Perhaps the single biggest difference is the collective and communal core values of the Pacific as opposed to the glorification of individualism that marks Western culture. Oral cultures favour collectivity because communication can happen only in face to face situations, reinforcing the perception of the person belonging to a group. This is unlike written cultures, where writing, reading, and electronic media communication often occur individually, and reinforce the sense of the self, apart from others.<sup>20</sup>



In oral cultures, community meals are common; in Western cultures a meal often involves only the immediate family.

The collective or communal nature of the world of the Pacific peoples produces a series of typical values and behaviours, although the specific nature of the community varies considerably between Polynesian, Melanesian and Micronesian communities, and often within each of these subgroups as well. However, certain generalizations can be made. In these cultures the group is more important than the individual, and individuals work for the realisation of group goals rather than their own. Persons are defined according to set groups to which they belong, rather than according to any distinctive traits that they personally might have displayed. In particular, the family and the clan play a central role in the identity of the individual. Kinship is a vital key to understanding the values and behaviour of oral cultures. Associated core values include mutual obligations of support within the group, obedience to authority, maintenance of tradition, an emphasis on following socially approved forms of behaviour, and unquestioned support for one's own group against any threat from other groups, regardless of the moral issues at stake. Typically, people belong to only a few group categories, to which they were intensely loyal, unlike modern cultures where people typically belong to many groups but have little loyalty to any (work, neighbourhood, church, social clubs, etc, which Western people change frequently). Closely allied with group identity is the concept of honour and shame, which play a huge role in determining behaviour. The reputation of the group is critical to one's sense of dignity, hence group honour is defended as a matter of principle, and the preservation of honour becomes a key motivating force, stronger than whether the group was right or wrong.<sup>21</sup>

However, community has distinct divisions within it. Most oral cultures share the view that the genders inhabit separate, though perhaps overlapping spheres. They tend not to think of 'people' collectively, but of separate categories of 'men' and 'women'. Similarly, they will often distinguish between 'men' and 'boys', 'women' and 'girls', and 'fathers' and mothers', and will probably not even have a collective term such as 'parents' in the language's vocabulary.<sup>22</sup> Some oral cultures have the added feature of a hereditary social hierarchy, common in Polynesian though not in Melanesian society. These differentiated categories are associated with culturally assigned roles. To break those roles is to be guilty of a great sin, for it threatens the entire social fabric. Hence, some resistance to Western ways of behaving can simply be a fear of breaking traditional cultural norms, such as promoting women or commoners to leadership roles, or expecting noble children to do the same dirty domestic tasks as commoners.

Community values means that South Pacific cultures can place an entirely different construct upon events from those of Europeans. To Pacific peoples, Western individualistic pursuits may appear rude and uncultured. In particular, attitudes towards ownership vary, causing Westerners to punish as theft behaviours which may not necessarily be considered so in the original culture. Conversely, Western personal property conventions appear to be the height of selfishness for Pacific cultures. Typically, in Pacific oral societies, the benefits that any individual gains belong by rights to that person's entire community, or to the elders who have nurtured them. A person in power, with rights over church budgets for example, is expected to share these among the extended family, and exclude those who don't belong. Anything less is considered an offence. However, Western people look on this behaviour as nepotism and corruption.





1 Dualism allows a person to conform to expected behaviour without requiring that they personally believe.

2 In a Western Culture, the men looking on would be in 'productive' work, not 'wasting time' watching.



In a case from Papua New Guinea, several church elders rose in a public meeting to avow that they were not responsible for the pregnancy of a betrothed girl, as they had only slept with her on one or two occasions. There was no shame in their denial. What Westerners failed to understand was, firstly, the local belief that pregnancy required at least four or five unions, and secondly, that the elders spoke not of their own behaviour, but of that of young men in their clan grouping who were in fact responsible, and who were universally known to have slept with the girl. As their elders, or fathers, as the local custom held them to be, the senior men could speak of other's behaviour as if it was their own. Indeed, community values and the need to avoid shame demanded that they do so.<sup>23</sup> The treatment of behaviour and the characterisation of ethnic groups in literature can often be shaped by such cultural misunderstandings. The historian needs to be aware of these cultural characteristics in order to understand motive and explain events more completely and fairly.

**Dualism:** Adherence to group norms over individual inclinations promotes a dualistic self, where external behaviours ideally conform to that of the in-group, and personal dissenting feelings or opinions are kept inside. There is little concept of the internal and highly individualistic psychological make-up of each person. People are defined not by idiosyncratic psychological characteristics, but by the stereotyped characteristics of the group to which they belong. Identifying a person's in-group is equivalent to identifying their individual and personal qualities.

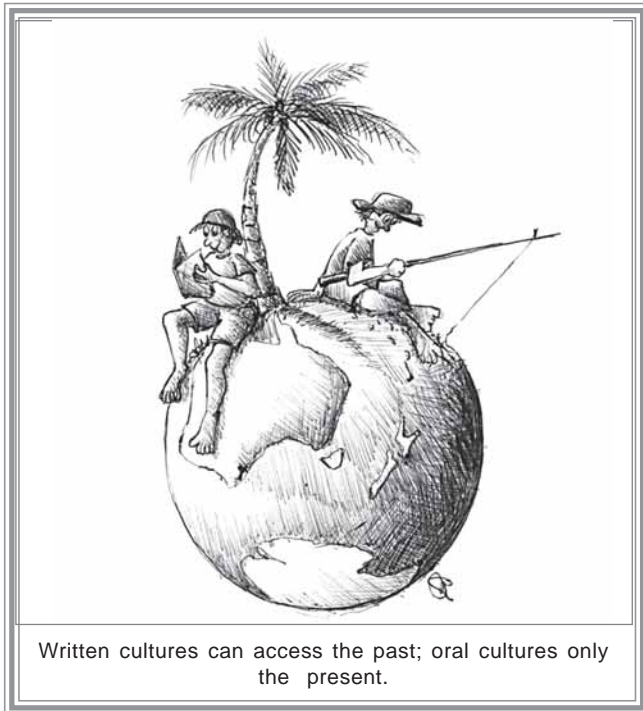
The tendency to externalise all things means that causes of problems are almost always seen as coming from outside the self or even the group. Whenever there is trouble, it is because of the malice of someone outside the group, and rarely because of the consequences of the actions of those in the group. Externalising can lead to what appears to be a lack of responsible behaviour towards the maintenance of machinery or property. Oral cultures are often unable to draw cause-and-effect conclusions from behaviour, rather blaming malicious outside forces for all events.<sup>24</sup>

Dualism, combined with community, leads to external acquiescence without the necessity of personal commitment. Hence a political leader will do whatever pleases the village that he represents, even if he is personally opposed to it. Similarly, children will answer a question from a teacher with whatever they believe will please the questioner, regardless of whether

they consider the answer to be right. Because pleasing the in-group is important, and because the in-group identifies with the powerful new Westernised peoples, individuals will do whatever it takes to satisfy the new power, regardless of their own feelings or understandings. Westerners can often be deceived into thinking that the motivation is internal, and can be offended by the 'hypocrisy' and 'betrayal' when it is uncovered. However, to people within the oral culture, they have fulfilled all their obligations. They have followed the external forms demanded by the in-group, and are puzzled when Westerners consider this not to be enough.

**Time:** Another key feature of oral culture is its perception of time. Many highly Westernised persons who have lived in the Pacific can testify that our Western time-conscious and clock-driven lifestyle is usually not shared by others. Oral cultures tend to see the past and the future as extensions of the present. What is not immediately imaginable, either in history or the future, simply does not exist, for both past and future are difficult to deal with conceptually without written documents. Hence time and chronology are not valued features of oral cultures, and now is all that matters. Yesterday and tomorrow are abstracts, not realities, and promises for tomorrow lack concrete meaning.<sup>25</sup> Thus, one day (month, year) is as good as another. This also affects attitudes to resources such as money and machinery. If the future is conceptually unthinkable, the idea of 'saving' money actually appears like wasting it, when it could be spent right now. Similarly, routine maintenance can appear to be a waste of energy when the machine is working perfectly well right now. Historians should expect that an understanding of chronology may not be shared by the subjects they are researching.

**Limited good:** Oral cultures often believe in the concept of limited good — that there is a fixed amount of good in the world, therefore the prosperity of one group can be had only at the expense of the well-being of others. This leads to intense competition and friction between various in-groups, as each seeks to appropriate to themselves the good that they see others enjoying. Hence, to do evil to others is automatic; it is in fact necessary if one's own group is to prosper.<sup>26</sup> In many Melanesian cultures, for example, a person outside of one's own clan was automatically regarded as evil or threatening. Such a mindset explains much of the apparently senseless violence which appears routine and ingrained, as groups demand that



Written cultures can access the past; oral cultures only the present.

**Language:** Every language has built into it modes of thought, and by implication, excludes alternate modes. Language shapes culture just as much as culture shapes language. It is difficult for a language group to think about things and ideas for which there are no words. Anyone who has tried to translate a text from one language to another has experienced the frustration of trying to fit an idea into another language that lacks the words to express it. A person's language therefore helps to shape the perception of events, and different language groups will create different histories, simply because of the characteristic thought patterns of particular languages. Indeed, research in parts of Papua New Guinea seem to indicate that tribal variations of a particular dialect or language are often cultivated as a valued clue to identity.<sup>27</sup>

Language differences also inhibit the ability of one culture to understand the nuances of what is happening in another culture. While the external behaviour can be seen and recorded, its true or full meaning may elude the observer, who will explain it using words and concepts which exist only in their own language, leading to distortion and misrepresentation. Take for example the word 'mana', which is widespread throughout the Pacific, and which is highly significant for understanding cultural relationships, but for which there is no adequate translation into English.

Oral cultures typically foster the use of proverb and pithy sayings. As the detailed codes of law in chirographic cultures are too involved to work from memory, the legal system of oral cultures is often based around the wisdom tradition, providing a 'grammar of values'.<sup>28</sup> The historian who takes these features into account will be able to make much more sense of the stories told by oral societies, even of the recent past, and will recognise the existence of a form of law, which is often overlooked by Western cultures.

**Conclusion:** It becomes clear then, that culture strongly shapes the very concept and practice of history. The oral societies of the Pacific have preserved stories of their origins and past achievements, mostly in the form of mythic narratives, genealogies and epic tales. Historians who understand the nature

of oral society and the stories that it preserves will recognise the historical value in the narratives, and avoid the twin failures of uncritical acceptance or cynical rejection of the stories. Sensitive historians will understand that their work carries the thumbprints of their own imperfect culture, even as they identify the limitations of other societies.

Ironically the similarities between South Pacific cultures and the cultures of the biblical world mean that Pacific peoples may have a better understanding of the significance of biblical narratives and precepts than Westerners, who too often impose alien Western values on their interpretations of the ancient biblical text. Having brought the Bible to the South Pacific, and having acted as teacher to its cultures, the West may now need to adopt the more humble position of student, and see how South Pacific perspectives can enhance an understanding of the Bible. The Western historian may in fact have more to learn from the Pacific than to teach it.

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- <sup>4</sup> John Baines and Jaromir Malek, *Atlas of Ancient Egypt*. Oxford: Phaidon, 1987, 210
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- <sup>6</sup> Nicholas de Lange, *Atlas of the Jewish World*. Oxford: Equinox, 1988, 14
- <sup>7</sup> Ibid.
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- <sup>9</sup> For a lively and readable discussion on the nature of history as a discipline, see John Vincent, *An Intelligent Person's Guide to History*. London: Duckworth, 1995
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- <sup>11</sup> Ibid., 27
- <sup>12</sup> Ibid., 24-5
- <sup>13</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>14</sup> Anecdote told to me by returned missionaries.
- <sup>15</sup> Ennio Mantovani, 'Traditional Values and Ethics', in *An Introduction to Melanesian Cultures. A Handbook for Church Workers*. Ed. Darrell Whiteman. Goroka: The Melanesian Institute, 1984, 207
- <sup>16</sup> Janmohamed, 23-4
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- <sup>18</sup> Janmohamed, 25
- <sup>19</sup> Deborah Bird Rose, 'Oral histories and knowledge', in *Frontier Conflict: The Australian Experience*. Eds. Bain Attwood & S.G. Foster. Canberra: National Museum of Australia, 2003, 122-5
- <sup>20</sup> Pilch & Malina, 49-52, 88-91; Janmohamed, 24
- <sup>21</sup> Pilch & Malina, 49-52, 88-91; Esler, 25-29; Malina, 37-40, 79ff
- <sup>22</sup> Malina, 51-59
- <sup>23</sup> Kenneth McElhanon & Darrell Whiteman, 'Kinship: Who is Related to Whom', in *An Introduction to Melanesian Cultures*, 105-8
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- <sup>25</sup> Pilch & Malina, 166-171
- <sup>26</sup> Pilch & Malina, 55-59; Esler, 34-35
- <sup>27</sup> D.C. Laycock, 'Melanesian Linguistic Diversity: A Melanesian Choice?', in *Melanesia: Beyond Diversity*, Vol 1. Eds. R.J. May & Hank Nelson. Canberra: ANU, 1982, 34-5
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# Education—the Church and the Administration

(Breaking New Ground—Part 10)



ALFRED G CHAPMAN



SEE CV IN VOL 3 #1

**Synopsis:** While the Bay Loo Co. erected buildings on the Put Put site SE of Rabaul, Harry Steed & Lionel Maxwell concentrated on developing the 1618.7 hectare property. When Aubrey Hiscox replaced Steed he established a training school. Its influence soon spread all over the NG area. Omaura was established as a training school in the Highlands to meet the need of the inland regions of NG. David Brennan carried the work forward there until halted by WWII in the Pacific. These two educational institutions, together with Mirageda were crucial in the training of workers for the church

The educational acquirements of these teachers were often meagre. In many cases they would have been equivalent to Standard 2 or 3. The peak of the system was Standard 5 and many teachers did not reach it. Many of the students were adolescents when they began school, some even married men. They tended to reach a plateau in their learning fairly early in their course. This was recognized and advantage was taken of this to allow them to serve their people and their church in a way that allowed them a sense of fulfilment, brought help and development to their people and aided the church in its program. The danger to be guarded against was that the student still capable of development, and thus with a potential for wider service as a more highly educated person would be drawn out of school by a pressing present need, and therefore denied his full personal fulfilment, while the church lost because his potential was never developed. That this may have happened all too often cannot be denied. However, it was recognized as a danger and efforts were made to guard against it, by allowing re-entry into the school system, by having this class of person serve only a short time before replacement and return to the school and by presenting in school the desirability of higher education and fuller training.

## Training before a Training School was Established

In the period between the opening up of an area and the establishment of a full-fledged training school, the district leaders often gave the elements of training to students in the district school. We saw how this happened at Bisiatabu, where Baigani or Timothy, the second Papuan to be baptized, was given some training before he went to work at Efogi. Faole, too, received this kind of training before moving to the Vilirupu area to become a missionary. Similarly on Bougainville at Rumba,<sup>1</sup> on New Britain at Matupi,<sup>2</sup> on Mussau at Bo[i]liu,<sup>3</sup> and at Kainantu.<sup>4</sup> This burden to see the people among whom they were working become missionaries is well expressed by Alexander J Campbell. He writes:

Missionaries are always deeply interested in at least two steps in the development of a new field. The first when it is entered with the gospel, and the other when it produces its first teachers. We are pleased to know that Manus and Upper Ramu have each taken the second step.<sup>5</sup>

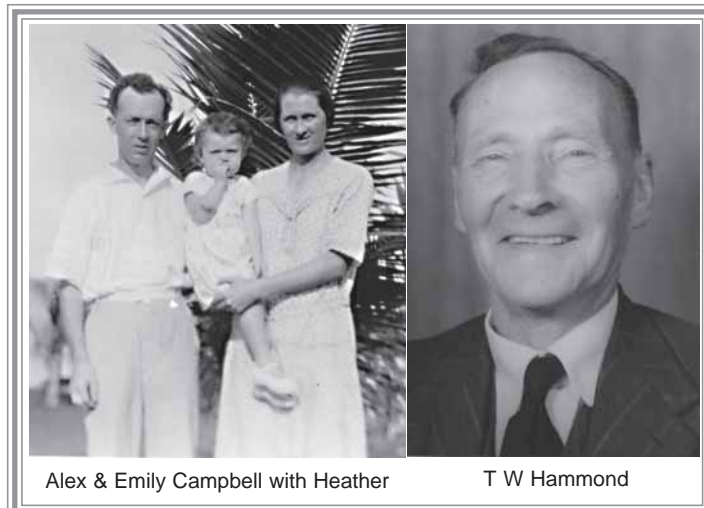
When he went up to the New Guinea Highlands, he found himself supported by young people, now teachers, who were children in the schools run by his Solomon Island teachers on Bougainville ten years before.<sup>6</sup>

## Relation of Education to the Mission Program

Education was not offered as an end in itself. There was a definite relation established between education and missionary service. At Put Put, Aubrey R Hiscox wrote:

It is good to see the enthusiasm which is shown when the students first come. Many of the boys spend every spare minute in the schoolroom trying to improve their handwriting or read from books or their Bibles. As the truths of the Bible are presented to them, and they understand more what the gospel commission really means to them, they wish that they could reach a suitable standard of education overnight, so they could go forth and speedily enrol others in the ranks of Christ<sup>7</sup>

When he visited the St Matthias Group which included Mussau and Emira, T W Hammond of the Australasian Union Conference



Alex & Emily Campbell with Heather

T W Hammond



Andrew & Jean Stewart, Griffith & Marion Jones, Septimus Carr

Laurie & Gwen Howell; Charles & Evelyn Mitchell; Faole in later years

recognized the special aim behind Adventist Mission education. He wrote:

A school should be provided where the most promising of them [people of Mussau] can be trained as teachers; and as they develop they can in turn be used as missionaries among other people and islands in this great Territory.<sup>8</sup>

In 1929, Andrew G Stewart wrote concerning Bisiatabu: “We have encouraged our missionaries to make the preparation of local workers their first consideration.”<sup>9</sup>

The Vailala Mission had hardly been established when we find it reported that:

In the afternoon, school is conducted for the twenty boys and girls living on the mission property. Several of these are prospective mission teachers, three of whom assist in the teaching at the village in the morning.<sup>10</sup>

### Relation of Missionaries to their Converts

References to the same thought could be multiplied. It was one of the basic aims of the Seventh-day Adventist Mission to train local believers as soon as possible to take up work as missionaries, and the desire in the hearts of the missionaries to be able to train some of their converts to help them, was equalled in its strength only by the joy they felt when they saw this happen. Of the Koiari young people who came to school at Bisiatabu, when he took over, Griffith F Jones wrote:

But in spite of all the lack in our mission the first twenty-one have stood by us through all our trials and now it looks as if it will not be long before we can place some of them in villages as primary teachers.<sup>11</sup>

Earlier than this Septimus W Carr wrote:

It was encouraging to find that some of the inland boys who had previously been at Bisiatabu working for a year, were exerting a good influence over their fellows and we found quite a number of the Efogi and Kagi tribes who were keeping the Sabbath as far as they knew how.<sup>12</sup>

This would refer to the influence of men like Faole who had had short contact with Bisiatabu in its early days and had returned to their villages with the very minimum of understanding of the mission and its function, and with scarcely any education or training, but who had been impressed that they had contacted something worth while

and who sought to help their people obtain its benefits. How much deeper was the satisfaction when a missionary had had a closer and longer contact with the new teacher. Again Faole is the subject when after some years contact with Charles E Mitchell at Efogi, he moved out inland from Korela, where the Mitchells were stationed, to begin a new school in the village of Bukuku. When the school was built and the people came to take back their teacher, Mitchell wrote:

“We had but one man with us who could possibly go, and that was Faole... It is now about four months since he left us and made his home up there, and it is really wonderful the progress the school has made.”<sup>13</sup>

Almost eighteen months later it was reported:

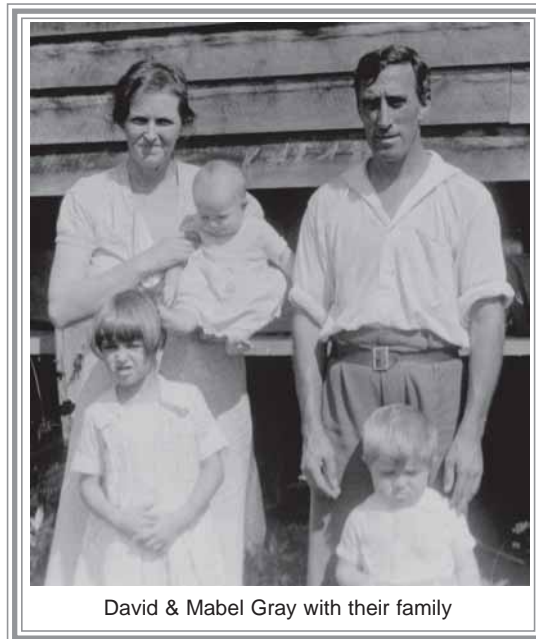
The Efogi man, Faole, who walked from Efogi to Bisiatabu years ago to carry goods for us and earn his Thirteenth Sabbath offering, still holds the fort at Bukuku. The people love him.<sup>14</sup>

In a similar way, William N Lock was able to see Mea who had come to school at Bisiatabu, help in the establishment of the new school at Mirigeda.<sup>15</sup>

Laurence I Howell could look forward with keen anticipation to the time when Paiva, one of the schoolboys from Belepa who had worked in the Howell’s home as a cook boy and who had gone on to Bisiatabu Training School, would be able to go out as a teacher to his own people.<sup>16</sup> This association broken at times by distance and transfers, was long continued, for in 1954, Howell became president of the Central Papuan Mission where Paiva then an ordained minister of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, was working in the Abau hinterland.

As the mission extended into Central New Guinea, Campbell met again some of the students from the schools he had had oversight of in Bougainville ten years previously. This made him exclaim, “Little did we then realize that we would meet them again as teachers in the dark heart of New Guinea.”<sup>17</sup> Often the joy of the missionary seeing students become teachers, and in having a sense of assisting in the expansion of the mission influence was tempered by a concern that some of the people becoming teachers could have made further progress in school. Writing of his school on Bougainville, David H Gray presents this aspect. His words are:

Last year we had an enrolment of twenty-two, but before the school closed we had let eight of our scholars go. It was not that they had finished, for they had really just begun, but because the call for teachers is so pressing we had to send them out with the little knowledge that they had. So far they have done reasonably well. Three of them are only children, but they call the people together for morning and evening worship, and give little talks on Sabbaths. During the week, they hold school to the best of their ability, and it is wonderful how they can keep the attention as they do.<sup>18</sup>



David & Mabel Gray with their family

life he had learned? His people could listen to him, they could watch his life. So he could help them. Even school consisted largely of rote learning. He had been taught by untrained men and women. Very little academic or professional knowledge was needed for him to be able to make quite a change in the people he went to teach. They could look on him as having something desirable, and as being able to give them help, even though to us there may appear to have been very little difference between them and him. Further, the people who first came to the missions, and went to school tended to be people who had initiative, who were willing to try and to do new things, who were

### Reasons for the Low Level of Education

To understand today how such a choice could be made, it will help us to keep in mind certain aspects of the situation as it existed then. We have already noted the philosophy and purpose of education as held by Seventh-day Adventists by which they saw education as an evangelical tool enabling them to help, not only individuals in their personal growth and development, but also the community. Further, they held that privilege brought responsibility, so that those who had been able to advance in school, were encouraged to think of their people who had not yet had this opportunity. There was also a certain fear of developing an elite which would be so highly educated as to be not only unacceptable to their people, but also without any sense of connection with them. There was the fear that should students be too long separated and too completely divorced in thought from their people they would be unable to help them, even if they so desired. Again, in their hierarchy of values, missionaries place the spiritual above the mental, which was to serve the spiritual and to be developed in harmony with it. As these, and similar ideas and feelings moved the missionaries, it is easy to understand how they came to move the students who were willing to leave school at a low level of attainment to help their own people or others in need. Many students who saw the religion and education of the missionaries as something desirable, as something that brought satisfaction to their own lives, needed no urging to take it to their people. It was quite often the case that they had to be encouraged to stay on at school when they felt an inner compulsion to leave to help their people. There was also the fact that many of the students of those days were adolescents, even married men with families when they began school. Three or four years of school could be a long time for them. The school program, with its necessary emphasis on time and punctuality, discipline and obedience, indoor and mental activity could be very constrictive when contrasted with their previous way of life. Then also, a student who could read, write and figure even at a very low level, could do so very much more than the village people that he really did have something he could give them. He had learned the spiritual truths he valued, as well as his school knowledge by listening to his missionary and observing his life. What was to hinder him from telling what he knew; from living the new

ready to change. They saw something they wanted, whether the material things the missionary had, or the way of life he lived or the power that they could see in reading a book. They were ready to adventure. So, many of them were ready to go to a new place, try a new role as a missionary. The village people, for their part, could see the mission as offering an alternative way of life. If they saw it as desirable, and the rapid expansion of mission influence in some areas would indicate that many of them did desire the new way, then their pleas for teachers exerted strong pressure not only on the missionaries, who looked on them as people in great need of help; but also on the students from among them who also felt the ties of kinship compelling them to give that needed help. So from all sides there was pressure to quickly find teachers. The desire of the village people could be tested for its sincerity by the requirement that they first set aside some ground, build a house for the teacher, a school for him to work in and plant a garden for him to live from. Too often this was done and the school waited up to a year or even longer before a teacher could be found. So we need not be surprised that untrained or poorly trained teachers were sent out. Rather our surprise should be that they accomplished so much

### Limitations of the Early Teachers

In the initial presentation of the mission and its program, both in its religious and educational aspects, these early workers, though having only a low educational attainment themselves, could do a great deal for their people. However, as they were limited in their own understanding as well as in their academic ability to advance further, so they could take the people only a limited way. Unless, therefore, there was a more highly qualified teacher to replace them after they had done the initial teaching and preaching, the people tended to stagnate. To guard against this, it was necessary to have men with higher academic achievements and better training ready. So there was in the 1930's in Papua and New Guinea, the emphasis on training schools. While it is doubtful that they were able to provide teachers, either in the numbers or with the qualifications that were desirable, the need to make an effort to do so was well recognized, and attempts were made to produce the needed teachers. We may question the precise

balance achieved between the number of students who were allowed to go before they were really ready and the number who were retained for higher training, but there was an effort to achieve this balance at such a level that the initial expansion could proceed and yet the provision be made to care for the later growth of the church established. It was recognized that much of such growth in Papua and New Guinea could only come from the efforts of trained workers taken from among the Papuans and New Guineans.

In general terms, Charles H Watson, who later was elected as president of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, spoke forcefully of their need for a strong denominational education work. He stressed first the world mission of the church and the urgency of the commission. He saw the key to the situation as being in the schools and their teachers. Young people should be in the schools and should be awakened to a consciousness that they were:

...responsible to God to do something definite for Him. This work of training our young people is a matter of denominational importance ... for in the success of our schools lies the hope of preserving our strength of effort ... The aim, too, of all our educational work is denominational rather than individual.

In order to reach this aim, he saw three essentials which he spelled out.

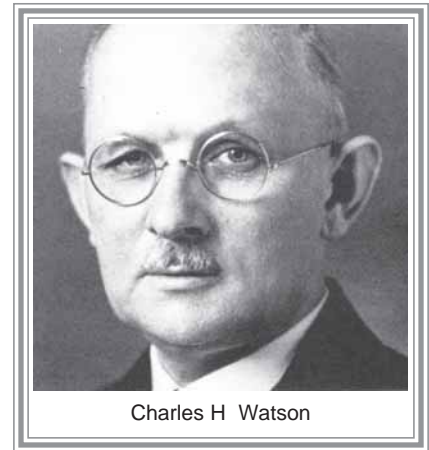
In the first place, we must give more earnest attention to the extent and standard of the educational equipment of our schools ... In the next place, it should be required of all our teachers that they obtain higher qualifications. The third essential is of the greatest importance: the interest of every church member ... in the work of education.

### **Administration of Mission Education**

In 1937, there was a change in the administration of the educational work in the mission field.<sup>19</sup> An Assistant Education Secretary for the Island field was appointed by the Australasian Union Conference Executive Committee. Previously the educational work of the Seventh-day Adventist Church had been fostered by an Education Department at the various levels of organisation in the home field, each with a Secretary to promote and guide church school education in its territory. For the mission education program, there was the Australasian Union Conference Education Secretary who had oversight of both home field and mission field education. However while each local conference in the home field had an Education Secretary, there was no comparable officer in the mission organization. As education in the mission field began to reach a higher level and to cater for a larger number of pupils through an increased number of schools, it was felt that an officer able to give his full attention to the special circumstances, needs and opportunities of mission education would bring strength to the work. Cyril S Palmer who was an experienced missionary with educational experience was the first appointee.<sup>20</sup> He served in this capacity until Alfred W. Martin was appointed in 1939. Pastor Martin also had been a missionary, having had experience in the Solomon Islands.<sup>21</sup>

It was hoped that these men could give assistance in the establishment, organization and administration of the mission schools. There had been considerable growth in the number of schools and in the standards reached in education, as well as in the number of qualified teachers operating in the mission

field. There was also a great increase in the number of schools operated by local mission workers, generally called teachers, though with minimum qualifications as teachers. There were now more local workers coming through the training schools established in the late 1920s and early 1930s, and these needed all the administrative support they could be given. There was need to find a basis of financial report for this expanding work and to this end, a sub-committee of the Australasian Union Conference Executive Committee was formed in September 1939, to report on ways of strengthening the support of the Island work.<sup>22</sup>



Charles H Watson

### **Relations of Seventh-day Adventists with Papuan Administration**

The growing recognition of the Seventh-day Adventist mission in Papua by the Papuan Administration, and the development of the mission in spite of the Spheres of Influence policy led to participation by the Mission in the Grants-in-Aid scheme under which part of the money received under the Native Taxation Ordinance was paid to Missions operating schools on the basis of a per capita grant for pupils passing the annual inspections. These inspections were conducted by an officer seconded from the Queensland Education Department to the Papuan Administration. He visited the major schools, and examined pupils presented.

### **Grants in Aid for Education**

Those who passed gained for their mission a grant ranging from 5/- (5 shillings) per head at Standard 1 level to 25/- per head at Standard 5. The Seventh-day Adventist Mission received under this scheme a total, up to June 30, 1940, of £4,665-12-2, of which £714-9-5 was paid in respect of the 1939-1940 financial year. This was of a total paid to all the participating missions from the inception of the scheme until 30 June 1940, of £119,385-3-4, of which £6,050-17-10 was paid for the 1939-1940 financial year.<sup>23</sup> The mission to receive the highest total over the period, and in 1939-1940, was the London Missionary Society with a total of £41,383-13-9 and a grant for 1939-1940 of £1,838-6-1.

It should be noted here that this scheme began long before the Seventh-day Adventist Mission participated in it. Thus, as late as 1929-1930, the Territory of Papua *Annual Report* states concerning the Seventh-day Adventist Mission: "This Mission likewise receives no grant from the Government."<sup>24</sup> However, the 1939-1940 figures indicate it as receiving a grant almost equal to that of the Anglican Mission, considerably more than half of that of the Methodists and Roman Catholics and between a half and a third of that of the London Missionary Society. LMS: £1191; Methodist: £1838; Roman Catholic: £1005; Anglican: £718; SDA: £714; Kwato: £553.

While the Seventh-day Adventist educational system in Papua still ranked considerably below that of the leading missions, it was making a considerable contribution to Papuan education.

### **School Inspection and Examination of Pupils**

The inspector for 1935-1936, Colonel John Hooper reported that he visited twenty-eight schools, while pupils from twenty-eight outstation schools came to seven of the schools visited, to sit the examination.<sup>25</sup> Of a total of 2025 pupils who sat, 1616 passed. This was a pass rate of 78.7% for 1934-1935 examinations. A further comment on these figures submitted by the inspector should be noted. They represent only those pupils submitted by the schools teaching English. Considerable numbers were taught in various vernaculars and *lingua francas* and these are not included. The Seventh-day Adventists themselves reported 890 pupils in 1935, and 900 in 1936. This was far more than they were likely to have had in the 1532 who were examined in 1935, and the 2025 in 1936. The set of figures submitted in *Table IV* is most instructive as well as being one of the few detailed reports allowing comparisons, available for the study of education in Papua at this period.<sup>26</sup>

### **Wastage of Pupils**

From *Table IV* it has been possible to extract *Table V* which relates to the progress of pupils through the school system, particularly the number passing but not continuing their education in the following year.

*Table V* indicates what may be considered a very heavy wastage of pupils. When we compare the total pupils examined in 1935 with the number who passed the next higher standard in 1936, we find the overall wastage over the two-year period. Thus 632 Standard 1 Pupils in 1935 have become 483 pupils successful in passing Standard 2 in 1936. Here is a wastage of 149 out of 632, or approximately 23%. Wastage for other levels was even heavier rising to 63% in the passage from Standard 3 to Standard 4. The figures for the overall group, Standards 1-4 in 1935 and the 1936 group, Standards 2-6, show a drop of from 1487 to 904, a wastage of 583, or a percentage wastage of 40%. (These figures are for the whole of the Papuan school system, which was based on compulsory education in schools where English was taught). If we take the number successful in 1935, and compare it with the number entered for the next higher grade in 1936, we find that 502 at Standard 1 has become 541 at Standard 2 indicating either that some failures were promoted, or that some students from previous years had re-entered the system. At the other three levels where comparison is possible, there was at each level a considerable wastage, amounting to 138 over the three levels of a total of 675, being about 25%. It is true that some of the early leavers, or unsuccessful students would be able to make valuable contributions, either to the program of the mission they were connected with, or in the community generally, but we cannot consider otherwise than that such a leakage from the system was regrettable as a major inefficiency.

### **Mission and Administration Relations Regarding Education in New Guinea**

That this condition was not confined to the Papuan side was indicated by the discussion at the Conference between the

Missionary Organizations and the Administration at Rabaul in 1927<sup>27</sup>. At the time this conference was held, the Seventh-day Adventists had been established for less than three years on Bougainville, and though invited to attend, did not do so, apologising that pressure of other commitments prevented attendance. Reverend Margetts spoke of the difficulty of securing regular attendance of pupils at schools. There was considerable discussion, but the missions did not seek a compulsory attendance law, partly because the denominational question could arise, as in New Guinea there were no Spheres of Influence for the missions. There was a feeling also that a compulsory attendance law could be linked to instruction in English, or at least the compulsory teaching of English, which some missions would have had difficulty in doing even on their head stations. What the Mission representatives desired was for the Government to uphold before the New Guineans, the value of vernacular schools; and a sympathetic attitude on the part of the District Officers to the village schools, so that the people would feel a certain pressure to send their children to school. It was also desired that chiefs and councillors would be discouraged from requiring school pupils to be absent from school to do road work and other community tasks. The missions did not seek a subsidy or grant from the Administration for operating their schools, as they considered that:

Our school work is of such a nature that we could hardly meet the requirements which would rightly be exacted upon the acceptance of a subsidy.<sup>28</sup>

On the part of the Administration, the Chairman, Mr H C Cardew, Commissioner of Native Officers, stated:

The Administration might be prepared to grant some assistance, but the Conference should understand, that if either compulsory education or subsidisation of Mission Schools is introduced, the Administration would require some form of control of Mission Schools either by inspection or examination of scholars.<sup>29</sup>

There was a clear difference between the missions on the one hand and the Administration on the other, as to the value of the vernacular schools. The Administration was hesitant to agree to the mission request to lend its support to the vernacular schools desiring to see a school system in which English had a more prominent place.

In New Guinea, the Administration did have a small school system which in 1936-1937 absorbed £8689-9-4 for education of both European and New Guinean children.<sup>30</sup> This catered for 317 pupils in elementary and day schools for the local people, as well as 72 pupils at a technical school and a group of New Guinean assistant teachers in special training classes.<sup>31</sup> Special mention is made of a school opened at Chimbu during the year ended 30 June 1937.<sup>32</sup> This school was staffed by two New Guinean assistant teachers and had an enrolment of sixty pupils.

During the same report, the missions are noted as having:<sup>33</sup>

Training Centres 41  
High, Intermediate and Technical Schools 63  
Elementary Schools 142  
Village Schools 2149  
Pupils in all Schools 72,994

Of these the Seventh-day Adventists in New Guinea, particularly in Bougainville and New Britain are credited with.<sup>34</sup>

Training Centres 11  
 High, Intermediate and Technical Schools 3  
 Elementary Schools 5  
 Village Schools 80

It is not clear just how the various grades of schools are defined, but the eleven Training Centres shown for the Seventh-day Adventists seems doubtful, unless it was considered that every school which came under a European or was supervised directly by him was a Training Centre. In practice, wherever there was a European missionary he made it his business to try to carry forward some system which would bring some of his senior students into his work force.

It is difficult to reconcile the figures from the *New Guinea Annual Report* with those of the Seventh-day Adventist statistician<sup>35</sup> due to the differing time period covered by each. The *Annual Report* followed the financial year while the Seventh-day Adventists followed the calendar year. Even more difficult is the differing areas covered. The *Annual Report* does not include the inland areas of New Guinea and probably not the Manus, Mussau and Emira areas. There is also doubt as to whether Bougainville was included in the Mandated Territory or the Solomon Islands Report. Little useful purpose can be served by comparing the two sets of figures.

### References

<sup>1</sup> D H Gray, *Australasian Record*, (AR) 15 Oct 1934, 3  
<sup>2</sup> AR, 13 Aug 1934, 8; 21 Sep 1931, 2  
<sup>3</sup> Ibid. 7 Aug, 1933, 8; 13 Aug 1934, 8  
<sup>4</sup> D A Brennan, *Missionary Leader*, (ML) Apr 1940, 7  
<sup>5</sup> A J Campbell, *AL*, 1 Jan 1940, 4  
<sup>6</sup> Ibid, 13 Sep 1937, 2, 3  
<sup>7</sup> A R Hiscox, *ML*, Sep 1940, 8.  
<sup>8</sup> T W Hammond, *AL*, 18 Jul 1932, 4

<sup>9</sup> A G Stewart, *ibid*, 9 Dec 1929, 2, 3.  
<sup>10</sup> G H Engelbrecht, *ibid*, 15 Apr 1929, 4  
<sup>11</sup> G F Jones, *ibid*, 30 Oct 1922, 92  
<sup>12</sup> S W Carr, *ibid*, 5 Sep 1913, 2.  
<sup>13</sup> C E Mitchell, *ibid*, 18 Jul 1932, 4.  
<sup>14</sup> Mitchell, *ML*, Feb 1934, 8  
<sup>15</sup> W N Lock, *ibid*, Mar 1933, 7  
<sup>16</sup> L Howell, *ibid*, Mar 1934, 7  
<sup>17</sup> Campbell, *AR*, 13 Sep 1937, 2, 3  
<sup>18</sup> Gray, *ibid*, 19 Mar 1934, 2  
<sup>19</sup> *Australasian Union Conference Executive Committee Minutes*, 28 Apr 1937, 148  
<sup>20</sup> *Ibid*  
<sup>21</sup> *Ibid*, 13 Sep 1939, 655  
<sup>22</sup> *Ibid*, 646  
<sup>23</sup> *Papuan Government Gazette*, Vol. XXXVI, Thursday, 2 Jan 1941, No 2, 28.  
<sup>24</sup> *Territory of Papua Annual Report*, 1929-1930, 15  
<sup>25</sup> *Ibid*, 1935-1936, 12  
<sup>26</sup> *Ibid*, 13, Table VII  
<sup>27</sup> *Commonwealth Record Series*, Attachment to File A838/1, Part I; Report of Mission Conference, Rabaul, 20 Jun - 11 Jul 1927.  
<sup>28</sup> *Id*  
<sup>29</sup> *Id*  
<sup>30</sup> *CRS*, R849/1/3, New Guinea Annual Report 1937-1938, 112  
<sup>31</sup> *Ibid*, 45  
<sup>32</sup> *Id*  
<sup>33</sup> *Ibid*, 46  
<sup>34</sup> *Ibid*, Table 1937-1938  
<sup>35</sup> See Tables 1-111. (Not included in this article).

Particulars	Standard 1		Standard 2		Standard 3		Standard 4		Standard 5	
	1935	1936	1935	1936	1935	1936	1935	1936	1935	1936
Pupils Examined	632	947	484	541	263	340	108	134	45	63
Increases in 1936		315		57		77		26		18
Pupils Passes	502	712	391	483	212	271	72	97	30	53
Increases in 1936		210		92		59		25		23
% of passes	79.5	75.2	80.8	88.3	80.6	79.7	66.6	72.4	66.6	84.1
Average ages in years	12.0	12.1	13.5	12.8	14.3	13.8	14.7	15.7	16.4	16.4

*Territory of Papua Annual Report 1935-1936, p 12*

Standard	1935		1936		No. examined at each Standard in 1935 minus No. passed at the next Standard in 1936		No. passed in 1935 at each Standard minus No. examined at the next Standard in 1936	
	Examined	Passed	Examined	Passed	Wastage No.	Wastage %	Wastage No.	Wastage %
1	632	502						
2	484	391	541	483	149	-23	39	8
3	263	212	340	271	213	-44	-51	-14
4	108	72	134	97	166	-63	-78	-37
5	45	30	63	53	55	-51	-9	-12





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## The Floating Log

George Rusa, a Solomon Islander, tells his life story, including his childhood spent in the Solomon Islands during WWII, his life-work with mission ships and his experiences at Seventh-day Adventist Colleges and Missions in the Solomon Islands, Papua New Guinea and Vanuatu. He also includes a brief history of the SDA Mission in the Solomon Islands and his personal knowledge of mission ships that served in the Pacific.

1932 - 2003



*George Rusa*

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Price: Book \$15 DVD \$10

A non-profit project

## Book Review

This is George Rusa's story. It is an inspiring story of a man and his work for the church that he loved. Unfortunately he died before he could see the results of his work but his family and Heather Dixon have worked together to bring this book to fruition.

It is most interesting as it tells of first-hand experiences: of the life of a boy living in an occupied country; the delicate balance of keeping out of trouble with the Japanese and maintaining good relationships with the Americans; the loyalty of the church members and the consequences suffered; his total dedication to his work and his search for excellence in all that he did; his great love for the mission ships which brought the gospel to the otherwise unreachable peoples in the Pacific.

The publishers have enhanced this great story by illustrating the book with hundreds of well-presented photos and excerpts from other historical sources. It is fascinating reading.

## The DVD

Accompanying the book is a quality 40 minute DVD slide show of mission ships with beautiful background music by Peter Dixon. It is a moving and unforgettable experience. All sorts of thoughts are evoked: an admiration for those who carried the gospel in these small ocean going ships—how much courage they must have had; what an adventure it must have been; how they must have had to rely on God. Words of Scripture come to mind: "They that go down to the sea in ships... These see the works of the Lord and His wonders in the deep." KJV Ps 107:23-24

All credit must be given to Heather for an outstanding and creative production. It represents significant research on her part and a single minded devotion to the task.

Cecily Hay



# Compassion and Treatment: the church's mission to lepers at the Togoba Hansenide Colony, Western Highlands, Territory of Papua New Guinea, 1954 – 1959 – a nurse's view

**JUNE MACAULAY**



*June Macaulay (nee Rogers), from 1939-1948 served the church in various places as an office worker - in SHF Brisbane, Queensland Conference Office, AMC, Sydney Sanitarium. From 1949-1952 June completed a course in nursing at the Sydney Sanitarium and a midwifery course at Ryde Hospital in 1953. During 1954 she, with her friend Florance Burdett, also a nurse, took a course in tropical diseases. In September they were on their way to mission service at Togoba Hansenide Colony located west of Mt Hagen. After 4 1/2 years there, she went to Hobart in Tasmania and completed a course in Infant Welfare. She went to Sopas Hospital in PNG in 1961. On returning home permanently, in 1963 she continued to serve both in the church and for the government using her skills in hydrotherapy and massage and care of babies. On retiring in June 1980 she married William Burn who passed away in 1983. She later married Pastor Albert Macaulay (deceased in 1997). June now lives in the Retirement Village at Cooranbong, NSW.*

As midnight approached on Wednesday, 15 September 1954, the DC3 plane circled the airstrip, descended and landed. There they were, June Rogers (Macaulay) and her friend Florance Burdett (Jones) almost at the end of their journey from Sydney, Australia. They had both, some months previously, finished their Midwifery Nursing training at Ryde District Hospital, Sydney. They had done their General Nursing prior to that, June at the Sydney Sanitarium and Hospital (Sydney Adventist Hospital) and Florance at Parramatta Hospital. Since training, June, wanting the opportunity to live at home and have regular hours for a time, did some colporteur work with a medical book: Florance, had worked in a private hospital. While employed along these lines they also did a Tropical Diseases Course at the Sydney University, a free one! During this time both were asked by the Australian Union Conference to accept a call to nurse at the Togoba Hansenide (leper) Colony near Mt. Hagen in the Territory of New Guinea.

Now they had arrived at Mt. Hagen in the Western Highlands, at over 5300 feet altitude. This last stage of the flight had been from Lae; and there had been two brief stops, at Goroka and Minj, where they had close-up views of the local people of the country. As they alighted from the aircraft and looked around, they were struck with the beauty of the country. The town of Mt. Hagen was small, the land was flat and mountains surrounded it. Here was the Western Highlands District Office - the office of the District Commissioner. It was also the Post Office. There were several houses occupied by Europeans, also the Mt Hagen government hospital which they were shown through on a later occasion. They could not see any houses of the local people, but later learned that the people of the area did not live in villages, as in most other parts of the country, but in single houses scattered here and there.

Togoba Colony was Government-owned and staffed by the Seventh-day Adventist

Mission. Staff members were responsible to the Coral Sea Union Mission Head-quarters in Lae and in turn the mission dealt with the Government Administration Headquarters in Port Moresby. The expatriate staff at Togoba was paid by the mission which was later reimbursed by the administration. National staff members were paid by the government. Actually, the hospital paid them when they had withdrawn the required amount from the district office each month. At first the nurses received government food supplies free and would submit their six-monthly orders for them, only buying their fresh food, such as potatoes, sweet potatoes and sometimes greens, locally. Some were grown. At one time they had a good pineapple patch and a small garden of soya beans and peanuts. Another time June remembers sowing seeds of lettuce, carrots, radishes, tomatoes and parsley on her day off. Later a charge was made for their groceries.

On their arrival at Mt Hagen they were soon greeted by a gentleman who asked if they were the nursing sisters for the Hansenide Colony at Togoba. He was Frank Aveling who had a sawmill in the district. Soon other folk arrived: Pastor Frank Maberly, the president of the Western Highlands Mission which was close at hand; then Len Barnard, superintendent of the colony, and with him Sister Essie Petherbridge arrived by motor cycle. Before long they commenced the journey to Togoba by jeep which had been borrowed from the Government office. Four of them, Len, Essie, Florance and June, plus their luggage, made it a well-filled jeep. The brakes were poor; so the plan they followed was that at every downhill the three nurses would get out and walk. Len drove to the bottom and waited for them. There were quite a number of wooden bridges to cross, mostly with kunai grass roofs to provide protection for the timber from the high rainfall. They found it interesting, all eight miles of it! On their arrival at Togoba, Mavis (Len's wife) had a lovely meal ready for them. That afternoon Sister Essie showed them around the hospital. One



Pastor Len & Mavis Barnard, Kaye (Mrs Ken Hawkes)  
& Sharon (Mrs Fred Lang) at Togoba

building contained theatre, laboratory and superintendent's office. Another similar one was a clinic where the walking patients came for their medicines. These were weatherboard buildings. When they walked into the building there seemed to be people everywhere, with a medical orderly taking their temperatures. The other buildings were the patients' houses, some made of weatherboard a number having roofs of kunai grass; others iron roofs. These huts had floors of sawn boards. Some houses were made of bamboo walls and kunai grass roofs. There were fires in the middle of the huts, usually in 44-gallon drums cut in half length-wise. They saw sweet potatoes and other foods cooking (often greens something like spinach) and people sitting around the fires. It could be cold, especially at night, and this was how the people kept warm. June and Florance toured these houses to visit the bed patients. They lay on the bed, which was one long platform made of plaited bamboo, where several people could sleep, and there was one of these beds on each side of the hut. Some of the huts - the weatherboard ones - had individual wooden beds. The patients laughed and were very happy when told that they were the new sisters and would have shaken their hands if they had been allowed. Instead, they were taught to flick the hand. For some days they followed Essie around, learning the work and learning to speak Pidgin English.

Each morning at 8 o'clock Yobik, the medical 'boss boy' would line up the local staff, mostly male with two females, and give them a short drill. Then the superintendent, Len, and also the sister in charge of the 'leper side' as it was called (Sister Essie at that time) would give them their duties for the day. Work then commenced. One orderly prepared bottles for artificially fed infants. Another did blood and urine testing. Others washed bed patients. Bed patients were those who had severe ulcers, or perhaps malaria or some other ailment making it necessary for them to be cared for. In those days there was no hospital building where they could be treated. At a later time a hospital building was provided after June had left. Probably two male and two female staff members treated sores. Mobile patients came to the 'Big Room' in the clinic building to have their sores treated: daily for bigger ones, two or three times a week for others. Two of the staff washed and boiled the bandages. This was never a popular task. Medicines were given regularly to the patients twice a week for their Hansen's Disease and it was also given as a preventative dose to young children who were there with their parents. It was *Dapsone*, (*Diaminodiphenyl-sulphone* or DADPS for short) in tablet form, eight tablets per dose to adults and for children from one or two tablets upwards according to age and size.

When they had learned some Pidgin English they were able to take on individual duties: one of them to the leper clinic side and the other to the theatre, outpatients (non-leper), laboratory

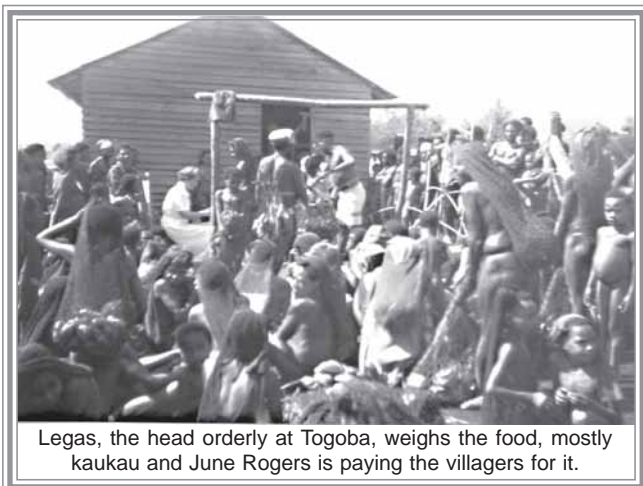
and office. This roster was changed every two months. June described the work of the laboratory in a letter home:

My typewriter is up at the hospital in the Laboratory where I have been getting the records straightened up a bit. Legas (senior medical orderly) works there at the microscope and is a real inspiration to work with; he is always so cheerful. He has been three years on the microscopic work. Koi is at the second microscope. His leprosy being arrested he is now a medical orderly and has been in the Laboratory three months. Some patients have a microscopic slide done every month, others every six months, according to the stage of the disease. Legas and Koi cut them in three places, also take a scraping from each nostril, and these five smears are rubbed onto a glass slide. This slide is then stained with a solution and under the microscope each of the five places, magnified 200 times, is looked at. Each viewing of a leprosy bacillus is counted and the result is one of the indications as to how the patient is progressing. If Legas sat all day at the microscope, he could do nine slides and he is really good at it.<sup>1</sup>

Twelve consecutive negative smears were required before a patient could be discharged. This would often take years or sometimes the whole remaining lifetime.

The patients came from various parts of the Highlands: from the Eastern Highlands such areas as Kainantu and Goroka, and closer to us Minj and Banz; and from the west and northwest, Wabag, Laiagam; and, of course, many from the Hagen area itself. At times they would have a planeload of new patients arrive. June remembers this happening once on a Sabbath afternoon. If the superintendent was away at the time, the nurses would write down the particulars of each person, issue them with the necessary blanket, laplaps, eating utensils, etc., then take them to their house. They would be thoroughly examined later when the superintendent returned. The patients were from various areas of the Highlands and were usually housed with their own 'one talks' or same language group. There are two classifications of Hansen's Disease, Lepromatous and Tuberculoid, and the patient's signs and/or symptoms indicated to which class they belonged. The former type affected the nerves, often causing severe pain, while the latter was evident by sores or ulcers. A patient could have both types. The disease was passed from one person to another by frequent or long-term bodily contact. The houses were numbered L1, L2, L3, or T1, T2, T3, etc. and new patients were admitted to the appropriate house. A patient could not transmit the disease to another patient with the second type of leprosy. After the temperatures of the patients were taken in the morning, those who were well enough each working day would go to the garden area and work there for the morning. Sometimes the Government leprologist would come to the colony and examine the patients. Usually, then, there would be the discharge of many of them and they would be sent off home within a day or two. In June 1956, the total number of patients was 630. Then in March, 1957, Dr Russell, the Government leprologist, spent two days examining the patients and decided that 163 could be discharged and another 30 when their ulcers had healed. There were several medical orderlies amongst this number, so the staff numbers were depleted until they trained others.

On 15 March 1955, Dr Roy Yeatts, our new superintendent, and his wife, Helen, arrived from the USA. A week later Len and Mavis Barnard left, firstly to have their leave which was due, then to take up duties at the Omara SDA Medical School.



Legas, the head orderly at Togoba, weighs the food, mostly kaukau and June Rogers is paying the villagers for it.

Dr and Mrs Yeatts soon settled into a lifestyle vastly different from that to which they had been accustomed at his private practice in the United States of America. They spent several years at Togoba and then at Sopas Seventh Day Adventist Hospital at Wabag.

Fresh food, in particular, kaukau (sweet potato), was grown on the station. June took her turn to buy it from the villagers there. She describes the procedure in a letter home.

Yesterday I had a busy morning buying kaukau. That is my usual Monday morning work. The villagers come in hordes, the head doctor boy weighs each bag of food; and I sit on a chair nearby and give the owner the payment as it is weighed... This food is for the patients. We ration it out to each house each afternoon.<sup>2</sup>

Government supplies of rice, flour, tinned meat, sugar and salt came for the patients and national staff.

At times they had to be very inventive to overcome food shortages. This is what happened one day:

We have been rather short of kaukau on the station lately. The next crop is not due for another month or more, so we sent out an SOS to the people of the district to bring in kaukau from their gardens for sale. As we had to gather up sufficient money to pay for it, we have been trying different methods. I was cleaning up the store on Friday when Florance was buying the kaukau, and suddenly came across a box of old handbags that had been sent up here amongst Welfare gifts. I had a sudden brainwave and went outside with an armful of bags. They went like 'hot cakes' at one shilling each. I came back several times for more and finished up with one bag left in the store and three pounds cash to add to our kaukau money. This was the easiest canvassing I have ever done.<sup>3</sup>

Many of the folk cannot read or write and it was felt that the Lord impressed them in other ways regarding the Truth. A young orderly by the name of Ai was one who related this story to June.

Yesterday one of the young orderlies, Ai, came to me when I was on duty and said he wanted to have a little talk with me. He told me that on Monday night he had a dream. He dreamed that he was in one of the houses with some of the patients, while some of them were outside. One of the men who was outside on the grass called out to him that Jesus was coming soon now and that the sun was dying. In his dream, Ai hurried outside and looked at the sun, and sure

enough it was becoming dark and the ground was all cracked as if there was an earthquake. He said, 'O, Jesus He come and me no baptize yet'. He ran inside to get his bag.<sup>4</sup>

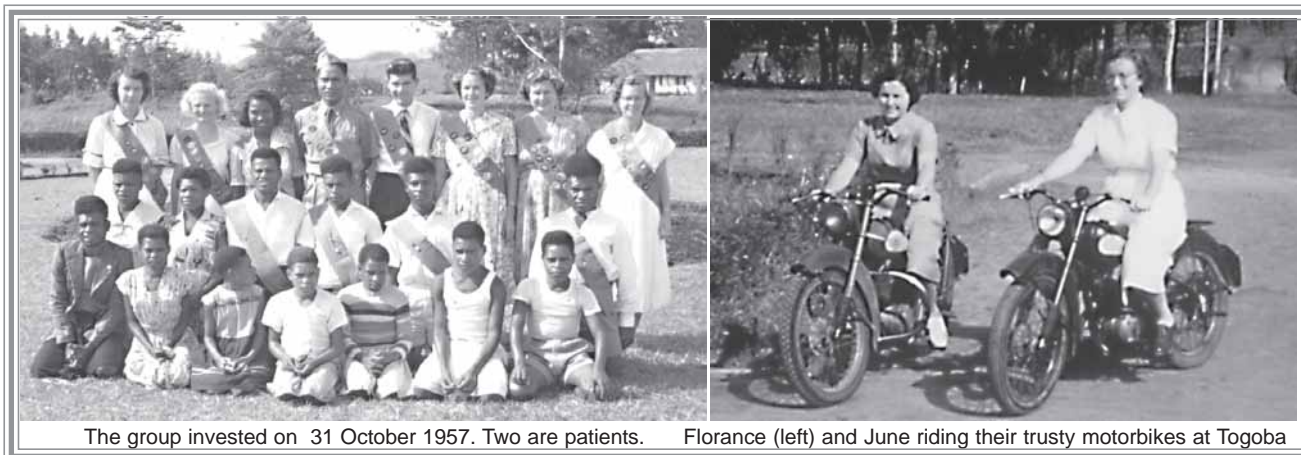
They usually carry a string bag (billum) when going on a journey so she presumed he was referring to that.

Another story illustrates this. June wrote home:

I heard a very interesting story from one of the young members of our medical staff today. This boy is Kaima who has been an orderly about two years. He is in 'class ready' or a preliminary to baptismal class. On Tuesday night he told the other staff members in his house that he was going to 'class ready' and asked two of them who often attended if they were going. They said, No, they would not go that night. He had his hand leaning against the wall and suddenly felt someone shake his hand. He tried to find who was there, but there was no one. The house had no light in it at the time but his three house mates all helped him try to find who had shaken his hand but could not find anyone. It really would have been impossible for any man to find Kaima's hand in the darkness and we really feel that may have been a sign of God's approval as he was on his way to class.<sup>5</sup>

Sabbaths were really something special. Considering that there were very few baptized church members at the beginning of this time period, the attendances at Sabbath School, Church services and afternoon JMV (Junior Missionary Volunteer) meetings were very good. The church building at this time was made of bamboo walls and kunai grass roof. It was V-shaped, with patients on one side and non-patients on the other. The rostrum was at the base of the V. When anyone was speaking from the front several interpreters (turnim toks) would interpret for their own people: e.g. Hagen, Wabag, Chimbu and Goroka areas. It was not quiet but was effective. There were three Sabbath Schools: adults in the church, non-leper children in the school near our houses; and leper children in their school building. The expatriate staff members were thrilled to see the spiritual growth in those with whom they worked each day and the patients for whose benefit they were there. They tried to make JMV meetings on Sabbath afternoons as interesting as possible. One night during the week, they practised knot-tying, studied the stars, etc. at the hospital. Occasionally a track-and-trail or a similar outdoor activity was held on a day when the weather was fine. They had one JMV Investiture while June was there, 31 October 1957. Some of the expatriates (including June) were already Master Guides, so were able to help others to do the necessary preparation. Those invested as Master Guides were: June Bartlett, Len and Beryl Doble, Pat Gibbons, Linda McClintock, Dorothy Schultz (all expatriate) plus Joseph and Vavine Oli of Papua. These folk, in turn, prepared others for Investiture, as part of their requirements. The Friends were: Bas, Pilan, John, Ivetma, Tank and Tandra. The Pals were: De, Dupi, Poning, Poti, Kagul, Lai, John, Moni and Ambaitom. Probably one or two of the Pals were patients. Pastor Ken Gray (Education and YPMV Secretary from the Coral Sea Union Mission office in Lae) and Pastor John Newman (President of the Western Highlands Mission) were present to conduct the Investiture.

There were just three of the national staff members who were church members at the time June and Florance commenced work at Togoba. A baptism took place during June's furlough (late 1956 or early 1957). Then there was a baptism perhaps two years later when there were twelve



The group invested on 31 October 1957. Two are patients.

Florance (left) and June riding their trusty motorbikes at Togoba

candidates. In each case there were patients and non-leper staff, and in at least one of the baptisms, people from the surrounding area.

June and Florance's house was approximately a ten-minute walk from the main buildings of the colony and the patients' huts. As time went on, they felt that they could save time if they each had a motor cycle. It would be particularly helpful when they were called out at night to a patient. So Les Bartlett gave them some lessons on his bike at the local Togoba airstrip that had little use, and they mastered the art very quickly. Mary Neill, who came to Togoba shortly after they did, and Linda McClintock who came at a later time, and Florance and June all bought motor cycles and found them a real boon. They were grateful to the menfolk on the station who so willingly helped them out with mechanical repairs. On one occasion when June and Florance had a day off together, they rode to Banz about fifty miles away. Then on 5 October 1955, they set off on their fortnight's annual leave, leaving Togoba at 5:45 am. Dr Yeatts arranged for Terry Solomon, who worked on the station, to have some days off so that he could accompany them on their trip to Goroka, a distance of approximately 150 miles. He would then return to Togoba while they continued their holiday by plane to Madang. During the early part of their journey, shortly after leaving Mt Hagen, the road was very wet and slippery and June fell down three times. They stayed overnight at the Moruma mission station. The missionaries, Joe and Lucy French, were on leave but the pastor and teachers, all from the island of Mussau, were very hospitable, opened up the house so that they could spend the night there and also provided them with food. The teachers looked after Terry in one of their houses. This was more than half the journey. Next day they did the remaining distance to Goroka and really enjoyed the experience of seeing these places, and some were really very beautiful! The remainder of their

travelling was done by plane. They booked their bikes to be returned to Togoba when they did; but they came five weeks later. However, it was a memorable holiday and the welcome they received on their return 'home' after two weeks was really great!

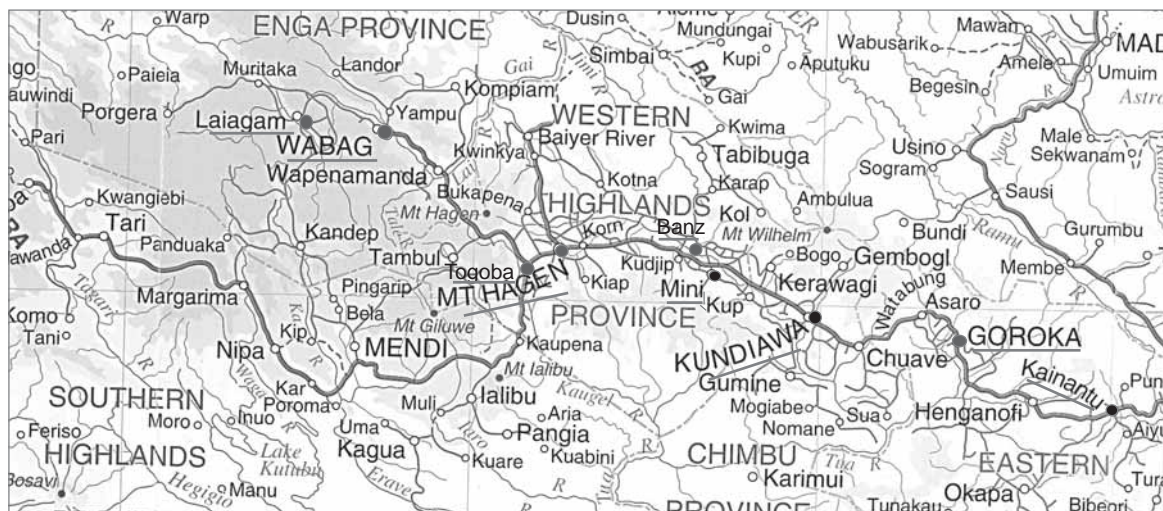
The patients were like family to them and if they went away even for a few days they were given a wonderful welcome on their return. When June was ready to have her leave in Australia in the latter part of 1956, she did the rounds of the patients' houses and said good-bye. One dear old Hagen woman named Nui shed tears as they parted. On her return several weeks later when June visited her house she cried again. June said through the interpreter "Nui, why are you crying?" and she replied, "Because of the joy of having you back!" For June, serving among these needy people was a privilege and the experience was rewarding.

#### References and Notes

The following are the names of those who worked there at Togoba during the time June was there, not all at the same time:  
 Len & Mavis Barnard: superintendent  
 Len & Beryl Doble - nursing  
 Ellis & Pat Gibbons - nursing  
 Linda McClintock - nursing  
 Dorothy Schultz- nursing  
 Olive Fisher- nursing  
 Essie Petherbridge- nursing  
 Mary Neill- nursing  
 Florance Burdett- nursing  
 June Rogers- nursing  
 Valerie Butterick - nursing at Hatzfeldhaven then Togoba  
 Les & June Bartlett - building and maintenance  
 Dr Roy & Helen Yeatts - superintendent.

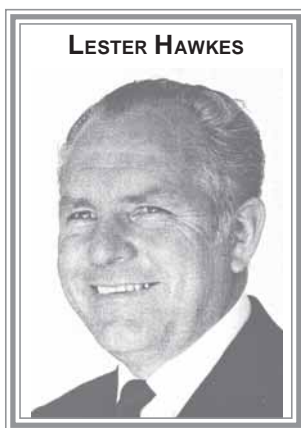
June's testimonial: "It was a wonderful privilege to do this nursing work for these afflicted people and I will always be grateful to God for giving me the opportunity to serve Him in this way."

- 1 June Rogers' letter to home
- 2 Ibid, 14 Feb 1956
- 3 Ibid, 10 Apr 1955
- 4 Ibid, 14 Aug 1955
- 5 Ibid, 25 Sep 1955



Locations in the Enga, Western Highlands, Chimbu & Eastern Highlands Provinces of PNG  
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# Unique and Interesting Funeral Practices in Papua New Guinea



**LESTER HAWKES**

*Lester Hawkes, a graduate of the Sydney Sanitarium (SAH), served in the Pacific for 30 years.*

*First appointed to Aroma in the Papuan Mission, PNG, he was a district director from 1946-48.*

*He transferred to the Eastern Highlands for the next six years. There he built the Omaura Hospital and established a nurses training school. From 1956-59, he served on Pitcairn Island then spent 10 years at Rabaul as a departmental director at the Bismarck Solomons Union Mission.*

*From 1975-78, he was president of the Eastern Highlands Mission and Communications & Health & Temperance Director at PNG Union Mission from 1978-1980.*

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

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

*They now live in retirement in Cooranbong, NSW, Australia.*

**D**uring my years as a missionary in Papua New Guinea (PNG) I had the opportunity to witness a number of indigenous funerals, a couple of which no other European has witnessed and reported on.

My wife and I began our work in PNG in 1946 on the Aroma Coast, about 100 km east of Port Moresby. Living as they did by the ocean, these Papuans valued their canoes. I discovered they were built in varying styles and shapes to suit the many differences to which they were put. But one thing was common to all their canoes. They were simply a log dug out and shaped for its intended purpose. The most common type of canoe was the small fishing canoe built to hold one or two persons. The beach at Aroma was wide and flat with dry sand hills where the vegetation began. It was on and among these dry sand hills that the canoes were 'parked' when not in use. And there were many canoes lined up on the dry dunes. It was amongst these people that we witnessed our first PNG funeral.

Upon his death a man's personal fishing canoe became his coffin. To transform it into a coffin it was cut through at the required length, but cut 'off-centre'. It was cut this way so that one section formed the main body of the coffin, while the remaining section was used as the lid. Two further pieces were cut

large enough to fill in the ends. When all nailed together the old canoe became a very effective coffin.

I discovered more interesting funerals when we transferred to the Yani district of South Simbu, in the Highlands of Central New Guinea. It seems to me that it was of God's leading that the local people of this mountainous area felt the need to have the white missionary conduct their funerals for them. For it is at a funeral that people reach out for comfort and understanding of the meaning of death. At no other time did I find the non-mission people so ready to listen. It was in the funeral setting that I was able to present the story of Jesus and His plans most clearly.

Although honoured to conduct the funeral oration I felt it prudent not to ask for changes to funeral procedures. I judged it best they follow their own traditions in that regard. The only change therefore was my presentation of the gospel story and the message of hope in the soon return of Jesus. I considered it wise to allow the Gospel itself to make any changes God might feel are required.

I find it most unfortunate that in far too many instances the foreigner who has come in as a missionary has taken the attitude that any practice carried out in the mission field which differs from the way things are done 'at home' is automatically 'heathen'. This is



The Yani Mission Station in the South Simbu (sometimes called Chimbu) area

an attitude I have seen far too often and one that has had devastating effects on mission work in many parts of the world.

But let's return to the funeral practices of the Yani district. When an ordinary village person was buried, a hole was dug in the selected location. It was almost two meters in length and a little over a meter wide. It was dug to a depth of between one and a half and two metres. When the correct depth was reached they began to dig sideways to create a grave something like a very wide shoe with the big toes going in under the ground. This 'pocket' was carefully lined with leaves, lots of leaves, a whole bed of leaves. One cardinal law had to be observed, namely that when a person was buried the body must not in any way come in contact with soil.

The body was therefore wrapped and tied in a large woven mat, which completely enveloped it. The body was lowered and carefully laid in the excavated 'pocket'. Then everyone stood quietly to listen to the sermon. Piles of grass and leaves which had been collected were now thrown down to the men who were working in the grave. The body was completely immersed in new green leaves or grass, till the pocket was totally filled. More and more leaves were thrown in and stamped down by the men in the grave till there was a compacted mass a half meter deep.

Next came loads of twigs and smaller branches. As the pile grew, larger and larger branches were trampled in. When the grave was about half filled, stones were thrown in, till the hole was completely full. The layer of stones was simply a practical way to ensure that the pigs would not dig up the body and mutilate it.

That part of the service was rather straight forward. But above the ground something occurred which was somewhat different. I noticed among the mourners that there were several who had ropes tied around their waists, the free ends of which were firmly held by strong young men. When I asked the reason for the rope, I was told that custom demanded that all close relatives were expected to demonstrate their deep sorrow by committing suicide. The method of suicide could either be by drowning in a nearby river, or by hanging. The period within which they could commit suicide was strictly limited. Once the last stone had been set in place the time for suicide was past and they were no longer required to harm themselves. So it was always a close relative who had the rope around the waist, and the young man holding the end of the rope was always a more distant relative whose task it was to prevent the suicide. Several times while beside the graveside I saw attempts to break free, but the one holding the rope was strong enough to hold the would-be suicide. During our stay in Yani I did, however, hear of several persons who succeeded in committing suicide.

At one funeral in the midst of my talk a young man, a close relative, did manage to break free and head toward the river. Most of the mourners immediately broke into a chase—including those other close relatives who had ropes around their waists. They seemed as anxious as anyone else to catch the run-away. They simply gathered up their trailing ropes and

joined in the chase. Even the two men working in the hole climbed out and joined in the chase. Only the older and less-able persons remained at the grave-side. Within about 15 minutes the whole group returned with all the ropes properly in place and my part of the service continued. As soon as the service was completed all ropes were removed and the whole group made its way back to the village to sit down and have a long talk about the deceased. The time for suicide was now past.

However, without question, the most impressive funeral I ever saw occurred one day in 1950. My national assistant, Saelo, and I were working on his house. Saelo had passed through very painful times during the Japanese occupation of his home village on Mussau Island which lay approximately 400 kilometres north of Rabaul. He had been severely tortured. The house we were working on became the first house for a national worker in the Highlands of New Guinea constructed of sawn timber and with weatherboard.

As we worked, a large group of village men appeared from the bush area carrying the body of an elderly man on a stretcher. It became immediately obvious, however, that this was no ordinary man. This body had been decorated in a manner we had never seen before. Propped up into a sitting position on the stretcher, the old man was painted with all the popular colours—white, red, blue and yellow—and then decorated with strings of beads, and strings of shells, including the most expensive and most sought-after kina shells (the golden-lip mother of pearl). On his head were highly valued bird-of-paradise feathers. In the culture of that area nothing was missing that could reinforce this man's standing and importance.

As we watched, a voice came from behind me. "Sir," the voice said, "we want you to come and take the service for this man. He is the most important father of all of us. He has just died and we are going to bury him now." Accepting the invitation, I raced up to the house to collect my Bible. My wife met me and suggested we have a short prayer asking God to give me the right words for such an important occasion.

Joining the group I learned that this old man was considered the most important person in the whole of the Yani district, and that people would come from every corner of the valley to attend his funeral. We walked along the valley trails

for more than an hour till we reached the selected spot for the grave. Our group now numbered eighteen persons.

Most of us sat down just a few feet from the body which remained on the stretcher. From all directions we could hear voices of people making their way to the graveside. The first group to approach came down the same track we had used. In their hands were balls of grey mud. From our group one woman, whom I will call the hostess, arose and made her way toward the advancing group. Then they began that piercing wail one associates with a heathen village. Unless heard, one can not imagine how heart-rending the wailing can be. It swells with notes of sheer desperation and hopelessness, and then ascends into screams of utter finality. The dejection that is felt

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almost tears one's heart out. In this instance the wailing became louder and louder as the advancing group smeared the grey mud over their bodies. Then they began to fling themselves violently onto the ground. This was done with such severity that I expected every rib in their bodies to be broken. They would rise to full height only to throw themselves again onto the ground; each fall seemed to be harder and more damaging than the previous fall. The sound level increased when our waiting group responded to each wail of the advancing group with its own loud wailing.

Of all present only the hostess did not wail. She made her way to each advancing group and tried to lead them by the hand to the graveside. The advancing groups made all the signs of refusing to come, but little by little they came till finally they sat with us. Slowly the wailing died down and those making up the augmented group began to talk together. Meanwhile another group would advance from different direction. Again the mud they brought was smeared over their bodies and they began to fling themselves down and wail while the hostess brought them slowly to the waiting group. Once again the wailing gradually subsided and merged into conversation. We sat there hour after hour as more and more groups came and the cycle of wailing rose and fell.

Meanwhile a group of men began to dig the grave. It was a far different grave from others I had seen. The hole was only about a meter and a half in length, and less than a meter wide. Its base was sloping so that at one end it was about a meter deep while at the lower end it was about one and a half meters deep with a pronounced hole at the lowest point. Next stakes were driven into the floor near each corner, and cut short so that the two at the higher end almost reached ground-level, but at the lower end the stakes were well below ground-level.

The old man's war shield was now brought and cut short so that it could be placed on the four stakes to form a kind of sloping bed for his body. By now it was late afternoon. All mourners having arrived, the wailing began again in real earnest as the old man's body was carried across and placed on the short sloping bed, his knees bent up near his face, and his face about ground level. At this point all present stood to listen to the gospel promises. They were quiet and respectful as I shared the gospel with them. I felt sure that the Holy Spirit did a good work that day.

Wailing began again as man after man came to the grave and tore their most treasured possessions from their necks. Strings of colourful beads fell into the grave, Talibum shells, and even the most precious of all, the kina shells, were smashed by a blow of a man's axe and dropped into the grave. Bird-of-paradise plumes also went in. At that time if a man was fortunate enough to find work, he would willingly work for a whole month just to get one kina shell. Now they were smashing them as a sign of the great loss the valley had sustained. (I did notice afterwards some of the men sneakily scooped out the larger pieces of Kina shell, and hid them in their *billums* or shoulder bags.)

Several men had gone to collect thatching grass and bush vines to be used as string. Others brought flexible sticks which were pushed into the ground around the grave, then bent over to form a dome-like shape, something similar to an igloo. Grass was tied to these to form a thatch roof. But in the centre, a length of bamboo about a meter in length was tied.

The bamboo already had all the segments knocked out so that it now made a length of pipe.

I asked, "What is the bamboo for?"

"To let the stink out" was the reply. (It was like a chimney)

Next I asked, "What is the hole at the bottom of the grave intended for?"

"That is to collect the greases as his body breaks down."

But the grave was not completed yet. A hole about 30 cm x 40 cm was cut in the thatching at the foot end of the grave. Then a sliding door was arranged across that hole. Again I asked, "What is that for?" and was told that when a member of the extended family came along they could slide the door open to look at the old man and mourn his passing, then close the door again.

While all this was going on, a flower garden, outlined with small stones, was planted all around the grave. At the front where the 'peep-hole' was located a path was also outlined in stones leading up to the small door. By this time the whole scene looked quite attractive in a miniature way.

"So, you will leave him just like that?" I asked.

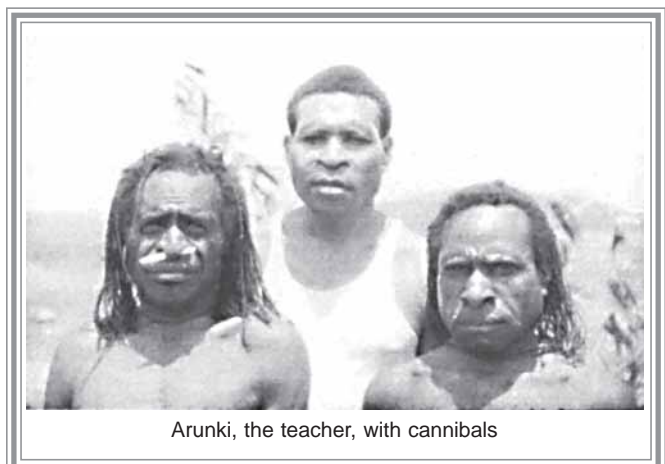
"Yes, he will stay like that till his body begins to break down badly. We then cover him with dirt, and he will remain like that for several months."

"What then?" I asked.

"We leave him buried like that till only bones are left. Then we dig up his bones and distribute them to members of his family. They will keep the bone safe and dry in their houses. His bones are most valuable because if any member of the family becomes sick we bury the bone for a short time outside the house. This keeps the evil spirits from getting into the house. Or if the gardens are not doing well we can bury his bone there for a short time, and this keeps the evil spirits from spoiling the garden."

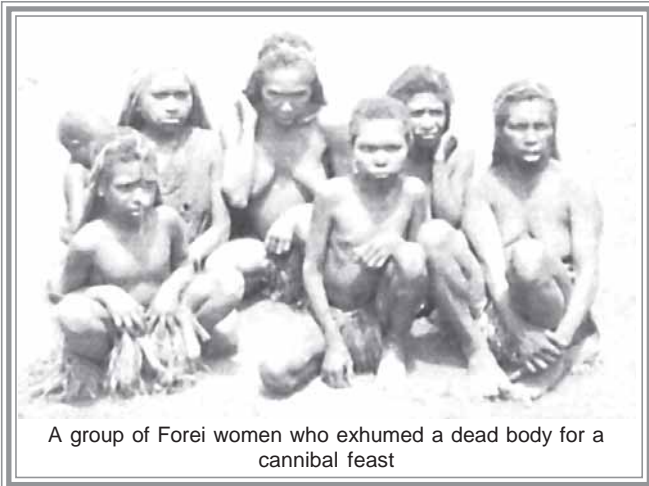
It is unlikely that there will be another man of such importance again in that valley, so such a funeral will probably not be repeated. With the changing of culture in PNG I feel confident that no other European has ever seen, or ever will likely see, such an elaborate funeral in that part of the country. Because many of the inhabitants of the Yani Valley are still not Christian I suspect that some of the bones of that old man are still treasured in selected homes.

It is my privilege to report on the first grave ever among the cannibal people of the Forei district in southern parts of the Eastern Highlands. The story began when a couple of men from that distant district arrived at the Adventist Upper Ramu Mission Station in Kainantu and asked Pastor Syd Stocken if the mission could supply their village with a person to run a



Arunki, the teacher, with cannibals





A group of Forei women who exhumed a dead body for a cannibal feast

school for their children. Syd asked Arunki, only a third grade student himself in the Kainantu School, if he would accept the job and he volunteered to do his best. He was supplied with a number of items, including a picture roll or two and marched off with the men.

He reported to me at a later date that the first time he opened the picture roll something unexpected happened. One of the men grabbed the roll, slipped the string over his neck and began a jig around the village much to the merriment of the rest of the people. In talking with Arunki I learned something not too widely known, namely that very primitive people do not automatically register a picture for what it is. They do not see a two-dimensional splash of colour as representing a three-dimensional reality. Our eyes have been trained from babyhood to read a two-dimensional scene as if it were in three dimensions. All that the village man saw was something more colourful than anything he had worn at previous dances.

Arunki's work resulted in a number of persons accepting Christ as their Saviour. One of his students, a lad of about 14 years who had become a Christian, took sick and died. Up till this time every person who died had been eaten. That was their established custom. They knew no other way. They wanted no other way. So the whole village began to prepare to do the same this time. Like Paul and Barnabas in the book of Acts, Arunki ran among the people telling them that they could not do this. The lad must be buried. The village people thought this was a preposterous idea, and would not listen. Arunki argued and argued for hours. Finally he used an argument that made them listen. He said,

"I have been telling you ever since I came here that Jesus is coming soon. Right?"

They agreed, "Yes, but what has that to do with us?"

"I also told you that when Jesus comes He will raise His own to life again."

"Yes, we all know that."

"Well, this boy was a Christian. If you eat him what kind of a feeling will you get in your belly when he rises to life again?"

*We stand amazed  
at the changes the  
gospel can, and  
does make, in the  
lives of willing  
human beings.  
To God be glory  
and praise*

That idea was food for thought and while not all agreed, it was finally decided to try Arunki's method. But now, being late in the day, the grave was to be dug on the morrow.

Among those who opposed the new plan was the lad's own mother. Indeed, during the night she came along and carved a large thigh steak, cooked it and ate it. Now it is essential that the reader, understand another factor regarding what is commonly called cannibalism. I don't speak for other areas where cannibalism is practiced, but in the Forei district persons were not eaten for the food they provided! Rather, *their form of cannibalism only had to do with love.*

In the thinking of the Forei people the most despicable thing one could do to a loved one was to cast him or her out onto or into the ground. Things are only thrown out or buried when you never want to see them again. For example, that is the way one treats a bowel movement. But one never treats a loved one in that manner. Rather, *the most loving thing one can do is by making that person part of your own life so the deceased now lives life again within you. No other action can be more loving than to give the deceased life again within one's self.* That was why the mother carved and ate the leg steak. As she said, "I have done the best I can for him." In the morning the lad's body was buried under the direction of Arunki.

I should mention that in the Forei valley there is one other reason for cannibalism. If in a fight between tribes a man is killed, the opposing tribe do their best to obtain the body and eat it, because in so doing they transfer power from his tribe to their own. Cannibalism may also be therefore a kind of 'power politics transfer'.

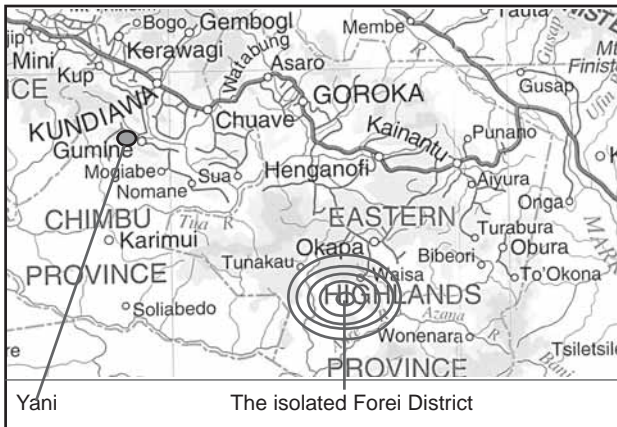
One day in mid-1955 Arunki was roused by much shouting and men running through the village. He was sure it must be a tribal fight and he rushed out hoping to stop it. Instead he stopped an arrow in his thigh. It transpired that the cause of the shouting was simply the arrival of a strange pig into the village and everyone was out to get it. Arunki's arrow-pierced leg became so infected he had to go into hospital. This was unfortunate because the first Seventh-day Adventist Camp for the Forei district was scheduled to commence 29 September, and Arunki was still in hospital.

I had the responsibility of running the camp. Pastor Len Bamard was in the area so I invited him to accompany me. About 400 persons experienced this totally new idea of a Camp meeting. Many had walked for long distances to be present. Thursday and Friday morning we conducted meetings for them. But by common consent Friday afternoon was kept free of meetings, and the time set

aside for essential tasks such as the preparation of food. Len and I decided that we would like to use the opportunity to see, and maybe photograph, a grave we had heard about. The 'road' to Arunki's village had by this time been pushed out further so, taking someone who claimed he knew the language of the people we intended to visit, we set out. After some dramatic experiences we were taken to the area where the grave was located. It was in a sacred place, like the Sacred Groves of

Old Testament times, with special features for ancestor worship. For example, a tree with many small branches had been cut down and laid between stones. The many small branches had been cut off to about 200 mm in length. On these pegs were placed the skulls of the ancestors, ready to receive worship. In

the midst of this sacred grove was the grave. The first and only grave in the whole area. The pigs had broken the fence down, but otherwise the body had not been disturbed. We photographed the grave and then made our way back to the camp.



Yani The isolated Forei District  
 Excerpt from Papua New Guinea c. South Pacific Maps Pty Ltd 2004. Licensed by Hema Maps Pty Ltd. Used by permission.

In December 1980 our family worshipped for the last time in the church in Lae. During the course of that day I met Dr Joel Akia, a national Seventh-day Adventist doctor. In talking with him I was amazed to learn that his home was in one of the villages which had participated in that inaugural 1955 Camp Meeting and as a child of about three years he had been present. Furthermore, it is almost certain that as a child he would have been given small portions of human flesh to eat (the locals tell me that human flesh is much sweeter to eat than pig). Now, 25 years on, that same lad stood before me as a fully qualified medical doctor, who had worked at the Sopas Adventist Hospital in the Highlands of PNG. We stand amazed at the changes the gospel can, and does make, in the lives of willing human beings. To God be glory and praise.

## Blessings From Heaven— a story of God’s miraculous intervention

**URSULA HEDGES**



*Ursula Hedges (nee Wood-Stotesbury) and her husband Allan began their mission service at Kabiufa in 1961. They then went to Panim, (1962-66), where they established a new school. Allan was principal of Fulton College from 1986-89. At that time Ursula was HOD of the English Department and she also became Head of Primary Teacher Training in 1989. In later years she was the Women’s Ministries Director for the NSW Conference. They had 3 children, Kenneth, Dwayne & Linelle. Sadly Ursula passed away on 10 September 2005. Her life was an inspiration to all as she battled with ill health. Her faith in her Saviour was strong.*

For weeks there had been no rain. It was not just that the crop of sweet potato was lost but the water tanks at the new Panim School in New Guinea were practically dry. The students had been trying to wash in a trickle of muddy water which was usually a clean and deep creek.

The situation was hopeless unless God would work a miracle and send rain that night. So the staff and students met for a special prayer meeting fully believing that because this was the Lord’s school, He would want it to stay open.

The prayers were fervent and faith-filled and afterwards as Allan Hedges, the principal, walked up the hill to the small fibro building that was his home, his heart was full of anticipation. He was tired from a day of teaching in a temporary thatch classroom with logs from the bush as seats for the students, and then he had worked another four hours with some students cutting trees and pulling out their roots with a chain attached to the tractor to clear land for permanent buildings. He was soon asleep from exhaustion.

When he awoke the next morning he remembered the prayer meeting so he hurried outside only to see that the ground was still dust right up to his front door. His disappointment was almost a physical experience. As he stood there in the bright sunshine, he picked up a stick and started hitting the rungs on the 1000 gallon water tank by his house as he had done habitually for weeks.

Yesterday there had been just three rungs of water in the tank and students had been allowed to fill containers with water for drinking. His brain told him that there was probably one to maybe two rungs of water left. However, he started as usual at the bottom rung. As he progressed up the tank he was astounded to find three rungs full, then four, then more and more. He realised that the tank was just about full.

He was so excited that he rushed back into his tiny house to share the good news with his wife. Their excitement just exploded in their hearts. God had performed a miracle. This was an even greater happening than they had expected because that tank was full without any rain falling.

The staff and students at Panim School in 1962 were awed that the great God of heaven had given them a sign of his love and care. This was a time of thanksgiving.

That day the students came to Mr Hedges and said, “Sir, we know there is a great shortage of food, but if you can give two cups of dry rice for each of us every day we will stay and the school can keep running.”

That was what happened until rain came and the school gardens began to produce food. There were many lessons taught in the classrooms that year, but none so well remembered as the one of God’s provision of water for His children.

# Saved from a Spear for Service

## —my story in Papua New Guinea



LUI OLI



*Lui Oli lived in the small coastal village of Irupara.*

*His life was guided by the Holy Spirit from a very early age and he became interested in the truths of the Second Coming when he heard them.*

*He came in contact with many expatriate workers and was obviously influenced by them, particularly Pastor Robert Frame.*

*He worked in many places as a teacher, missionary and brought many people to Christ -- particularly his family.*

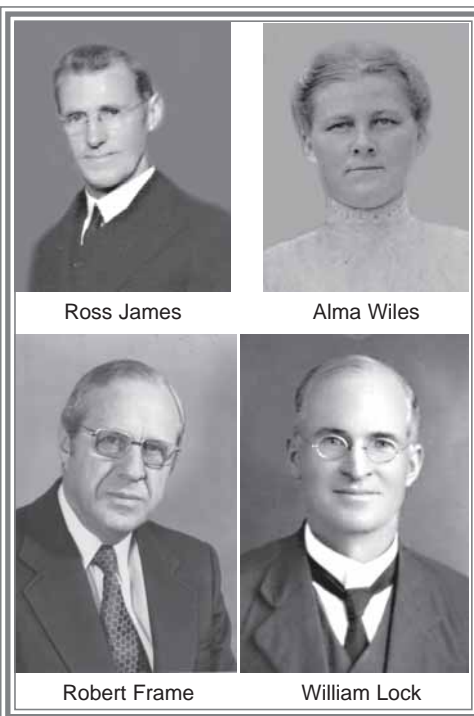
*He faithfully fulfilled whatever task he was asked to do whether in the field or in administration.*

*He and his wife Esther live in retirement in Irupara village but he still does what he can to further the work of the gospel.*

One day when I was about two years old, my parents took me on a trip to get food. We used the barter system of exchanging goods which meant that we first of all had to catch some fish<sup>1</sup> so we could exchange them for some vegetables<sup>2</sup>. My father told me that we had stopped for the night along the coast near the village of Kapakapa, situated 55 kilometres south-east of Port Moresby. In those days all activities had to be finished before sunset, and then everyone would retire for the night. We slept on the beach with the canoe anchored about twenty metres from the shore. At sometime during the night I suddenly rolled away from where I was sleeping next to my mother and walked into the cold water. I started making a noise with my arms beating the side of the canoe. My father heard the noise and picked up his spear thinking he would make a good catch for the night. Then a thought came into his mind and he turned to see that I was not sleeping beside my mother. He quickly jumped into the sea and rescued me. That experience showed me that God had a plan for my life and that was why the Holy Spirit had spoken to my father to save me.

I was born in 1923, into a family of three girls and six boys. My father's name was Oli Veleke, and my mother's name was Manu Raka. We lived in Irupara, a coastal village, which was about one hundred and twelve kilometres south-east of Port Moresby, now the capital city of Papua New Guinea. This village is Hula speaking and we believe our ancestors may have settled there after travelling from the East. My parents were not church-goers,<sup>3</sup> and I grew up in that type of environment.

When I was eleven years old I first heard of the Bible truth from a missionary called Galama Pau with his wife Kila Kapa who were visiting my village and talking about Jesus Christ and His coming again. I was interested in the truth and wanted to learn more, so I followed them to a mission school at Pelagai, another 70 kilometres on from Irupara. In the next two years I completed all classes up to grade three. Mr Kairi Kekeao was the teacher and missionary in that area. Mr J Ross James



Ross James

Alma Wiles

Robert Frame

William Lock

and Mrs Alma Wiles were caretakers of the small mission station. The next two years I completed grades four and five at the Mirigeda Training School for teachers and missionaries, about thirty kilometres inland from Port Moresby where Mr Ken Gray and Mr Stan Pennington were the teachers. Mr Robert Frame was the treasurer and I was his houseboy. On 15 November 1938, when I was fifteen years old, I was baptised by Pastor William Lock. That was the end of my school education as I didn't have the opportunity of attending high school or college.

Although the Second World War had begun in Europe in 1939, it wasn't until Japan entered the War on 7 December 1941 that the government decided to send all Europeans, whether missionaries or non-missionaries, back to their homelands. Among the missionaries who were sent back to Australia were Robert Frame, Eric Boehm and Stanley and Mabel Sheppard with one child, aboriginals from North Queensland.<sup>4</sup> While all these people were waiting at Ela Beach, (the mission headquarters in Port Moresby), to board the *Diari*, the mission boat that would take them to Australia, the first bomb was



Minnie and Willie Sheppard

dropped on Port Moresby by a Japanese warplane. As soon as it was safe the missionaries departed for Australia and I left for the mission station at Mirigeda which was looked after by Pastor Ngave (Nave) and Pastor Ope Loma.

In the middle of 1940 I had married Kila Iao Kalawa, a local girl, and we returned to my birthplace of Irupara. Sometime later the army personnel came from Port Moresby to the village looking for carriers. I was chosen, along with other married men and a lot of young boys. After a couple of months, we went to the Army Headquarters at Konedobu in Port Moresby where the person in charge divided the boys into two groups. One group would go to war to be carriers and the other group would stay at the headquarters. I think it was God's plan for me to stay at there as I was given the task of caring for the high-ranking officers (Generals, and Brigadiers down to Lieutenants). While staying there an Australian navy boat came looking for young sailors. Here was my chance to be involved in the war so I boarded the *Suva*, which was carrying soldiers, but a phone call from Lieutenant Elliot told me to get off the boat. I was disappointed but I know now that God didn't want me to die because he had some bigger work for me in the future. All during the war I worked at the headquarters for the officers.

In 1944 when the missionaries started returning to Papua, Pastor Charles Mitchell and Pastor Alex Campbell arrived. They went straight to the army headquarters and asked Mr Fayshon, the army commander, if there were any Seventh-day Adventist believers working there. The commander told the assembled workers that all Seventh-day Adventists were to be discharged. Kila Kai<sup>5</sup> and I stepped forward and were allowed to go with the missionaries.

Soon after this Pastor Mitchell, Pastor Campbell and I went to Pelagai. Pastor Campbell and I stayed in Pelagai while Pastor Mitchell went on to Korela. While working there at Pelagai my wife of three years died from malaria and pneumonia. Not long after that Pastor Campbell was called to the Highlands and I stayed to work in Pelagai.

In September 1944 I returned to my village of Irupara as an experienced teacher and missionary. I visited both the older people and the younger people who had not heard about Christ's second coming and shared Bible stories with them. Some London Missionary Society (LMS) students became interested in my teaching but when their teacher, Mr Short, heard about it he told me to remove my house and go to some other place. In the discussion that followed I told him that his teachings, particularly about the Sabbath and the Second Coming, had blinded a lot of people and that I had come to open their eyes to what the Holy Bible said.

In 1946 I was sent to work at Gaivakala (Aroma district) as a missionary-teacher and for the next eight years I moved to a different village each year. First it was back to Pelagai to be their missionary and teacher. In 1947 Pastor Martin Pascoe conducted my wedding ceremony at the Korela Church when I married Esther Pala Kila, a woman from my own village.

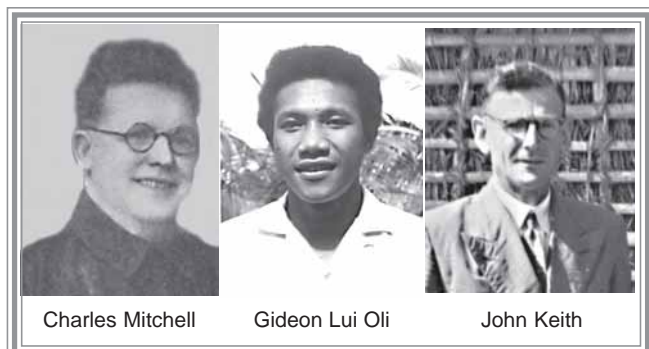
The next year at Madana I helped Pastor Eric Boehm, and also became a father for the first time. My wife had a baby boy whom we called Walter Lui Oli after Mrs Boehm's father, Walter.

The next year I returned to Pelagai to do the same missionary work. I was mostly reaching out to those with new interests in spiritual matters and I encouraged them in their walk with Christ.

In 1950 I returned to my home village of Irupara where I carried out the same work as I had been doing at Pelagai and Madana. While carrying out visitation in the homes my family members, five brothers, three sisters and my parents learnt of the truth. Another missionary, Pastor Tauku, came to take my place at the end of the year. He was from the Solomon Islands, although he married a woman from Irupara village and lived out his life as a Papuan

In 1951 I was asked to serve in Maopa, one of the villages along the Aroma coast, not far from Pelagai and next to Gaivakala. In this village I carried out house visitation, shared the 'Good News,' and helped the members in any way I could. When we were about to build a church, the LMS members didn't approve, and took us to court because they weren't happy to have any other religion in their village. At the court hearing they were told that the ground that had been prepared for the church was owned by a Seventh-day Adventist believer. The court then gave us the right to build a church there. Sometime later, on 20 July, I became a proud father again to my second baby boy, whom we named Gideon Lui Oli.

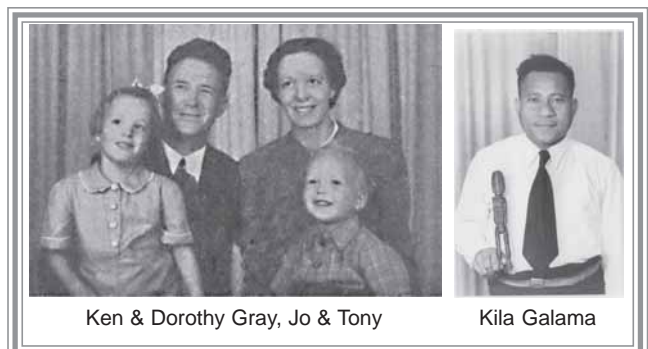
In 1952 I was asked to return to Korela to do more visitation, teaching and sharing the gospel. This time I was under the supervision of Pastor Martin Pascoe. Our job was to visit coastal villages sharing the wonderful story of salvation



Charles Mitchell

Gideon Lui Oli

John Keith



Ken & Dorothy Gray, Jo & Tony

Kila Galama



Edna & Lester Lock and their children

and the return of Jesus, and helping the people where we could.

The call to move again in 1953 was for us to go to the Highlands and work at the newly established mission school at Kabiufa, near Goroka. There I did some teaching at the school and some missionary work, like going to branch Sabbath Schools and preaching services in other places. I was there under the care of two experienced missionaries, Pastor Ken Gray and Mr. Stan Gillis. I spent about four years up in the Highlands. It was while I was there in 1956 that I was ordained as a gospel minister at the Coral Sea Union Mission Training School at Kabiufa by Pastor John Keith, the president of that Union Mission.

Daru, in Western Province, was my next call. So in 1957 I went to do more teaching and missionary work as well as administration as the secretary-treasurer, under the leadership of Pastor Kila Galama, the Western Papuan Mission president. Our work there involved a lot of visitation and teaching the gospel in the villages on the banks of the south Fly River. The place was all covered with water and there were no roads, so people used canoes to travel here and there. We used a smaller boat named *Diari 11*. The *Diari* was at Korela on the opposite side of Port Moresby. In the same year, on 23 April, I again became a proud father of another baby boy whom we called Joel Lui Oli.

In 1961 I was called to Karokaro. During that time Pastor Elwyn Martin was the missionary and he supervised my work. I remember taking a test in Port Moresby that lasted for about one month. At the end I was issued with a licence to captain small vessels (like *Diari 11*) along the coast from Abau in the Central Province to Daru in the Western Province.

In the middle of 1962 Pastor Elwyn Martin returned to Australia and in his place came Pastor John Richardson who helped supervise my work. Almost a year later, on 16 May, once more I was a proud dad on the birth of a baby boy, our fourth son, Iga Lui Oli.

In 1964 we moved the mission station from Karokaro to Kikori in the Gulf Province. There we built a new school and a new mission office. The mission gave us another boat to use called the *Uraheni*. We used the new vessel to make our visits to people. We would have to travel out of the mouth of one river and then in another river before travelling upstream doing more visits mainly at riverbank villages. During one of these visits in January 1965 I went upstream to Kibeni village. Because I had only sons I decided to adopt a baby girl from that place. We named her Alma Lui Oli.

In 1967 a call came for me to go to Port Moresby in the Central Papuan Mission where I was to be the assistant mission



The *Uraheni* and the *Light*

president working with Pastor Ernest Lemke, the mission president. Later on when he left and Pastor Lester Lock came and took his place, I still continued on in my position. And it was the same when Pastor John Richardson followed Pastor Lester Lock. After Pastor Richardson left in 1973 I became the mission president and was given the independence to look after the mission. I was also elected a member of the Australasian Division Executive Committee for five years (one term). After the five years I went down to Sydney and was surprised that I had been re-elected for a second term on the committee.

It was during this time that I recall an interesting incident. I was called to attend a camp meeting at a village called Uaholo. About three hundred people turned up for the meetings. By the time camp meeting ended we baptised seven people. The total church offering collected was K300. As I was leaving I was unaware that the whole area had flooded and I needed to use the fast-rising Kemp Welsh River for transport but it was now rising quickly. After hurriedly making a raft of banana suckers, we left on the raft with some food and the K300. Coming down the river we experienced countless overturns but we did not lose any thing. God was in charge. Then we came across a big whirlpool which took the raft and turned it upside down. The raft and I parted and I was sucked under by the tremendous force of the whirlpool. I had no way of coming out of it on my own. I was at the mercy of the whirlpool. I began to think quickly, as I was now short of breath. My thoughts fixed on Jesus, and in my last moments I offered this prayer, "Father, if you still want me to serve you then save me, but if not then take my life." Immediately, when I had finished praying, my feet stepped on some rocks which supported my weight and allowed me to force my body upwards and out of the clutches of the whirlpool. God had answered my prayer.

During the next four years we built a couple of churches in Port Moresby; at Korobosea, Hohola, Sabama and the most surprising one, June Valley, which was built without any support – just by faith. While building this church a letter was posted to the mission president (me). It had come from the General Conference. They were sending some money and telling me how I should use the money, so I used it to complete the building of the June Valley church.

In 1977 I was called to be the President of the Madang Manus Mission. I attended camp meetings and made visitation in these two areas even though the sea was rough and it was often too windy. I used to travel in a big boat, one similar to the *Uraheni*, but this one was called *Light*. It was one of the 45-footers owned and operated by the Adventist Mission in the waters around Papua New Guinea.

In the year 1980 I retired from paid missionary work and returned to my village of Irupara. While in my retirement I started to do more missionary work. In 1982 I visited a few families in Hula, a huge LMS dominated area, but I still had a married couple, Nuga Tom and Kila N Tom ask to be baptised. I started to work with these two people who come from that area and we decided to build a church. As the roofing iron was being put up a huge village crowd tried to stop the work so we decided not to go on with it. I was told to return to my village. Nuga Tom went to court with the village elders over the problem. Eventually he won the court case and he called for me to come so we could continue with, and complete, the church building. I continued visitation in the district and there are about fifty new interested people

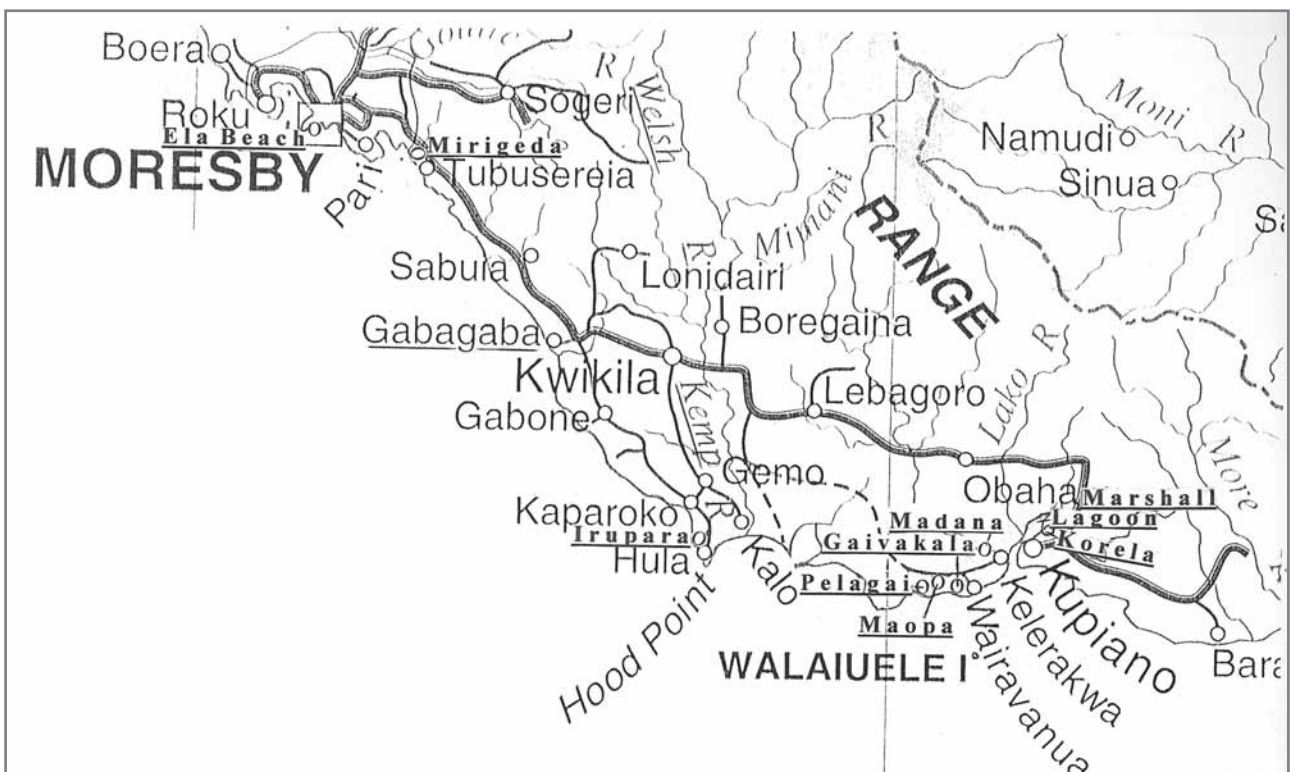
believing in the Bible messages I shared with them. And the good news is that the company has become an organised church since 15 May 2004.

As I look back over the years I know that it was God's will that my life was spared as a small boy, and also at other times when I was a man, and I give Him all the praise and glory for such wonderful love. I also am humbled and grateful for the Lord's leading in my life. I want to continue to work for Him, in whatever capacity, as long as I have the health and strength.

**“Father, if you still want me to serve you then save me, but if not then take my life”**

**References:**

- <sup>1</sup> The string from which native fish nets were made was from the bark of a tree. It was stripped and dried for 7-14 days. This was then further stripped down to long fine threads. Two of these threads were then rolled together on the thigh by hand to make one long strong thread which was used for weaving the net. The net was limited to catching shore fish such as barracuda, garfish, travely, and long tom. If lucky, mackerel and parrot fish were also caught.
- <sup>2</sup> Available vegetables would, at certain times, have included yams, tapioca, bananas, sugar cane, and sweet potatoes.
- <sup>3</sup> Although my parents were not commandment keepers, they surprised me by observing one day each week as their rest day which they named 'Puka Omana.'
- <sup>4</sup> The names of all missionaries returning to Australia on the *Diari* are as follows: George Engelbrecht, Charles Mitchell, Robert Frame, Cyril Pascoe, Thomas Judd, Ward Nolan, Ken Gray, Fred Burke (a friend), Lester Lock, and Stanley & Mabel Sheppard & child. Lester Lock, *Locks That Opened Doors*, Signs Publishing Co, Vic, Australia, March 2000.
- <sup>5</sup> Kila Kai came from Irupara Village and later became a minister.



Locations in the south & east of mainland Papua New Guinea. Excerpt from Papua New Guinea c. South Pacific Maps Pty Ltd, 2004. Licensed by Hema Maps Pty Ltd. Used by permission.

# A Missionary Nurse in Papua New Guinea

## —hundreds of babies delivered safely



JOYCE PASCOE



*Born in Crookwell District of NSW in 1917, Joyce Pascoe (nee Willis), attended Crookwell Public School, and later was home schooled by a governess.*

*In the mid - 1930s she attended AMC (now Avondale College), and then trained as a nurse at Goulburn Base Hospital.*

*On 24.3.41 she married Martin Pascoe, a 1936 Ministerial graduate who was a literature evangelist in the Goulburn area. They moved to Broken Hill, then to Lithgow where Martin pastored the church. In 1946 Joyce, with her children Doreen, Wilfred & Ruth, joined Martin in Port Moresby, PNG. They lived in a number of places with Joyce caring for the children's needs. At Belepa she also operated a small clinic. Later, Merlene and David (deceased) were born.*

*In 1959 while at Rakamunda in the Enga Province, Joyce commenced a 14 year period of infant and maternal welfare work for the local people. Of the 1642 babies delivered, not one mother was lost. At the end of December, 1973, Joyce and Martin returned to Australia where they pastored churches in Queensland until they retired in 1982. From 1990 onwards they made their home in Cooranbong, NSW, and became excellent gardeners. Martin passed to his rest on 19 April, 2004, and Joyce continues to live a busy, faith-filled life.*

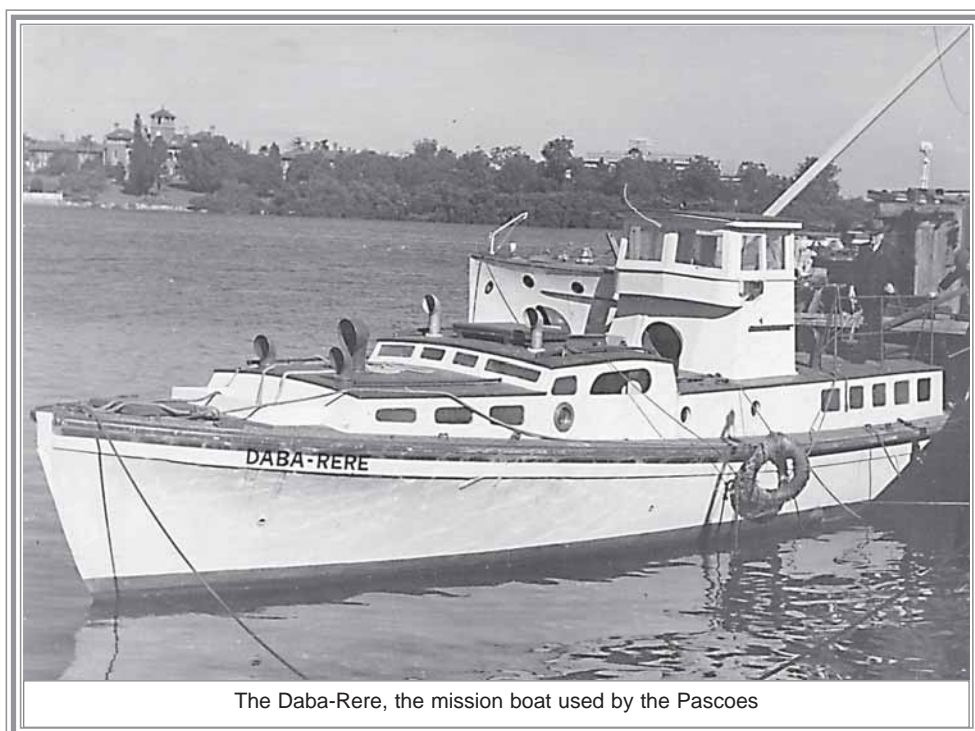
Towards the end of the Second World War, while we were working in Broken Hill, we were called to work in the Territory of Papua and New Guinea. This opportunity led to nearly thirty years of helping to meet some of the spiritual, educational and medical needs of the people of the Papuan Coast, and of the Western and the Eastern Highlands of New Guinea.

In April 1946, I arrived in Port Moresby by steamer, with three little children, to join my husband, Martin. We were delayed there for weeks for transport from Port Moresby to the Belepa Mission station, some two hundred and ninety kilometres away, near the mouth of the Vailala River, just a few kilometres east of the Papuan Delta. Here we were to begin our work of helping the people of the surrounding villages.

In April 1947 Pastor and Mrs Les Webster arrived to reopen the medical work at Orokololo which had been closed by the war. At Belepa we had our clinic. A new building was erected there which not only gave us better facilities for treating those who came with malaria, yaws, ulcers, sores, etc, but also provided needed help for babies. A few babies were born there too.

Early in 1949 we were given our first mission boat, the *Daba-Rere*, and with it the task of setting up a new station in the delta area at a location known as Baimuru. It was at the head of Romilly Sound close to a number of large villages. Crocodiles were also in abundance in this area. It wasn't long before we were busy with the work of the clinic. National workers gave basic medical help to the folk they met but passed on to us the more difficult cases.

Twelve months later we were called to the Korela-Mandana district situated approximately one hundred and fifty kilometres south-east of Port Moresby, where we spent the next four years. This area was more heavily populated and the people were different from the ones we had previously worked with. We were working with Alma Wiles, who not only helped out in the school but also carried on an active medical work. She paid particular attention to the medical and the spiritual needs of the girls and the women. We worked together for several years and enjoyed associating with her until she returned to Australia to care for her aged parents.



The Daba-Rere, the mission boat used by the Pascoes

In April 1953 Martin was called as the president of the newly-organised Western Papuan Mission and we served there for six years. For awhile we again lived at Baimuru and then returned to the Vailala River area, where we established new district headquarters at Karokaro, located an hours walk from Belepa. John and Melva Lee and later Alf and Betty Chapman were our nearest neighbours.

On one occasion at Karokaro, while walking with my children near the river, I heard considerable wailing coming from a nearby village. On meeting a man from the village I enquired about the source of distress. "Oh," he said, "a little boy is very sick."

"Well," I responded, "Please tell them to bring him over to our clinic right away, and I will give him some medicine." Unfortunately they didn't bring him that day but during the night the wailing grew louder. The next morning I asked a man from the village, "How is Keru today? No one brought him here for medicine."

He replied, "Clos tu 'e dai. Liklik laif tasol 'e stap long im."

Keru, the sick child, was about four years old and lived with his aunt who had no children of her own. His mother had a large family and had given Keru into the care of his aunt. I now knew that if he was still alive he wouldn't be brought to the clinic so I decided to go quickly over to the village. On the way I saw many people making their way there too. They were carrying all kinds of food — bananas, taro, sweet potatoes and fowl. Uncooperative pigs were being dragged along squealing loudly. Everything would be used for a feast for the dead. Even though the house was crowded with mourners I asked others to make room for me to go inside. Keru indeed, was very sick with meningitis. Losing no time I appealed for helpers to carry the boy to the clinic and soon he was on his way there. There were some present who were not pleased because their hope for a big feast had been spoiled.

Regular treatment enabled Keru to improve though he couldn't walk for some time. His aunty had to carry him wherever he went. This was difficult for her because he was so heavy. Actually he had to be taught to walk again just as one would teach a baby its first steps. One morning I thought he was late in coming over for his medicine, but I was cheered to see him walking by himself down the track from the village, using only a stick for support.

He eventually recovered fully and when he was old enough enrolled at the mission school. Later on he attended the Coral Sea Union Mission College (Kabiufa), and after training as a teacher entered into mission service. He faithfully carried out his work for many years, and only recently passed to his rest. I

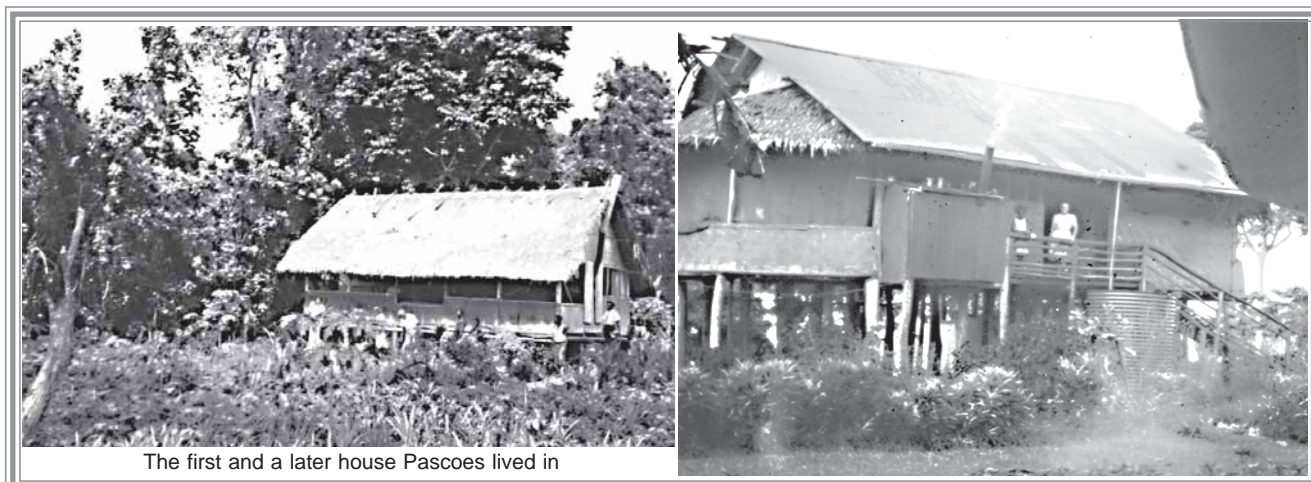
am thankful to God for his life because his witness in education has touched the lives of many young people with the hope of salvation.

Early in 1959 we left the Papuan Coast to care for the district work in the Wabag area of the Western Highlands just at the time plans were being made for the commencement of a mission hospital of one hundred beds. The new facility, Sopas Hospital, was to be located eight kilometres west of the town of Wabag. We lived at Rakamanda on the eastern side of Wabag. This was the first mission station in the area and was begun by Pastor Frank Maberly who was followed by the Greives who later transferred to Tari. Mrs Ora Greive was a very active nurse and carried out a significant amount of maternity work as well as caring for the regular clinic.

When we arrived at Rakamanda we soon discovered there was a need for a suitable building catering for both maternity and clinic services. In the Highlands it is impractical to have a nurse walk long distances to help maternity cases in the villages. With relatives willing to carry patients to the clinic we knew this was the method to follow. With a delivery unit, plus a local style building where mothers-in-waiting could rest for awhile if needed, work really got busy with more than five hundred babies being born there in almost seven years.

With some nursing experience obtained in Australia, and registration as a European Medical Assistant in Papua New Guinea, I had sufficient authority to carry on all the medical work that I was likely to encounter. Government doctors visited occasionally, and there were free government medical supplies, so I could provide help in maternal and infant welfare activities. When Sopas Hospital got underway the staff were able to care for the many cases in their area, which lightened my load.

The following incidents illustrate the challenges we faced in our work. One Friday a woman who had been in labour for several days managed to walk over the mountain area and reach our clinic. I stayed with her all night but she still did not deliver her baby. Following lunch on Sabbath I realised something must be done to help this woman. As we were without transport at the time to seek further trained help, I decided to rupture the membrane for she was fully dilated. That act brought results. Within seconds out popped a baby boy followed by his twin brother. Both mother and father were grateful for the safe birth of their boys who could have died if they had not sought help.



The first and a later house Pascoes lived in



We named the twins Paul and Silas and their story does not end here. In the year 2002 our daughter Ruth and her husband Dennis Tame, who is the secretary of the Papua New Guinea Union Mission (PNGUM), were visiting one of the churches in Lae. There they chanced to meet some folk from the Wabag area. When Ruth was introduced to them as our daughter they grew excited. One of them said to her, "Your mother delivered my twin brother and me. I am Paul and my brother is Silas." Now nearly forty years of age, Paul is a city councillor in Lae where the PNGUM headquarters is located.

Another time a mother came to me for prenatal care because the doctor was unable to locate the position of her baby. She told the doctor, "My Maram is able to help me." I warned her husband that he must bring her along to our clinic immediately she began labour pains, and that we might still have to take her to Sopas Hospital.

One morning about 5 o'clock there was a knock at the door. On opening it the lady's husband blurted out, "Quick! Meri bilong me clos tu nau. Im e redi long kari im pikinini."

"When did she start?" I quickly asked.

"Now tasol," he replied with a look of anguish on his face. Hurrying to the clinic I found that her membranes had ruptured but no head was present not even the buttocks. The baby lay in a transverse position and couldn't be delivered that way. So I found the nearest part presenting, pushed the heap up and brought it down as a breach presentation. Fortunately all went well and an 8½ pound (3820 grams) baby was delivered.

Not all the deliveries I attended came easily, some even gave me real concern. I am sure, however, that God was with me supplying the help I needed. Of the one thousand six hundred and forty-two deliveries I attended, I never lost a mother. Hundreds of little lives were saved. Mothers-to-be for kilometres around knew there was a special power at work at the 'Seven-day' clinic, and several made spiritual decisions which have been blessings they haven't regretted.

In 1967 we were transferred from Wabag to Moruma in the Chimbu district of the Eastern Highlands. We had not been there long when our first maternity case from that area arrived. The next one was the wife of a Lutheran teacher who lived two kilometres away. Although there was a clinic building and a trained doctor-boy there to treat common cases there was no provision for maternity care. We had to do with what was available on our mission until a suitable building could be erected. The Lutheran teacher's wife advertised the good service she had received and when the new building was completed over eleven hundred babies were born there during our seven-year stay. We know of many mothers who would walk or be carried over long distances, past a government hospital, to have their babies at the 'Seven-day' Mission. Some times were busy indeed. On one occasion three babies were born in three-quarters of an hour. One morning four mothers arrived around 2 am and three babies were delivered by 6 am.

There wasn't a dull moment in our mission life. One Sabbath afternoon I went across to the clinic to see that all was well there. As I was about to return home I noticed a crowd of people making their way towards the clinic. The school girls who were with me suggested that perhaps another maternity case was coming for attention. As an old grandma

came forward she took a bilum (string bag) off her back and gently laid it on the verandah in front of me. She opened it up and inquired, "Can you save this baby for me?" There lay the smallest baby I had ever seen, weighing five hundred grams! Curious, the girls came forward to see for themselves. In surprise they said to me, "Maram, this is only a rat! You will never be able to save it!" At this point a utility slowed to a stop in front of the clinic and the mother of the baby alighted. Assessing the situation I explained to the mother and the relatives that I did not have the equipment to care for such a tiny baby and they would do better to take it to the nearest government hospital approximately eleven kilometres away.

They wouldn't accept my advice so I picked up the little mite who had been lying on a bed of leaves, cold and dirty with its eyes caked in pus. Taking it inside I washed it and dressed it in some baby clothes sent by the welfare ladies in Australia. I used one oversized booty as a bonnet and a carton lined with a blanket for a cradle. A hot water bottle kept it warm.

Because the baby was too small to suck I fed it by a tube. A few days later when I went to Mt Hagen, sixty-five kilometres away, I obtained some feeding tubes from the government hospital. While there I discussed the situation of the small baby with the nursing sister who said, "We can't save them here." Although we had no humidicrib I did my best with what I had available. I was surprised and encouraged with the baby's progress. After six months she was returned to her mother. We named her Janice. Just prior to our departure from Moruma her mother visited the mission station to enquire about Janice attending the mission school.

I remember a mother who came in the evening to have her baby although she was not experiencing advanced labour. I thought she would probably wait until early morning. About 1.00 am the phone rang calling me to the clinic. On walking in I sensed that something strange was going on. I asked the nurse what the problem was and she said to me, "This meri (woman) is talking with her brother who died several years ago, and furthermore she isn't in labour." I realised the devil was there trying to upset our work. The meri would talk to her brother and then tell me what he had said to her. He told her that she would not be able to have her baby here. "Missus can't help you," he said. "You will have to buy a car to take you to the government hospital," he added further. "Oh," she said. "I will need \$2 for a car and \$42 for the hospital." She then put out her hand to the invisible brother saying as she did, "Thank you." I asked her if she would like me to pray to God and ask Him to help her have her baby, and to command the devil not to trouble her again.

The devil however, was persistent, and after awhile the conversation resumed. The supposed brother said, "I don't belong to this place. I have heard Missus' prayer. This is a Christian hospital, so goodbye!"

The meri finally went into labour and three hours later she gave birth to a lovely baby boy. The husband was waiting for news and I told him what had been happening. On hearing my story he told me that the same thing had happened when her previous baby was due. Unfortunately it had died. I am sure God answered our prayer and protected her baby from the unwelcome visit of the devil who tried to have his way.

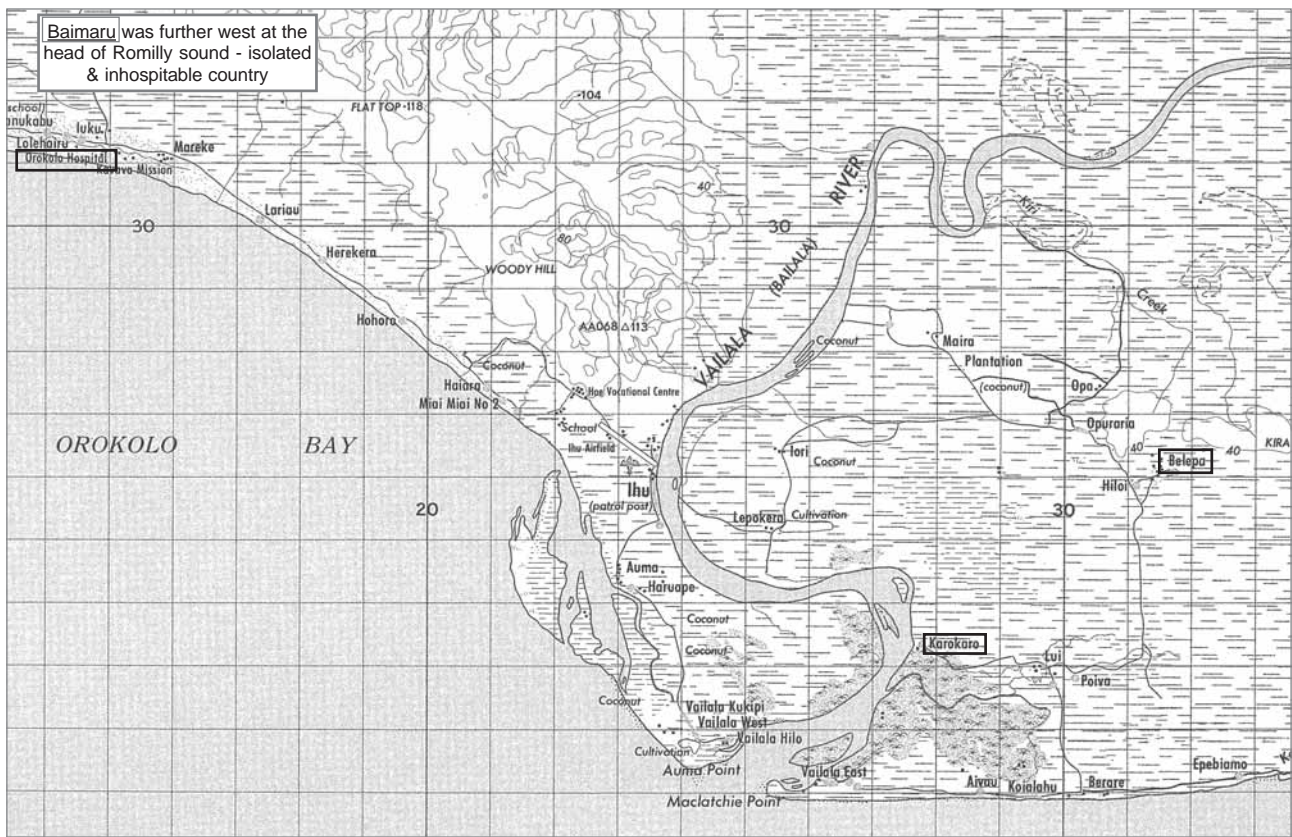
Besides maternity work there were other medical needs to attend to. Some old folk would come in with toothache, so I had to take the tooth out. Then there was a man who had been in a fight and came in with his ear severed, pleading to have it sewn on again. That work, of course, required a number of stitches, but it did stay on permanently. I remember one old man who came in with his neck badly cut. Fortunately the jugular vein was untouched and I was able to sew the rest together. Then there was the patient who came from the Roman Catholic Hospital located eight kilometres away. She was quite distressed. The doctor boy there had told her that she had to take her baby back to the village and bury it for he didn't want it to die in his care. "Can you help my baby?" she cried out in desperation. She thought her baby was probably dead but as she carried it past the mission she felt a movement in the bilum on her back and decided to call in and see if we could help. The baby was very sick but it was saved with loving care and was soon well enough to be taken home.

Infant welfare work was an important part of mission activities. Shortly after we had begun work at Rakamunda a government doctor conducted a survey of the district that revealed only four out of every ten babies would reach the age of two! To help improve this situation we encouraged all mothers with little ones to bring them to us each Sunday

morning so they could be weighed and their progress noted. Advice was provided for the mothers who needed it. Some babies required a milk supplement which was provided in feeding bottles each day. There were a few who wanted a supply of milk powder to take home weekly, but we saw no light in that suggestion. Once Sopas Hospital was operating, staff regularly visited villages which could be reached by Landrover, to conduct infant welfare programmes.

In February 1974, we visited Australia on furlough fully expecting to return to Papua New Guinea. Saying goodbye to all the mothers hadn't been easy but I assured them we would return. I did not know then that after one month in Australia we would be informed by the division office that we wouldn't be returning to the mission field. This decision made me feel very sad. Twenty years later my husband and I were privileged to attend the Golden Jubilee celebrations of mission work in the Wabag area. Imagine how happy we were to meet some of the mothers we had known in earlier years, and to have a number of men and women in their twenties and thirties introduce themselves by saying, "I am one of your babies!"

The thirty years of service in Papua New Guinea were the happiest times of my life because I felt I was doing the Lord's work and with His help being of assistance to others in need.



Location of places in the Papuan Gulf area of Papua New Guinea. Topographical map IHU, No. 7982. c. Lands and Survey Department, Government of Papua New Guinea. *Used by permission.*

The distance from Belepa to Karokaro was about 4½ kilometres and from Karokaro to Orokolo, about 15 kilometres. The land was very swampy and the climate was not very healthy. The missionaries were quite isolated.



# “Not Easy, But Well Worth While” Reminiscences on life in the Western Highlands of Papua New Guinea over 50 years ago



**IDA AVELING**

*Ida Kathleen was born 4 August 1915 to Walter & Kate Rose Davidson, migrants from England. Because her parents separated, she and her brother, aged 2 and 4 were sent to an orphanage. The children were separated and she experienced living in a series of often unsuitable foster homes. She was eventually adopted by an older couple. The one bright event in her life was when her foster mother became an Adventist when Ida was 10 years old and some of the church members took an interest in her. They encouraged her to go to Carmel College, where, without support of any kind she completed high school. At this time she met her birth mother again but realised that she had to choose between her mother and her faith. Her dream was to train as a nurse at the Sydney San. She was accepted for training but did not have the entrance fee of 20 pounds. However, she felt impressed by God to go to the station with the other trainees. She was given the money by a class mate who had not been accepted.*

*During her nursing training she met Frank Aveling who had returned from the mission field because of the war. Ida and Frank were married on 7 June 1941. Four years & two children later they were asked to serve in the Solomon Islands as missionaries & later, PNG. She, with her husband Frank, have made a contribution to the work of the church both as paid employees and as self-supporting employees. The title of the article summarizes her philosophy.*

*She & Frank in their retirement live at the ARV, Redland Bay Rd, Brisbane*

“I never said it would be easy, I only said it would be well worth it.” These were the words Marty Peterson, a young vulnerable missionary in Japan wrote on either side of a portrait of Christ he discovered. Really needing encouragement, he believed Christ offered these words to him as His eyes seemed to burn deep into the young man’s soul.

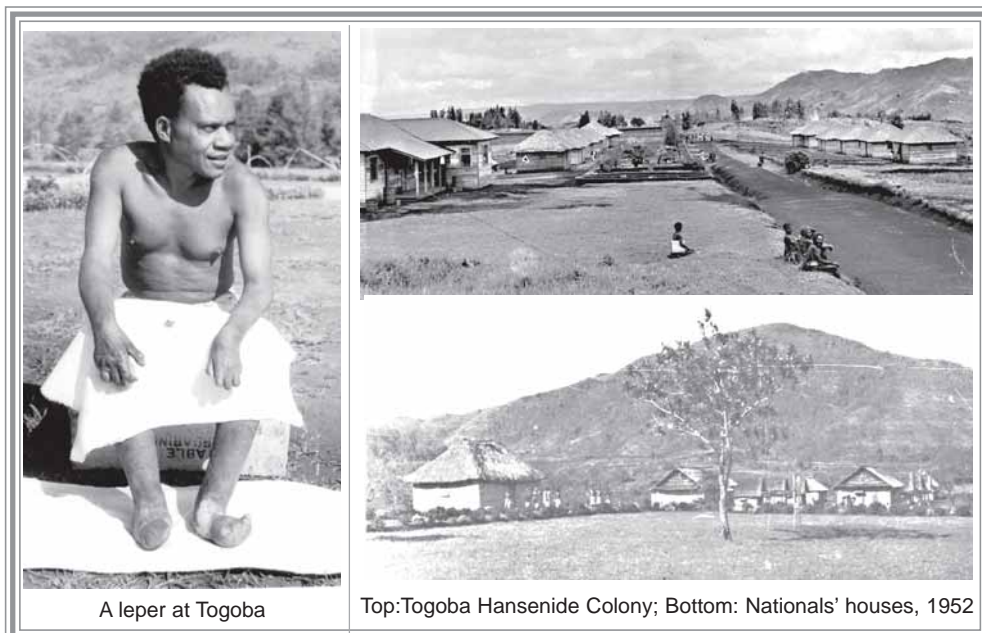
Culture shock often comes to missionaries, sometimes when they change their field of service. So it was with us. Following three years in the Solomon Islands and after furlough, Frank had spent three months at the Mount Hagen Hansenide Colony at Togoba, nearly 13 kilometres from Mount Hagen in the Western Highlands of Papua New Guinea. Our two girls Anne and Jeannette and I boarded the steamer *Malaita* in Sydney, and after a voyage of ten days we arrived early in 1950 at Lae on the northern coast where Frank was waiting for us. We all travelled further on the *Malaita* to Madang where we were met by the Eric Boehm and Ward Nolan families. There we stayed four days, including Christmas Day, and stocked up on the ‘essentials for living’ Then we scrambled aboard a small De Havilland Dragon aircraft and flew off to Mt Hagen. Although we weren’t scared travelling in such a small plane I guess this was because we didn’t know much about the plane itself. We just trusted God to take us there.

Mt Hagen provided the first of our culture shocks as we encountered scantily clad people covered in pig grease. The odour was strong. (Later I learned they did this to protect themselves from the cold temperatures experienced at 1828 metres above sea level).

Government personnel arranged for willing men to carry our possessions and assist us on our thirteen kilometre trek over slippery tracks and deep gorges interspersed with more than ten swiftly flowing creeks. We crossed them walking on six inch wide poles assisted by helpers on either side. I was walking with extra care while balancing the bulk of our soon-to-be-born son. Our helpers were a cheery lot for they laughed and talked away in their own language as we slipped and slid along the red clay tracks.

Shoes were useless so we discarded them and the girls were hoisted aloft on the shoulders of willing helpers. Our journey took three hours and how pleased we were to meet Len and Mavis Barnard and their four year old daughter Sharyn. Their welcome to Togoba warmed our hearts.

What a contrast the almost naked people made to the gracious Solomon Island friends we had worked among earlier. The former were only a few years from total primitiveness. They wore a bark belt known as a pul-pul.



A leper at Togoba



Top:Togoba Hansenide Colony; Bottom: Nationals' houses, 1952

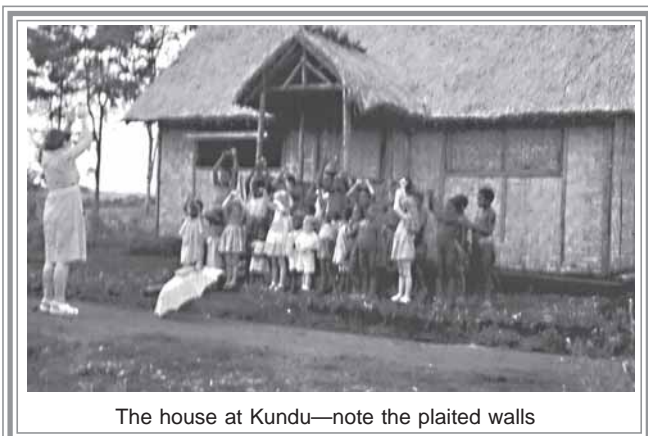
From it was suspended a coarse net made from rolled leaves by the women folk. Half a dozen leaves from the tankard tree protected their rears.

We soon noticed that the main government road ran right through the colony and that a few huts were already occupied by lepers. The huts themselves were constructed of bush sapplings, plaited bamboo, and were roofed with pit-pit (a coarse local grass). The hospital, built on a plateau, was flanked on both sides by swiftly flowing rivers. Mountains appeared on three sides towering two or three thousand feet above the hospital site. Although other mission bodies had been operating in the area for several years many of the people were devil worshippers. What a challenge the church faced! We prayed earnestly that the influence of morning and evening worships and the lifestyles of the mission staff would lead many to know Jesus Christ as their Saviour.

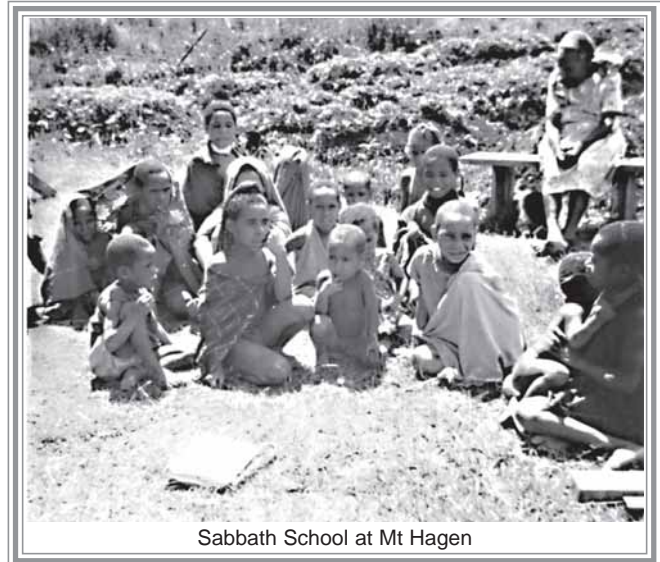
Frank's work involved setting up a sawmill in the bush to provide timber for building replacement huts made of kunai grass (blady grass). He also built many of the new structures. And there was the time he provided all the timber for the building of the Wabag Adventist Hospital situated 80 kilometres northwest of Togoba.

### Kundu Valley

After about three and a half years of extremely stressful work, caused partly by lack of equipment such as crosscut saws and a Gardener diesel engine which had been ordered in February 1949 and did not arrive until 1951, Frank's health had reached a point where he felt he could no longer continue in his present role. Frank visited Harold Rudd, a friend who had a trading post and small sawmill at the Tunan River. It was situated about 32 kilometres (20 miles) east of Mt Hagen on the southern edge of the 160 kilometres long Wahgi Valley. It was over 1524 metres (5000 ft) high and was bordered north and south by majestic mountains rising 4572 metres on the north and 3962 metres to the south. Frank then made enquiries at the District Office at Mt Hagen as to the feasibility of setting up a sawmill to supply timber for government, mission and private enterprise. Bob Cole, the district officer, welcomed the idea as Mt Hagen had been surveyed for a township and there was an urgent need for good timber. With the assurance of support from the government it was decided to present our resignation to the mission and venture forth as self-supporting missionaries. We began our search for a suitable stand of timber. After a week or so of searching, we located an excellent stand in an area known as Kundu Valley, about sixteen kilometres east of Mt Hagen. This was a beautiful little valley with easy access for timber.



The house at Kundu—note the plaited walls



Sabbath School at Mt Hagen

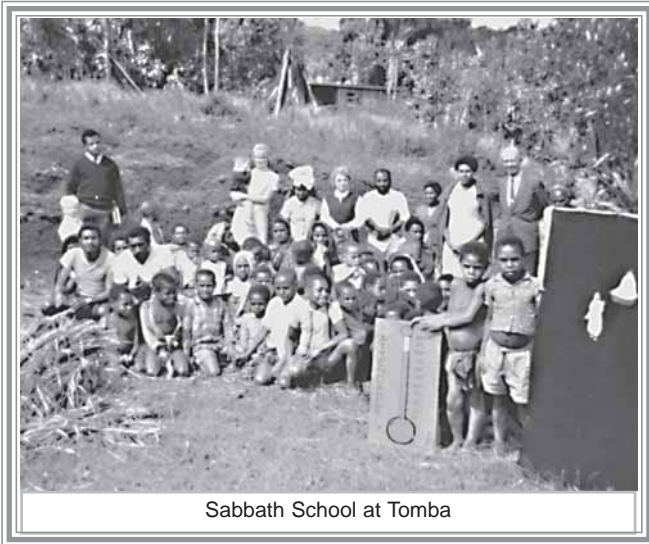
The people there had been influenced to a certain extent by the teachings of two other religious organisations but at this time had not advanced very much in an understanding of Christianity. Frank introduced morning worship to all the workers at our mill and presented Bible truths with simplicity. On Friday at lunch time the mill ceased operating so that the workers from further afield could return to their homes for the weekend. Our little family conducted Sabbath School with the aid of a picture roll and felt board stories out in the open. Gradually adults and children attended in increasing numbers. We felt the Lord blessed both our business and our outreach, and although we personally did not know of any local people who became Adventists we have heard that now there is a church of over one hundred members, and several of the children have attended Adventist schools.

### Tomba

Our next 'sawmill mission station' was in the village of Tomba, on the road between Wabag and Mt Hagen. This village was situated on a swampy plateau between two dormant volcanic mountains, Mt Hagen 3657 metres high to the north and Mount Gilewa 3962 metres high to the south. Though cold at night it was a majestic setting. It was a very isolated area more than 2438 metres above sea level. There was no road suitable for a vehicle, so the local people had an excellent system for road-making (very economical—we must tell our councils about it). The men with pick and shovel cleared space for the road under government supervision. The women made improvised stone holders from semicircular pieces of strong bark. They carried these, full of stones, to make a suitable surface on the roadbed for vehicles. Each tribe was apportioned a section of road to complete.

Our first place of abode was very primitive, in the heart of the bush, surrounded by thick black mud. By this time, all five of our children were in Australia — the boys, Donald, Glenn and Neil at school, Jeannette at the Sydney Sanitarium, and Anne married with a baby girl in Brisbane, so we were by ourselves.

My stove was unique—it was an inverted 44 gallon drum with a fire box inside. It cooked effectively, but somewhat slowly, so that the vegetables for lunch had to be placed on the stove immediately after breakfast! The shower was the usual four-gallon drum with a shower rose fitted at one end. The area was mainly Roman Catholic, but there was a small Adventist school run by a national. Owing to lack of students,



Sabbath School at Tomba

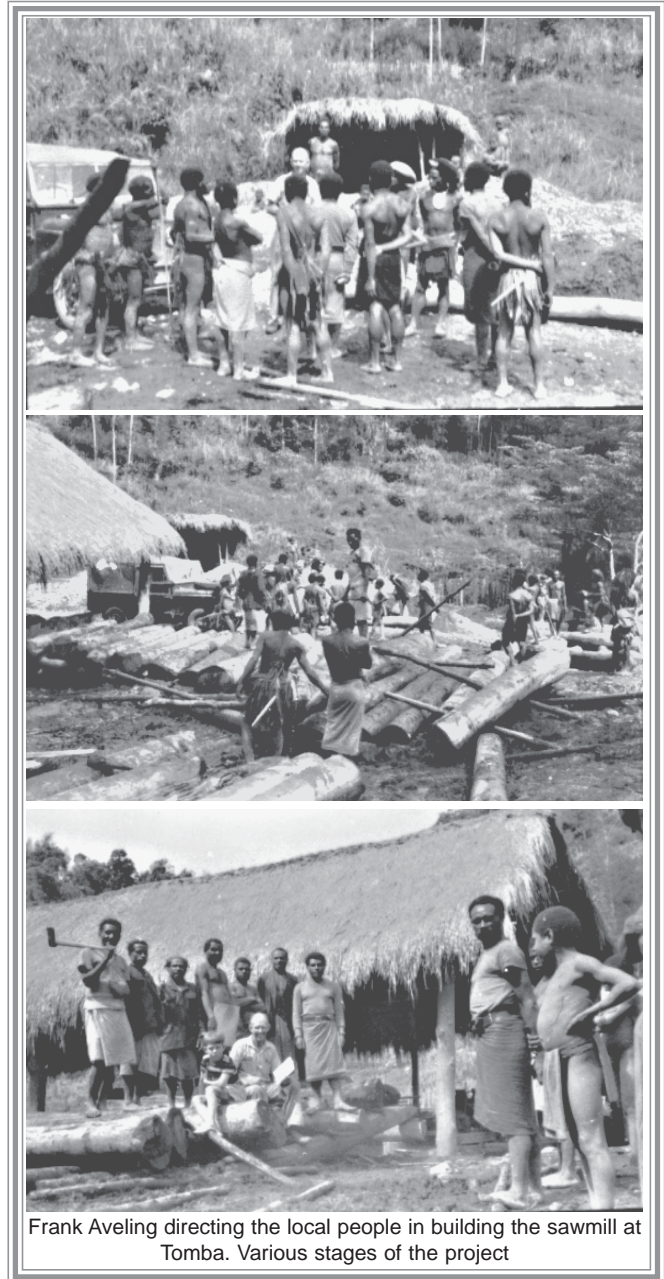
this finally closed. Eventually, Spence and Barbara Arnold joined us and we built two homes about a mile from the mill. I ran a small school in our home and Barbara and I had a daily medical clinic supplied with medicines by the government.

Following his usual pattern Frank conducted morning worship before starting the mill each day. Some of the men were antagonistic saying that they belonged to other churches and weren't interested. Frank explained to them that milling was a dangerous occupation and it was necessary to ask God's protection each day. He also reminded them that they were being paid from the time worship began.

Each Sabbath, Frank held a church service. Barbara and I, with the aid of the faithful picture rolls and flannelgraphs, soon built up a fairly large audience of children. Also every week, Frank and Spence took turns preaching at a small village, Kulika, where we had a church built of local materials. The Tomba area was a fruitful mission field and the people have now financed and, with help, built a European-style church for 500 members.

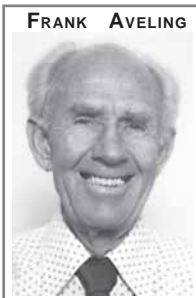
Some of the mill-workers' children have been educated at Seventh-day Adventist schools in Mt Hagen and at Kabiufa Adventist High School. Some have worked for the government, commenced businesses of their own, and supported lay preachers. They also successfully lobbied the government for a medical clinic, which has been erected locally and staffed by a government-supplied health worker.

During our sawmilling years timber orders came from government departments, business organisations, the Roman Catholic Mission, and from individuals. We really made a significant contribution to the building up of government, commercial and private facilities in the Western Highlands and the Enga Provinces.



Frank Aveling directing the local people in building the sawmill at Tomba. Various stages of the project

As our younger children needed a stable home in Australia, we sold our mill to Spence and Barbara Arnold and John and Anne Norris, who carried on the good work. In 1970 we returned to Australia and we still receive encouraging letters from one of our 'adopted' former workers. Even though our first impressions made us apprehensive, we feel that self-supporting mission work has been very rewarding.



FRANK AVELING

Location of some of the places mentioned in the article  
Excerpt from 'New Guinea'  
c. South Pacific Maps Pty Ltd 2004  
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# No Greater Love: A tribute

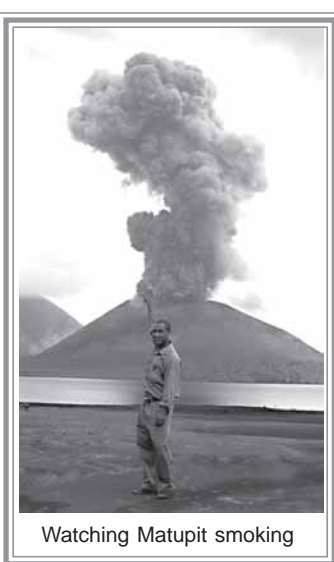
## Deni Mark Megha, a pioneer Solomon Island teacher and missionary in the New Guinea Islands, 1933-1944



KEN BOEHM

*Ken Boehm was born of missionary parents at Port Moresby in 1937. He went to primary school there. After completing Grade 10 at Gosford in Australia he began an apprenticeship in carpentry & joinery in Rabaul PNG. He later completed a correspondence course in technology at the Univ. of Technology in Sydney, an accountancy course at Australasian Missionary College. From 1966 he was a contractor in the private sector & for the church in Rabaul & Australia. He began 28 years of service for the church -- Sepik local mission 1969-72; CSUM- clerk of works 72-81; PNGUM-property manager 1982-89; Sonoma College- lecturer 1990-97; Business Manager- Sopas Hospital 1985. During these years Ken was involved in design and construction using employed labour and many times using Fly-N-Build volunteer teams from PNG, Australia & NZ. He also handled all land & building applications for various church projects. As a lecturer he produced many graduates who have become good workers in their own right. Following retirement in 1997, Ken made his home in Ourimbah in NSW. As health permits he gives assistance to the Adventist Aboriginal School at Mirriwinni Gardens in NSW.*

Life was exciting for us missionary children growing up in Papua New Guinea. Ten years after World War II had ended my dad, Pastor Eric Boehm, was transferred to Rabaul on the island of New Britain to serve as the president of the Bismarck-Solomon Islands Union Mission.<sup>1</sup> Sailing into Rabaul Harbour, which is an extinct volcanic crater, we saw the smoking vent of Matupit volcano on the northern shore. We children even kept a check on the amount of smoke and steam and made daily announcements of the situation.

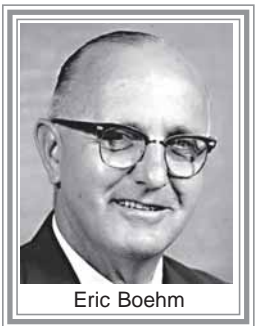


Watching Matupit smoking

This was not the only excitement though, for the shore of the harbour was littered with the wrecks of bombed Japanese ships. Even the main wharf was the deck of a sunken Japanese ship. Then there were also the Japanese tunnels in the cliffs alongside the harbour for us to explore. The Japanese had lived in these and also used the ones that were large enough to haul barges into and unload their cargo under cover of the mountains. There were also hundreds of Japanese bicycles which were big and heavy with

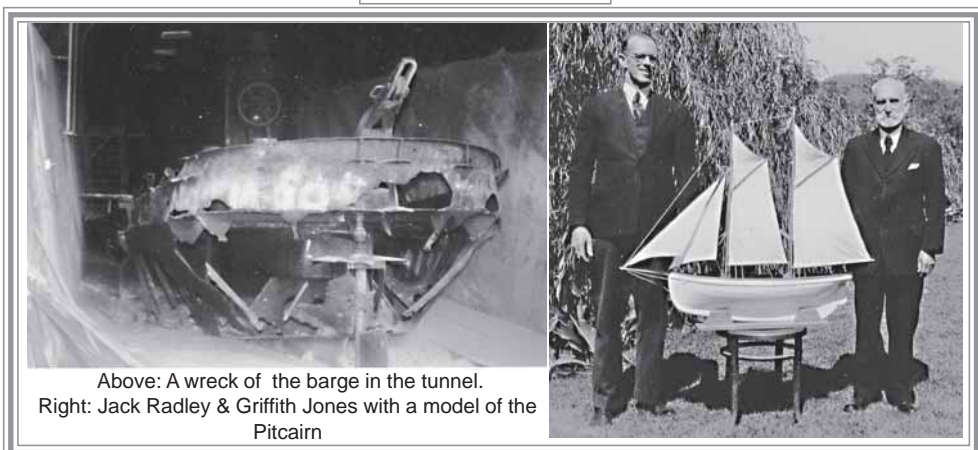
funny brakes! Even at Jones Missionary College (now Kambubu Adventist Academy), situated 55 kilometres southeast of Rabaul, they used a Japanese tank to haul the logs to the College sawmill.

However, most interesting of all for the children were the war stories we heard. We would just sit with our eyes wide open as men like Captain Jack Radley and Pastor Cyril Pascoe,<sup>2</sup> as well as our national friends from Rabaul and Mussau, would tell us their stories from the war days. One of these stories that I first heard at Jones Missionary College in 1954, when we were visiting there with dad for their graduation weekend, was that of Deni Mark. He was the Solomon Island teacher who had been appointed acting principal at Kambubu after the Australians had been evacuated to Australia.

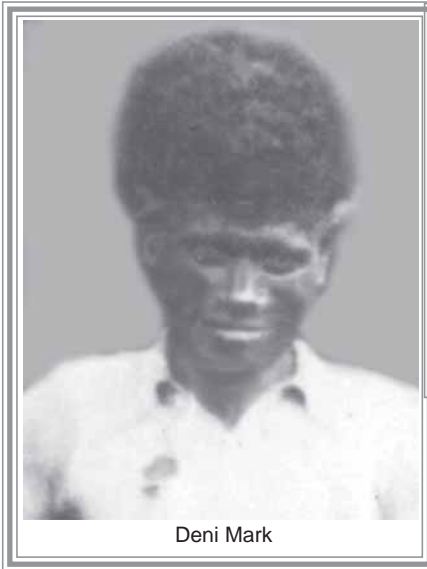


Eric Boehm

Going back in time we find that Captain Griffith F Jones and his wife had been sent to take the Seventh-day Adventist message to the Solomon Islands in 1914. Other missionaries soon followed, and one of their student converts, Pana, became an evangelist to his own people. In 1923 he shared the story of



Above: A wreck of the barge in the tunnel.  
Right: Jack Radley & Griffith Jones with a model of the Pitcairn



Deni Mark



Pana

Jesus with Deni Mark of Buri Village on the island of Ranongga. Deni's spiritual interest led to

his baptism at the Batuna station in the Marovo Lagoon. Some years later, in 1932, Pastor Alfred Parker conducted a Christian wedding for Deni Mark Megha Ghoaba, and Ellen Panda Sigadao at Buri on Ranongga. Then in May the following year Pastor Gilbert McLaren, superintendent of the New Guinea area, selected the young couple to be missionaries in New Guinea and they sailed on the MV *Veilomani* to Mussau Island in the St Matthias Group, where they commenced teaching at Boliu School.<sup>3</sup> Deni and Ellen thoroughly enjoyed working there for three years with the Australian missionaries, Pastor and Mrs Harry R Steed. Their first two children, Alick and John, were born on Mussau.

Through God's blessing many island people were accepting Christianity and by 1936, land had been purchased for a school near Rugen Harbour on New Britain. The Put Put Training School was commenced with Deni Mark and Pastor Steed moving there from Mussau to assist with the development of the school property, joining the other missionaries and local workers from the area and from Manus, Mussau and Bougainville. Deni and his students did fine work there felling trees, pit sawing timber and planting gardens. Steed wrote in the *Australasian Record* at this time that Deni Mark and his wife were a credit to the work and in the Solomon Islands.<sup>4</sup>

Deni, with the blessing of the principal of the new school, Aubrey Hiscox, was also reaching out to local villagers. When Deni, with the help of students chased away plantation labourers who were confronting a group of Baining people who came to the coastal area to collect salt, the inland people remembered this kindness and requested Hiscox and Deni to send a missionary to their area. This was in 1938. In an article he wrote for the *Australasian Record*, 'A Journey to a New Area', Deni told of leading a group into the Baining

area, inland from the school.<sup>5</sup> He commented on God's protection from murderers, storms and flooded rivers as they travelled to the village of Laikatoki and placed a teacher there. He believed in the promise of Psalm 121:8, "The Lord shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in from this time forth, and even for evermore."

Three more children—Everlyn, Erick and Maena—blessed their home during these early years at Put Put, and another, Deku, came during the hard war years. When the sad news of the passing of Pastor Steed reached them from Australia, Deni sent a letter to Mrs Steed, which was published in the *Australasian Record*. In his letter, Deni stated, "It makes us very sad on the passing of your husband. Pastor Steed was a fine man. He called me his son, however he is asleep in Jesus while his works are still growing in PNG. God bless you."<sup>6</sup>

Then further bad news came to the missionaries at Put Put. Early on the morning of 23 January 1942, the invading Japanese forces had bombed Rabaul and their troops commenced landing. Pastor Malcolm Abbott, superintendent of Adventist Church work in the Territory of New Guinea, decided that the Australian missionaries should leave their stations and attempt to escape back to Australia on the available mission ships. When they left, Deni became the Acting Principal of the Put Put Training School. One final message from the missionaries to Deni was to take the Put Put students and go back into the jungle behind the school and make gardens there for their food.<sup>7</sup> This he did along with other workers most of whom were from Mussau.

Life became not only difficult, but also dangerous for Deni and his family as they lived in the jungle covered hills inland from the area known as Kambubu where the school had been located. He was visited constantly by Japanese soldiers as their camp was in the area where Deni was living and growing his gardens. We know little of the day to day life of Deni and his family during this time of the Japanese occupation, but we do have information that shows his strong loyalty to his Australian friends, their countrymen, and their American allies.

A letter from Major B. Fairfax-Ross of the Allied Intelligence Bureau (AIB), written to the Chairman of the Australasian Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists shortly after the war told of some of his activities that helped the Allied war effort. At the beginning of the Japanese occupation of Rabaul, he had given food to both Australian soldiers and civilians as they escaped from the Japanese soldiers who had captured Rabaul. Deni later risked his life gathering intelligence information to pass on to AIB agents, and on two occasions in 1944 he even sent out maps of Japanese positions and equipment. He was instrumental in hiding and feeding several Allied airmen whose planes had been shot down, and then arranging for their rescue. And



Pitsawing the timber



The wreckage of a Jap plane at Rabaul



Students beside USA aircraft engine salvaged from the reef. Probably belonging to Gordon Manuel's plane

while doing this he constantly remembered his mission work. Although forbidden by the Japanese to hold church services, Deni had made a clearing in the bush and up to the time of his death he held services there.<sup>8</sup>

Among the Rabaul civilians that Deni and his students helped were many Chinese who had fled before the invading Japanese forces. One of the more prominent was businessman, Chin H

Meen. The Chinese were living on plantations just around the coast from Kambubu, and suffered many privations at the hand of the Japanese. They would have suffered more if they had not been given food and help by Deni and those helping him. Chin H Meen claimed him as a personal friend for the three years up to the time of Deni's death.<sup>9</sup>

Several of Deni's experiences relate to Lieutenant Gordon Manuel, an American pilot whose plane crashed into the sea off the beach near the mouth of the Kambubu River. He was found by villagers who hid him for nine months until he was able to make contact with some Australian Coast Watchers who arranged for his rescue by an Allied submarine. Although Deni was not the principal one hiding and protecting Manuel during this time, he did help in many ways including providing food for him. He also made a dugout canoe which Manuel hoped to use in an escape bid if the opportunity arose.

Manuel, who had a broken leg and couldn't move around very much, was impressed with Deni's ability to help him now and again with a variety of tasks. On one occasion he asked for quinine to help deal with malarial attacks, and the very next day he was there with a box of quinine, and also a tin of Japanese dried fish and some black sauce to make it edible. A day later he turned up with an Australian Army compass, and surprisingly, a larger regular mariner's compass taken from a burnt-out mission boat. Deni even managed to

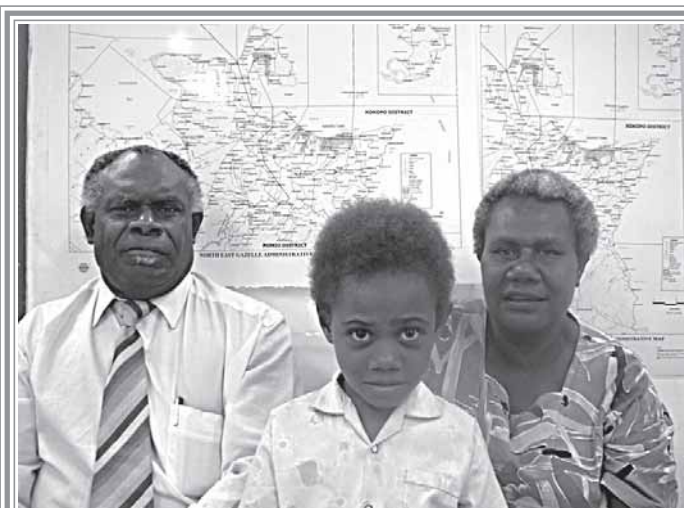
supply him with a rifle and cartridges given him by an escaping Australian soldier who was unable to take them with him.

Later, when Manuel was able to move around more easily, he, with the assistance of Deni and others, made a reconnaissance of Rabaul which was controlled by the Japanese Army. Deni was even able to tell him that his friends told him that American and Australian prisoners were kept in the House of Akun located in the centre of the town.

There was a time too, when Manuel decided to build a hut on an 800 foot high mountain commanding a spectacular view of the surrounding countryside and even of Rabaul. When Japanese soldiers began coming more frequently to the village to visit his friend Robin's home, he felt they might come across him. But they never climbed the mountain. The hut would be a real refuge. Deni was all for it! He and his friends Popeta and Leli, assisted by others, constructed a really good building. They took tin off an old disused coconut storehouse overgrown with weeds on the Matala Plantation to make the roof, and overlaid it with heavy leaves so the hut would be waterproof and insulated against the hot sun. A floor of Bamboo was laid, and leaves and vines were tied together to form walls to keep the sun and rain out. One end was left open for breezes to cool the interior. Manuel was really pleased with the 'new mansion,' and the building team admired what they'd accomplished for a friend.<sup>10</sup>

But Deni never forgot that he was a missionary for God - he brought Manuel three books to read - *In Time of War*, *The Great Controversy*, and the *Bible* - and he even discussed them with him. Manuel said: "Deni Mark and I would have long discussions about Biblical passages, and he often straightened out things in the Bible that puzzled me."<sup>11</sup> And Eric Oronga, a Baining Seventh-day Adventist pastor from Marambu Village, in writing of Deni's work, commented that he even had a positive influence on some of the Japanese soldiers. Apparently the Japanese were holding a group of prisoners at their camp in the Rugen Harbour area, whether islanders or Allied prisoners he doesn't say. When the Allied soldiers were nearing the area towards the end of the war, the Japanese officers told the prisoners to leave the camp and go as the war was about to end,<sup>12</sup> instead of killing them.

The Japanese knew that someone was passing on information about their activities and became suspicious of Deni's movements. They tried him several times and had him flogged, but he was able to hide his pro-Allied activities. However, he was finally imprisoned in a water tank. The punishment given to Deni eventually led to complications and hastened his death from malaria which in turn had



Pastor Eric Oronga, a Baining SDA pastor, his wife and son



Baining villagers who lead Ken Boehm to the remains of the water tank where Deni Mark was imprisoned





The beginning and the end. The completion of the new library building at Kambubu Adventist Academy took the SHF team ten days. It was later named on 12 September 2003 in honour of Deni Mark.

weakened his body. Before he died on 15 September 1944, Deni urged his wife and the others who had been helping him to continue doing all they could to help the Allies.<sup>13</sup> Deni Mark was buried by the workers from Mussau on the banks of the Kambubu River, over the hills from Rugen Harbour, just metres from his prison cell, and his grave is still respected and honoured by the Baining people to whom he brought Christianity.<sup>14</sup> Pastor Eric Oronga wrote: "We, the Baining people, owe this dedicated worker of God so much for the contribution he played in opening up the church work amongst the Baining on the South Coast of East New Britain."<sup>15</sup> Ellen Sigado, Deni's widow, and their children were repatriated to their home island of Ranongga in the Western Solomon Islands and arrived there on 19 June 1945 two and a half months before the official end of WWII on 2 September.<sup>16</sup>

In 2003 more than twenty staff members from the Sanitarium Health Food Company (SHF) took part in a Fly-n-Build program to erect a new library at Kambubu Adventist Academy. The group included Rob Scoines, Belinda Peuser,

Alister Yeo, Charlie Mackay, Shane Dawson, Kim Turner, Glynn Rigby, David Kinghorn and Kevin Hannah. On 12 September the library, which was funded by the SHF, was named in honour of Deni Mark.

My life was greatly touched, as it has been on every visit to his jungle grave. His story motivates me in the Christian walk and I'm sure it will for you too, as it has for every visitor I've lead there. Pausing for awhile the words of Jesus come to my mind: "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends."<sup>17</sup>

## References

- <sup>1</sup> The Bismarck-Solomons Union Mission administered the work of the Adventist Church in the following Islands — New Guinea: Admiralty, St Mathias Group, New Hanover, New Ireland and adjacent islands, New Britain and adjacent islands, Bougainville and adjacent islands, and the British Solomon Islands Protectorate
- <sup>2</sup> Captain Jack Radley had served on Adventist Mission boats in the Pacific for many years, and knew very well the people and places in the Melanesian countries of the Solomon Islands, Vanuatu and Papua New Guinea. Pastor Cyril Pascoe had served the Adventist Church for most of his time on the island of Bougainville, both before and following WWII.
- <sup>3</sup> Letter, Lapisah Deni Mark to Glynn Litster, 2 Oct 2002.
- <sup>4</sup> Eric Oronga, Brief Sketch of Deni Mark, 1937 – 1945, ( in Ken Boehm Collection). Steed, H.R. *Australasian Record (AR)*, 22 Mar 1937, 8.
- <sup>5</sup> Mark, M. Deni, *AR*, 15 Sept 1941, 4-6
- <sup>6</sup> Mark, M. Deni, *AR*, 11 Aug 1941, 4
- <sup>7</sup> Dixon, Robert D, "The Pacific Islands", in Clapham, Noel (ed). *Seventh-day Adventists in the South Pacific 1885-1985: Australia New Zealand South-Sea Islands*. Warburton, Vic.: Signs Publishing Company, 1985(?), 212. Hare, Reuben. *Fuzzy Wuzzy Tales*. Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1950, 138-142.
- <sup>8</sup> Letter, Major B Fairfax-Ross to The Chairman, Australasian Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 8 March 1946.
- <sup>9</sup> Letter, Chin H Meen to The Secretary, Seventh-day Adventist Mission, Wairoonga, Australia, 1946(?), in Hare, Reuben. *Fuzzy Wuzzy Tales*. Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1950, 144-145
- <sup>10</sup> Manuel, Gordon, as told to Quenton Reynolds. *Seventy Thousand to One*, Melbourne; Cassell, 1947, 119-121
- <sup>11</sup> Manuel, *ibid*, 122.
- <sup>12</sup> Letter, Eric Oronga to Ken Boehm (?)2002
- <sup>13</sup> Hare, *ibid*, 146
- <sup>14</sup> Dixon, *ibid*, 212
- <sup>15</sup> Letter, Eric Oronga, *ibid*.

## Real Missionary Deni Mark

Illuminado Selidio Jnr 2003 (1955- )      Illuminado Selidio Jnr 2003 (1955- )

1. Stirred by the love of Je-sus Christ, De-ni left So-lo-mon is-land.  
 2. With eye sing-le to God's glo-ry, He served in an-y cap-a-ci-ty  
 3. With a de-vo-tion of a mer-tyr, He stood at his post of du-ty

In re-sponse to the call of God, To serve Him in the fo-rein land.  
 'Mid pri-va-tion, per-plex-i-ty, He toiled for God un-swer-ving-ly  
 Al-though his dear life was at stake, Shuk-ri! re-spon-si-bi-li-ty

**Refrain**  
 Real mis-sio-na-ry De-ni Mark, The man with whom the Lord was pleased,  
 For though he knew death be his lot, Stayed to serve Kam-bu-bu with his best.  
 For though he knew death be his lot, Stayed to serve Kam-bu-bu with his best.

Left: The song, composed by a staff member at Kambubu, was sung at the naming of the library in honour of Deni Mark. It was built by the Sanitarium Health Food Company, Australia.

<sup>16</sup> Deni Mark's wife, Ellen Sigado (pronounced as 'sing' in English), returned to the Solomon Islands, with her children: Alick Deni, born 27 November 1933; John M Deni, born 23 June 1935; Everlyn Galo, born, 13 June 1937; Erick Deni, born 1 November 1939; Maena Deni, born 29 November 1941; Deku Deni, born 1944.

After some time Ellen Sigado married Pastor Kata Rangoso Snr., and they had a daughter, Stellar. Stellar is married to Mission school teacher, Martin Luther, from the island of Malaita. At this time they are teaching in the Western Solomon Islands.

Dr Alfred Liligeto, in an e-mail message to Ken Boehm on 9 June 2003, stated that when Pastor Kata Rangoso Senior passed away, Ellen Sigado retired to Buri Village on her home island of Ranongga in the Western Solomon Islands.

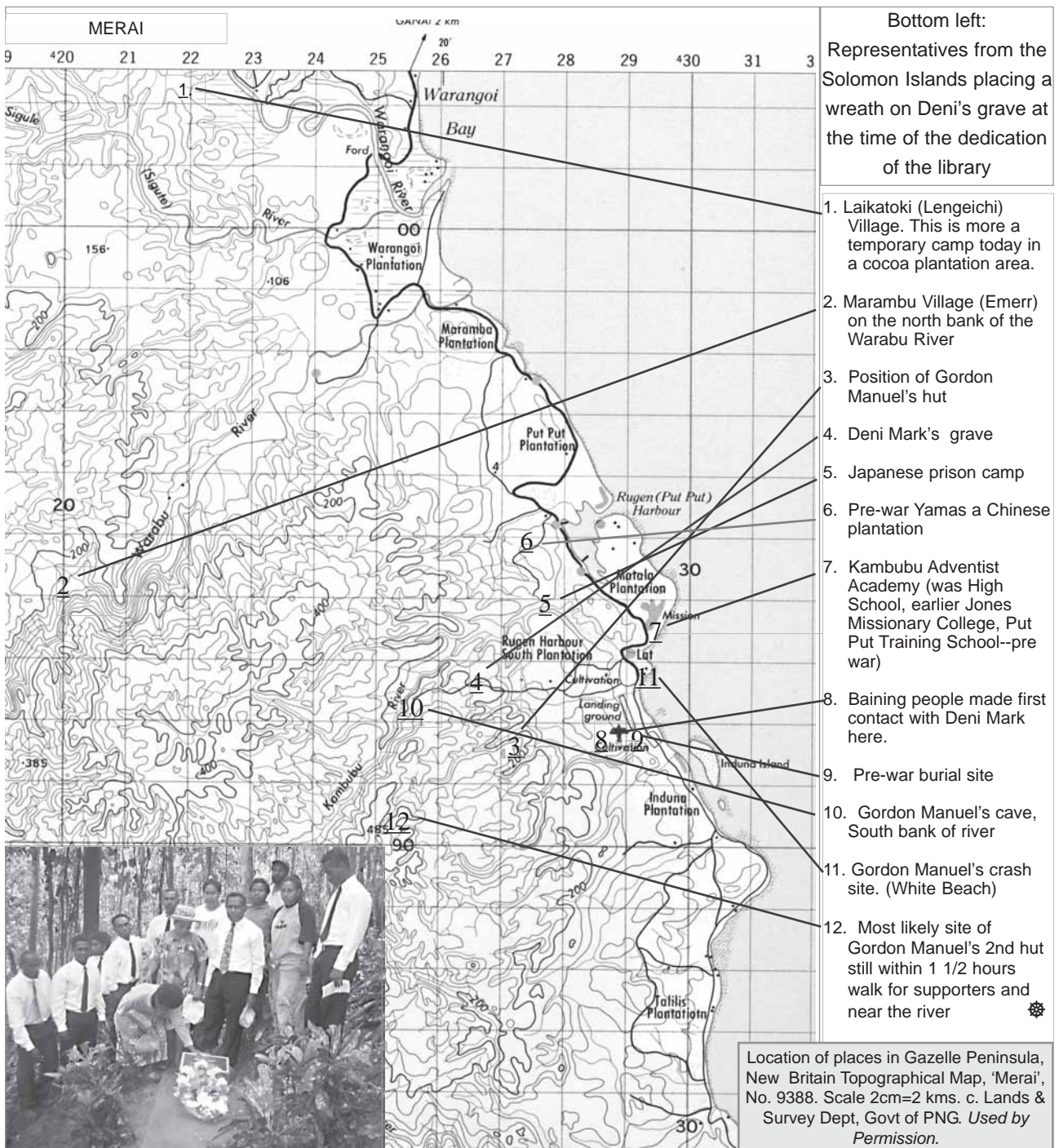
<sup>17</sup> John 15:13, New King James Version.

### Special Note

The author has conducted extensive research on his topic, including his own visits to the grave site, and numerous discussions

with people acquainted with Deni Mark. Some of his personal contacts included Eremas of Matupit; Laia an aged teacher in retirement at Kambubu; Barras a farm 'bos boi' of Kambubu who is married to a Baining's girl; Chin H Meen; Dan Mes; Robert Dixon an expatriate who had taught at the Jones Missionary College in the early 1960s and who, on a return visit in the interests of a study program, and with some of the Baining people, revisited Deni's grave in 1990. He recalls an earlier visit.

"One Saturday afternoon in the 1960s, while teaching at Jones Missionary College, my wife Heather and I decided to follow the Kambubu River up-stream to see if we could find Deni Mark's grave. We took young Alfred Liligeto with us to show us the way. Eventually we came to a beautiful part of the river and Alfred pointed up the bank and said: 'Deni's grave is here.' We clambered up the bank and found the grave marked out with croton bushes and a few rocks, but otherwise surrounded by rain forest. In this peaceful setting with the rain forest shading us and the Kambubu River gurgling along a short distance away, we reflected on the life and death of faithful Deni Mark."



# Mission and Memories of life and service in the Pacific Islands

**ROBERT FRAME**



*Robert Frame was born in Tamworth, New South Wales. On completing the Business Course at the Australasian Missionary College in 1935, he commenced service for the church as a literature evangelist (colporteur in his time), in the southern area of New South Wales. Succeeding appointments were as—a clerk in the Australasian Union Conference treasury office in Wahroonga, NSW 1937-38; Secretary-Treasurer Papuan Mission, PNG 1939-41; Sanitarium Retail Sydney 1942; Assistant Treasurer AUC 1943-47; Superintendent Papua-NE New Guinea Mission 1948-49; Sec-Treasurer Trans-Tasman Union Conference 1950-54; Assistant Secretary AIUC 1955 and 56, Australasian Division (name replacement for AIUC) 1957-62; Secretary AD 1963-76; Associate Secretary General Conference, 1966-70; President Australasian Division 1970-76; Manager Radio-TV Centre California, 1977-86.*

*Robert and Peggiew (Watson) were married in 1938, and since retiring in 1987, have lived in Nth Carolina, USA. They have two children, Judith and Peter.*

It has been well said that reminiscing is a sign of old age. Having long since accepted that designation I have, in harmony with the editor's request, agreed to reflect on some events from our mission experience which have lingered in my memory.

In September of 1938 I was asked by the then Australasian Union Conference (AUC)<sup>1</sup> to transfer from the Treasury to serve as Secretary-Treasurer of the Papuan Mission. On 8 November Peggiew Jean Watson and I were wedded, and ten days later boarded the *Bulolo* to sail to Port Moresby, the capital of Papua. Those were the days before Mission Orientation, and as young people we could be designated as 'Innocents Abroad'. In later years I came across the following which is a fair description of necessary qualifications for beginning missionaries: "Have the love of God in your heart, have the ability to mix with people, to wade rivers, to write articles, love one's neighbour, deliver babies, digest questionable dishes, sit cross legged, conduct meetings, patch human weaknesses, and burn the midnight oil." Such activities were very familiar to us as we became involved in mission service.

We were settled at Mirigeda, the headquarters of the mission located approximately 30 kilometres inland from Port Moresby. Our neighbours were Pastor William N Lock, the Mission Superintendent, and Mrs Molly Lock, and Mr and Mrs Ken Gray who were in charge of the school. Their support and guidance was in the form of a very practical orientation—on the job! Our fellow workers were certainly a blessing to us. Our home comprised two rooms with a separate galvanised iron kitchen containing a wood stove for cooking. We were ready to face the challenge!

When one accepts a mission appointment it is not long before his special abilities need to be expanded into other activities. On Christmas Day 1938 we were alone at Mirigeda, for the Locks and Grays had boarded the mission boat *Diari* and gone to visit friends at outstations down the coast. Mid morning the

telephone rang and I was asked to go to Port Moresby to bury the deceased child of Pastor and Mrs Songavare, wonderful missionaries from the Solomon Islands. Without transport being available I soon began the fifteen mile walk to Moresby. Accompanied by a couple of school boys, in due course we arrived at the cemetery in town. There I was met by a truck with a small wooden box on the back, the coffin of the baby. The few present gathered around the open grave, and I was initiated into taking a funeral service. I could barely converse with the parents. I read a few texts, had a prayer, and the service was soon concluded. I felt totally inadequate, but believed that God was present. We then retraced our steps to Mirigeda.

While living at Mirigeda we had a house boy named Lui Oli, who was a student at the local mission school. Lui came from the village of Irupara on the east coast of Papua as did many of the students. Lui impressed us as an outstanding young man. He was always pleasant and very well mannered. His work was done quietly and efficiently. We learned to



Bob and Peggiew Frame at Mirigeda

love Lui and it was no surprise to see him find his way into mission service. With my responsibilities taking us to different parts of the Division and then to the General Conference we lost track of Lui.

With the passing of time I returned to the Australasian Division as President in 1970. The first time I sat in the chair to conduct a division committee meeting I looked out over the members gathered and there smiling at me was my house boy Lui, a member of this committee.<sup>2</sup> I was overwhelmed with emotion and as soon as opportunity offered we were together living in the past. God is so great and His love binds us together in such wonderful ways. I have always been impressed with the way in which South Pacific nationals who have been through our schools develop into strong workers and leaders as time goes by.

After some months at Mirigeda, the office was moved to Port Moresby. Here we had better access to business operations with which we were dealing in the capital. The pre-World War II war years in Papua could be described as tranquil. Mission activities moved along with the membership increasing, while the general national population was at peace with government, and life in general.

At this time Ward and Ora Nolan were located at Orokolo, a station on the west coast of Papua. Life there was trying indeed. Some time earlier an unused house in the Moresby area had been purchased and partly dismantled. It was shipped on a small steamer to Orokolo, and inasmuch as there were no anchorage facilities there, the 'house' was pushed overboard. The ocean proceeded to do its work with portions having to be retrieved from up and down the coast! Some parts were never recovered. So the Nolan home was hardly satisfactory. Ward directed a difficult district and Ora, a graduate nurse, was paid one pound per month for her services! When supplies arrived by boat they were taken ashore in a dinghy, but the cargo did not always reach the shore. Caught up in a large wave, items like flour were rendered useless. However the circumstances of mission life did not deter such dedicated people as the Nolans.

In early February 1942, Ward Nolan and I were in the mission headquarters home when at 4 am we were awakened by a bombing raid and there was a dash for the prepared shelters. The sight next morning was one I shall never forget. Nationals and some expatriates were streaming down the road by the thousands heading out of town away from the danger. They were panic stricken, yelling and



Ora and Ward Nolan in PNG

crying, as they searched for a place of safety. Fortunately all of the expatriate women in Papua had been evacuated prior to bombings, and this included the Adventist personnel.

A few days later all civilians were required to report at the Catholic School on Sunday afternoon. We were being drafted into the army. The notice said 'bring your toothbrush!' The 'we' were Pastors George Engelbrecht, Charles Mitchell, Ward Nolan and myself. The Catholic school was crowded with males of all ages. A medical check declared Pastor Mitchell as unfit, but the remaining three of us were driven off to a camp where 5000 soldiers from Australia had arrived that day. We found that there was no accommodation and little food. We applied for medical service, and roughed it three days. Then a new man-power

Officer declared that all missionaries must be discharged and leave the country. So began the *Diar's* saga which has already been covered in the Journal. Ward Nolan and Charlie Mitchell later returned to serve with ANGAU (Australian New Guinea Administration Unit). Thus an Adventist presence was brought to the areas where they worked.

Upon returning to Australia and after enjoying a brief period of leave, I was asked to serve as an Assistant Treasurer for the Australasian Union Conference. My work related specifically to the mission field which included keeping the financial records etc as national leaders were able to make contact with the union. These missionaries did a wonderful job faithfully forwarding information of tithe paying and necessary expenditures, thus setting an example for all to follow. Their work revealed the depth of their dedication to God and to the Church.

In 1944 I accompanied Pastor Andrew Stewart on a visit to Vanuatu (New Hebrides). There were reasons for the trip. First, we were to contact the United States Army base in Santo to discuss the possibilities of receiving some of the surplus army materials for use in rehabilitating mission properties.

This we did without much success. Second, in order to assess needs we were to visit mission stations and personnel as the ship's movements permitted. Here we were successful in a few instances and much encouraged by what we saw. We travelled on a Burns Philp steamer, and being war time the ship was completely blacked out at night.

During the meetings planned at Aore in the northern part of the country, Joseph Miller and Bert Pietz were ordained to the gospel ministry on 29 July. A few days later we all journeyed on to the island of Atchin, and on



Joshua (Melresres) meeting Robert Frame in Atchin in 1976



Pastor Albert Pietz



Pastor Kata Ragoso



Dr Cyril Evans



Pastor Herb White

the way Pastor Stewart talked of the pioneering days in the area. Those early days were very difficult. He and his wife worked for seven years without a convert. They endured much opposition from the local people, and in their primitive home had to sleep away from windows to avoid arrows and spears. To try and persuade the people to come to worship, Pastor Stewart built a small church on the mission property. Finally one day a young man named Melresres climbed the stone wall separating the mission from the village and joined Pastor Stewart in the church. This was the first breakthrough on the island of Atchin and the beginning of a larger work. Pastor Stewart later changed the name of Melresres to Joshua, and it was now my privilege to travel to Atchin with Pastor Stewart. As we landed we saw a middle aged Joshua rush forward with his wife and ten children followed by scores of members. Overcome with emotion and an outpouring of love, Pastor Stewart greeted everyone and opened God's Word to them as they were seated under a large tree. Such experiences bring great rewards to missionaries who labour hard and long, and live to see the fruitage as the Holy Spirit does His work in the hearts of men and women. This is a picture that will remain with me as long as I live. Returning missionary Bert Pietz was warmly welcomed by the people as he'd been away for two and a quarter years. While on the island Andrew Stewart, Mission Superintendent James Perry, Algie Gallagher, Bert Pietz and I met as a committee in Bert Pietz' house. The agenda was lengthy and the needs were great.

During the war years many of the mission vessels used in the South Pacific were lost, or taken over by the authorities.



The *Veilomani*—1946

This led to a boat building program and several boats of three different sizes were placed under construction, mainly by Halvorsens in Sydney who had a fine record as boat builders. Pastor Reuben Hare, and treasury staff gave leadership in this activity. The largest vessel built was the *Veilomani* of 20 metres. She was to ply the waters of New Guinea and be based in Rabaul, as was the first *Veilomani*. In 1945 the boat was ready for delivery. A retired sea captain was hired and Pastor Hare was first mate, with an island national crew making up the balance of seamen. Pastor Stewart and I flew from Sydney to Moresby and joined the boat there after its trip from Sydney.

We began a long journey of eleven weeks, commencing at Rabaul<sup>3</sup> on the island of New Britain, in February 1947. We travelled throughout the Solomon Islands visiting most of the mission stations and assessing the current situation relative to the condition of plant and personnel needs. Pastor Cyril Pascoe was on board with his wife Marie. She served well as the stewardess and with the able assistance of a boy from Buka, managed the dining room. As second mate I stayed on the bridge and assisted Nava, a New Guinean who was steering the boat. Proceeding in a south-easterly direction we rounded Cape Henpan on the north of the island of Buka and then sailed down the eastern coast of Bougainville.

Soon we were in the Bougainville Strait (known as 'The Slot' at the time), with the island of Choiseul on the port side and the island of Vella la Vella on the starboard. On reaching Gizo, the administrative centre for the Western Province on the island of the same name, we were cleared by both the customs officer and the port doctor. On arriving at Kukundu a short distance south on the northern coast of the island of Kilimbangara, and anchoring there for two days, two church workers came on board the *Veilomani*—Dr Cyril Evans, resident doctor at the Aymes Memorial Hospital, and Pastor Kata



The Aymes Memorial Hospital—1938



Dr Cyril Evans with some of his staff at Aymes Memorial hospital

Ragoso, a national leader of distinction who had supervised the work of the church during the WWII years.

On the voyage south to Honiara on the northern coast of the island of Guadalcanal, we passed the islands of Kilimbagara on our port side, the islands of New Georgia, Vangunu, the Russells, Savo on the starboard and the Florida Islands on the port side.

At Honiara, after successfully arranging for permission to visit the two southern islands of Bellona and Rennell, we spent time with a number of missionaries—Pastor Herbert White, Superintendent, and John Fletcher, Secretary-Treasurer of the Solomon Islands Mission, Pastors Lester Lock from Kopiu, and Wally Fergusson and John Newman from Kwailabesi. White and Fletcher boarded the boat to join us in visiting the outer stations. The first call was made in the Florida Islands where we gave the boat a thorough cleaning before we proceeded on to Kwailabesi on the northern end of the island of Malaita where we had a hospital and central school. Here we again met Dr Cyril Evans who had gone on before us. He and some nurses were providing medical treatment for a large crowd of people. We then travelled through the narrow Maramasike Passage and turned westward towards Kopiu on the eastern end of Guadalcanal. There Lock joined our party.

We set our course for the island of Rennell lying well to the south of the large island of Guadalcanal. The people on both Rennell and Bellona were of Polynesian descent. It was a very rough journey but finally we were able to drop anchor and climb the high cliffs at the waters edge. Night had fallen, and after eating some sweet potatoes we sought rest. We were ushered to a hut and the 'beds' were old planks which were very, very hard. Beside me was Ragoso. He managed to sleep with some gusto, but it was a long, dreary night for most of us. Chief Taupongi joined us in the morning and we canoed across the lake to the village of Hutuna for meetings with the small group of believers. They were quite isolated, but they grew in numbers through the years and some of them became active missionaries to other islands.

On returning to Honiara we talked with Lyn Thrift and inspected the land adjacent to Henderson airfield on which he would be establishing the Betikama School. The airfield had been the scene of many fierce battles with the Japanese soldiers on Guadalcanal during the war. Pastor Cyril Pascoe had drawn the preliminary plans for the new institution. We also inspected



Top: The school building on Kopiu; Middle: The hospital on Kopiu—1946; Bottom: A group welcoming visitors to Kopiu

progress on the erection of facilities for a new headquarters office on the land obtained at Kukumu on the outskirts of Honiara. Our next port of call was Batuna on Vangunu Island in the Marovo Lagoon. A school to train workers and the headquarters for the work had been established there. After we were welcomed by hundreds of people we participated in a series of meetings attended by more than 800 eager listeners. On the Sabbath afternoon, Patovaki, Rini II, Pandahiti, Itulu and Nondi were ordained to the gospel ministry. Pastor Herb White was administering the work of the Solomon Islands from there and several days were spent with him and his associates discussing the needs and plans for the advancement of God's work.

Following a chorus of goodbyes from the many who had crowded on to the wharf, we were off to Kukudu and Gizo, and for a short visit to the islands of Ranongga and Simbo. On continuing our journey we sailed eastward to visit Ruruvai, Varoonga and Nuatambu on the island of Choiseul, calling at Segi on the way.

We headed for Rabaul, calling on the way at Kukudu, Sosolokamu and Dovele on the island of Vella la Vella, Faisi in

the Shortland Islands for a permit, and Buin Torokino, Rumba and Inuson Bougainville.

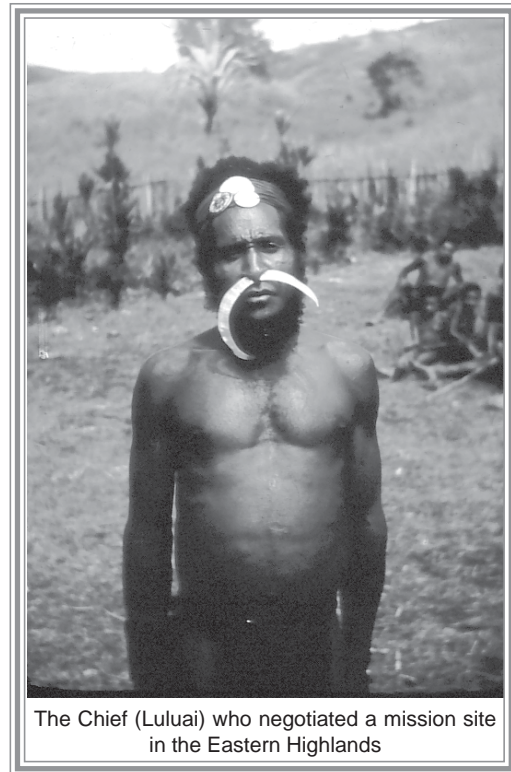
We of the AUC Office were able to take back to Wahroonga Headquarters a report of the stability of the work in the Solomons and other fields due to the leadership qualities of national workers while the war raged. Now with the return of expatriates, the united effort under the blessing of God's Spirit, boded well for the future.

In 1947 Peggie and I were asked to return to Papua New Guinea to give leadership to that portion of the mission field. Following the war Papua and New Guinea became one country, and this was a time of great activity in mission enterprise, particularly as the Highlands were being opened to settlement by various organisations including missionaries. The AUC Committee was busy appointing new missionaries and our home in Port Moresby became a transition centre for the new recruits. The Government opened the Highlands section by section as the people were considered to be friendly toward new settlers. At this time Pastor Nolan was the Director for the Highlands and he and his family were located at Bena Bena in the Eastern Highlands. Ward was busy locating missionaries, both new and returning.

Around the coastal areas the mission stations which had been established for many years were developing full operations again. Credit must be given to the national missionaries who had 'stood by the stuff' during the war years. Their dedication to God and to the work assigned to them made the planning for new advance easier to arrange. These were times when a country which had been ravaged by war was now opening to the spreading of the Gospel. Looking back today we must recognise the mighty way in which the Spirit has worked. When we landed in Port Moresby in 1938 the membership in Papua and New Guinea was numbered in hundreds, and today we can speak of many, many thousands in that field. The combined efforts of God and man have prepared a great harvest.

In February 1948, I joined Nolan in an itinerary through the Highlands, with the purpose of securing new sites for mission stations. We started from Bena Bena with fifteen carriers and headed west. This journey covered more than 320 kilometres and a period of several weeks. It was not long before we were moving across a pass at over 3,000 metres and the majesty of mountains and valleys were opened to us. Although adjacent to the equator the altitude of the Highlands provides a climate of eternal spring, and all of us who have visited there can testify to this reality.

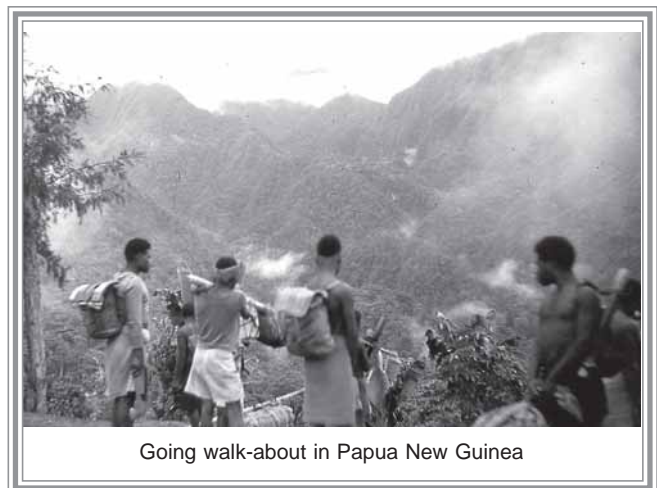
As we travelled from village to village we were welcomed with open arms. So much so that the pigs' grease and soot which covered the nationals' bodies were soon transferred to us as they rushed to carry us across streams, and generally to make us welcome. Some of these people had seen just a few white people and only as government officers opened the territory. At night we would camp in a hut that had been set aside by the officer for their use. We would unfold our camp stretchers surrounded by the locals as they filled every space. At one village the people came in throwing chickens at our feet, and then a pig was dragged in. Communication was difficult but as night settled down, people, chickens and pigs disappeared.



The Chief (Luluai) who negotiated a mission site in the Eastern Highlands

The people of the Highlands were salt hungry. Recognising this, Nolan had included a sack of salt in our luggage. At each village we need to provide food for our carriers, and this was done by buying sweet potatoes from the villagers for whom this was a staple diet. A teaspoon of salt would purchase a mountain of sweet potatoes! Government patrol officers had given to the local people a variety of vegetable seeds which they had planted. Our diet included tomatoes and passion fruit as big as tennis balls etc. Here in the midst of a somewhat primitive people we dined with pleasure. I recall that on one occasion dessert consisted of half a paw paw filled with passion fruit. Quite a delicacy!

When we arrived at a desirable site for a mission station, and particularly if it lent itself to an airstrip, we would negotiate with the Chief or Luluai as he was called. We carried some axes or large knives with us, and these were gifts to open discussion. This was the practice of all organisations negotiating for land. The people of these areas had used stone axes for generations, and an item of steel was a real treasure. If permission was given we would measure land and draw a plan of the proposed site. This was taken to the nearest government station and we



Going walk-about in Papua New Guinea



Len Barnard and Colin Winch with the *Andrew Stewart*

would further negotiate with the officer who was responsible for the village in question. If he agreed, he would purchase the land on behalf of the mission, and in due course the mission would be granted a Mission lease of the property for a period of 99 years for what was known as a 'peppercorn rental.' In this way we purchased three sites in the Eastern Highlands, and in this area today there are more than 60,000 members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, a growth hardly visualised when handing out steel axes! God surely works miracles.

Our trek led us down into verdant valleys as well as along the mountain ridges. A happy occasion was the site of a waterfall. For two tired and sweaty individuals this was an invitation to shower. We stripped and looked around for observers and found no one but our carriers. However as we began to shower it seemed as if hundreds of pairs of eyes peered from the jungle! Refreshed we pressed on.

At the end of our journey we arrived at the Mount Hagen area and joined David Caldwell and his wife Joy at the school which they had begun to operate. This was a very happy and comfortable stay as our hosts refreshed us in body and spirit. After a few days we boarded a small aircraft and were flown back to base. This trek will always be fresh in my mind, as will be the picture which I have today of the boundless measure of God's love as He uses His servants to spread the Gospel to a primitive people. Many are today graduating at university level and can thus engage in even larger work.

It was during the 1940s that the Government of Papua New Guinea decided to develop a Hansende Colony in the Western Highlands. The Mission was invited to become a partner in this activity and to provide the staff, so an appropriate action was taken. The Mission Committee decided to invite Len Barnard to head up the establishment of the Colony which was to be located at Togoba not far from Mt Hagen. At this time Len was serving as a medical worker for the Government. He had gained considerable experience in ANGAU while in the army during the war. At the time of our call Len was located in Bogja, an isolated spot on the northern New Guinea coast, and was in charge of a medical unit caring for the local people. It was urgent that we contact Len to get his reaction to the invitation and the only way to accomplish this was to fly to his area. However there was no airstrip in his vicinity so we decided on an 'Air Mail' delivery. Two of us rented a small plane and pilot and took on board a letter of call tied to a brick! We buzzed the Barnard home and Len came out waving to us. We then launched the brick which instead of landing in the yard, went through the thatched roof of the house! This was surely

the first time that a worker had been called to mission service by such a method!

Len readily joined the mission staff and we all know what a great work he did at the Colony, and later as a mission plane was purchased—the *Andrew Stewart*, honouring Pastor Andrew Stewart, the pioneer missionary who did so much to spread the Gospel



Len Barnard at Laiagam

across the South Pacific. Later the Barnards were located at Laiagam in the Western Highlands where Len had the responsibility of directing a team of nationals spread across a vast area. To make contact with these outposts required many days of walking. With the arrival of the plane, however, days of walking changed to minutes of flying. As the years went by other planes were added and, as one missionary said, they were 'angels flying in the midst of heaven' taking missionaries to spread the Word.

I thank God for His multiple blessings as I have relived our fifty years of service. It is a real privilege to be able to look back so far and trace His guiding and ever present Hand. The challenges to the Church are still great, but as another has said "God will continue to use the genius of man to spread the Word and build souls for His Kingdom."

(With assistance from Pastor Bert Pietz and Pastor Cyril Pascoe)

## References

- <sup>1</sup> The Australasian Union Conference (AUC), now the South Pacific Division (SPD) — an administrative organisation of territories in the South Pacific comprising Australia, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, and the islands of the Pacific lying south of the Equator between longitude 140 degrees East, and longitude 120 degrees West, and Kiribati north of the Equator. *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook*, 1986, p293
- <sup>2</sup> From 1968 Pastor Lui Oli served as the assistant president of the Central Papuan Mission; from 1973 as president; and from 1977 until 1980 (retirement) as president of the Manus Madang Mission. *Saved from a Spear for Service in Many Places*, Lui Oli, JPAH Vol 6 No 1.
- <sup>3</sup> While in Papua New Guinea, Pastors Reuben Hare and Andrew Stewart, and Brother Robert Frame, together with some other people, were able to secure two jeeps from army authorities for mission work. They also went in search of Pastor Arthur Atkins' grave. Two miles from Kokopo on the Gazelle Peninsula on the island of New Britain, they visited a Catholic mission where some of the sisters led them to the mission cemetery and pointed out two graves together. One was marked with a wooden cross and on it were the words 'SDA Missionary.' Here they were informed, was the resting place of Pastor Atkins. *Australasian Record*, 2 June, 1947, p8





# They Did Return!

## The resumption of the Adventist Mission in the Solomon Islands after World War II—Part 1

ARNOLD REYE



SEE CV IN VOL 2 #2

A previous article dealt with the Adventist Church's response to the Japanese occupation of parts of its mission field in World War II. This article focuses on the sequel—the return to those mission stations.

The supreme commander of the Allied forces in the South West Pacific Area, General Douglas MacArthur confidently declared, "I came through, and I *shall return*", when he arrived in Australia from the Philippines on 17 March 1942. This unshakable goal shaped the manner in which MacArthur prosecuted the rollback and defeat of the Japanese army over the next three years. Without MacArthur's public relations flair, but with equal conviction, Adventist Church leaders in Wairoonga, Sydney, were determined that as soon as possible its missionaries would return to the mission stations they had been forced to evacuate in Papua, New Guinea, and the Solomon Islands. This is the story, in part, of that return. In this article we will focus on the return to the Solomon Islands.

### The Context

Following their capture of Rabaul in January 1942, the Japanese proceeded to occupy the many clusters of islands to the north, south and east of Rabaul—New Ireland, Buka, Bougainville, the Shortlands, New Georgia, Russell, Florida, Tulagi, and Guadalcanal. The thrust into the Solomons began in March 1942 at Buka and by 3 May the Japanese had occupied Tulagi the seat of government of the British Solomon Islands Protectorate (BSIP). Soon after the occupation of Tulagi, the Japanese began the construction of an airfield near the Lunga River, Guadalcanal, later to be known as Henderson Field.

The BSIP, along with other British territories in the Pacific, came under the jurisdiction of the British High Commission for the Western Pacific with headquarters in Suva, Fiji. The BSIP was administered by a Resident Commissioner, and he in turn devolved responsibility for civil government at the local level to a team of District Officers. With the approach of the Japanese, government officers facilitated the repatriation of missionaries, European traders and planters, and the majority of its civil service personnel. In an effort to

retain a semblance of civil government, however, the Resident Commissioner, William S Marchant, opted to remain and relocated headquarters from Tulagi to Auki on the west coast of Malaita.

In addition to Marchant, five District Officers also elected to remain, to continue civil government, and to actively participate in the war as coast watchers. Two who are mentioned in this article were Donald Kennedy who was assigned the Western Solomons, an area extending from Florida Island to the Shortlands, and Martin Clemens who was assigned Guadalcanal. Because they were closest to the fighting, Kennedy and Clemens developed strong networks of nationals who played significant roles in the rescue of allied airmen and in the capture of downed Japanese fliers. In time they were joined by other former civil officers and effectively maintained British influence despite the presence of the Japanese.<sup>1</sup>

In August 1942 US Marines landed at Lunga Point and captured the airfield the Japanese were constructing on Guadalcanal. The remainder of 1942, however, proved a stalemate as the Marines grimly held on to their prize. By January 1943, however, the tide turned and the Americans began the task of liberating the Central and Western Solomons from the Japanese. The process of evicting the Japanese proved a very hard slog.<sup>2</sup> Key Japanese strongholds in the Solomon Islands were, however, cleared by October 1943 and Bougainville by April 1944. While the southern part of New Britain had been reoccupied late 1943, Rabaul remained a Japanese fortress until the end of the war.<sup>3</sup> It would appear that Church leaders at Wairoonga thought it would be a simple matter for their missionaries to return as soon as the Japanese had been cleared from an island group. For a variety of reasons, however, getting its missionaries back to the Solomon Islands proved difficult and frustrating.

### Problems with the BSIP and British High Commission

As noted above, when the Japanese invaded the British Solomon Islands and occupied the administrative centre at Tulagi, a vestige of civil government remained but the majority of civil officers withdrew and civil government was largely transferred to the High Commission in Suva. It was therefore to the High Commission that the Australasian Union Conference (AUC) Mission Board directed its requests for permission to re-enter the Solomons. With the Japanese effectively cleared from the Eastern Solomons, namely, Guadalcanal, Tulagi, the Florida Islands and Malaita by January 1943, in April 1943 the Secretary of the AUC, S Victor Stratford, directed the first of a succession of letters to the High Commission seeking permits for the return of three

missionaries. A couple of months from the clearing of the Japanese to the return of the missionaries seemed a reasonable period of time. The AUC officers were therefore surprised and a little miffed when the April letter and another in August went unanswered. Given this silence, it was decided that a more personal approach was required. Pastor Lennard V Wilkinson, president of the Fiji Mission, was briefed and directed to seek an interview with the High Commissioner and to make representations on behalf of the Adventist Mission Board. It was also agreed that Sir Henry Scott, a Suva barrister, be requested to work with Wilkinson in this approach to the High Commissioner. Specifically, the Wilkinson-Scott team was asked to intercede with the High Commissioner, Sir Philip Mitchell, for the return of Norman and David Ferris, and John Gosling, to Guadalcanal, Malaita and San Cristobal respectively.<sup>4</sup>



Lennard Wilkinson

In engaging Sir Henry Scott the AUC officers singled out one person who was eminently positioned to help their cause. Born at Levuka, Fiji, in 1876, Scott graduated in law from Sydney University and returned to Fiji in 1899 to practise law. He became a barrister in the Supreme Court of Fiji, was appointed a King's Counsel in 1912, and served for many years as a member of the Legislative and Executive Councils of Fiji. For a period he served the government as Acting Attorney General. His public service also included presidency of the Fiji Chamber of Commerce and Mayor of Suva and for his public service he had been knighted in 1928. In 1937 Scott with Ratu Sukuna, a New Zealand and Oxford educated Fijian, represented the Colony at the coronation of George VI.<sup>5</sup> Scott had previously undertaken legal work for the Church in Fiji and was favourably disposed toward Adventists. Thus in seeking Scott's assistance the AUC officers focused on a man who had ready access to the administration of the High Commission. They felt confident of early success.

However, before they received a reply from Wilkinson and Scott, the officers at Wahroonga received rather disturbing news. While visiting the Sydney office of the BSIP, Norman Ferris had met Major Sanders, the former District Officer for Malaita. During the course of their conversation Sanders made it clear that it was not intended that Adventist missionaries return to the Solomons following the war. As recalled by Norman Ferris, Sanders' words were: "The missionaries of the SDA Mission deserted the natives, and have nothing left out in the group, and have no right to expect it back." This was a challenge that could not be ignored. If Sanders' comments reflected the position of the High Commission then the Church stood to lose its entire mission program in the Solomons. Alarmed, lest they handle the matter ineptly, the AUC placed the issue in the hands of their solicitors with a request that the latter draft a Memorandum to submit to the High Commissioner.<sup>6</sup>

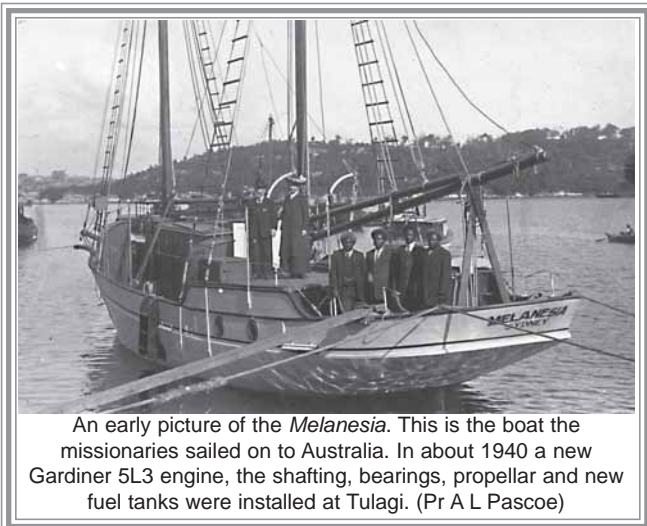
A brief overview of the resulting Memorandum was provided in an earlier article.<sup>7</sup> It is now proposed to outline

more fully the issues raised as they were considered pivotal to the return of an Adventist expatriate presence to the Solomons. The Memorandum<sup>8</sup> was presented in sets of paragraphs under nine headings. The first set dealt with the history of Adventist missions in the Solomon Islands and noted that since its beginnings on New Georgia in 1914 the church had extended its work to fourteen other islands. There were approximately 5000 enrolled members [Sabbath-School members] and several thousand others who called themselves Seventh-day Adventists but who had not yet been enrolled. It noted that immediately prior to the outbreak of hostilities twelve expatriate missionary families had been located throughout the islands. The expatriates were supported by 130 national assistants. Adventist activities included 85 village schools, several district schools, and a central training school at Batuna on the

Marovo Lagoon, the Amyes Memorial Hospital on Kolombangara, a maternity hospital at Batuna, and a medical clinic on Malaita.

The second set established that the Adventist withdrawal had not been precipitate and chaotic. On the contrary it has been planned and orderly. In June 1940 a meeting had been held at Rabaul in which the superintendents of the three Adventist mission territories—Papua, New Guinea and Solomon Islands—met with several Church leaders and formulated a plan for handling any emergency in their areas of responsibility. Thus the Mission Board, the mission superintendents, missionaries, and national leaders were fully briefed on what they should do in the event of hostilities. Furthermore, it had been stressed that all missionaries were to implicitly carry out directives issued by government officers of the island administrations.

The paragraphs under the third heading dealt specifically with the evacuation of missionaries from the Solomon Islands. This commenced with the evacuation of missionary families when so advised by the District Officer at Gizo. Evacuation of the men followed a couple of weeks later when so advised by their respective district officers. The Church's cooperation with government officials was evidenced by the use of Mission headquarters at Batuna as the gathering point for the evacuation of all Europeans in that area, including missionaries of other faiths and several district officers. Adventist male missionaries sailed to Australia on the Mission's largest ship, the *Melanesia*, and did so two weeks after the Methodist mission vessel, the *Fauro Chief*, and several days after the last civilian party on the *Morinda*. Explanation was given that while D A Ferris had planned to be part of the *Melanesia* group, he had been directed by the District Officer at Auki, Malaita, to proceed immediately to Tulagi and join the *Morinda* evacuees. Due to overcrowding, however, Ferris was amongst those asked to step off the steamer. It was pointed out that a senior officer of the Solomon Islands administration, a Mr Johnson, and several other officials remained on the steamer. Fortuitously, on the way back to his mission station, Ferris



met up with the *Melanesia* and helped sail that vessel to Australia.

The fourth set of paragraphs dealt with the brief history of the efforts to obtain permission for a number of Adventist missionaries to return following the Allied defeat of the Japanese in the Eastern Solomon Islands. It noted that letters were written to the High Commission in Suva and to General Douglas MacArthur on 13 April 1943. There was a further letter to the High Commission in August 1943, and a personal approach through Sir Henry Scott and Pastor L V Wilkinson on 13 October 1943. In each of these approaches it was proposed that three men return who were experienced missionaries and qualified to carry out medical work. To the above approaches the High Commission finally advised that no permits had as yet been issued for missionaries to return as the Solomons was still a restricted military operational area. Contrary to this assertion, the Memorandum pointed out that in Sydney a member of the BSIP administration, Mr Johnson, had admitted that two missionary nurses of another faith had been permitted to return to their stations on Malaita.

The fifth set dealt with the meeting between Norman A Ferris and Major Sanders in Sydney. It outlined the gist of the points made by Sanders and his assertion that Adventists would not be permitted to return to the group. This led directly to the sixth set which advised the High Commission that subsequent to the interview with Major Sanders information had been received from reliable sources that some native members of the Adventist mission on Malaita had been victimised by government officers, including the imposition of the 'extreme' penalty. This purported treatment was meted out for their loyalty to 'conscientious religious convictions'. Although essentially rumour, the suggestion was that one or more Adventist nationals had been executed for refusing to work for the military on Sabbath. Whatever the veracity of the rumour, the High Commission was reminded that these reports were viewed with 'the gravest concern' by the Church.

The seventh set of paragraphs got to the nub of the matter and asked the question why Adventist missionaries had not been permitted to return to the Solomon Islands. The High Commission was asked whether Major Sanders had expressed a personal view or whether he had reflected an official position taken by the High Commission. The Memorandum stated, "We deeply resent the offensive remarks of Major Sanders concerning our missionaries and the future of our mission work in the Solomons." Furthermore, the Adventist Mission Board felt constrained to protest at "such casual and care-free disposal of matters so vital to our interests. . . and to the

thousands of our adherents in the Solomon Islands." For good measure it pointed out that the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Australasia was but a part of a world-wide church with headquarters in Washington, DC, USA. Furthermore, in due course the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists "will require to be informed as to whether its interests in the Solomon Islands are to be utterly destroyed by official decision, which as yet has not made the least approach to the mission body concerned." This section concluded by asking whether there was a more serious reason beyond the points made by Major Sanders, and contained the thinly veiled imputation that maybe the High Commission sought to cover up the harsh treatment meted out to the Adventist mission natives on Malaita.

The eighth set of paragraphs dealt with the outstanding contribution made by Adventist native members to the Allied cause. Without attempting to chronicle specific instances, it pointed out that this contribution was evidence of the effectiveness and success of Adventist mission work in the Solomons. This, the Mission Board believed, entitled the Adventist Church to favourable consideration to its request for permits for three of its missionaries. The ninth and final paragraphs resubmitted the names of Norman Ferris, David Ferris and John Gosling and reiterated the breadth of their experience in the islands and their skills as medical missionaries. In the case of Norman Ferris he had sailed the waters of the Solomon Islands for fifteen years and had contributed valuable navigational information to the Allied Geographical Section of the South West Pacific Command.

Resolution of the issues raised in the Memorandum were perceived by the AUC officers as crucial to the Church's interests in the Solomons and to the resumption of its mission program. It is not clear, however, when or by what means the Memorandum was forwarded to the High Commission in Suva, but the officers at Wahroonga chafed at their failure to make progress. Early December 1943 Pastor Charles H Watson, AUC President, received a letter from Sir Henry Scott in which Scott advised that the Church seek the assistance of General MacArthur. While the minutes of the AUC Office Committee record receipt of Sir Henry's letter, they do not record his report on progress with the High Commission.<sup>9</sup> The counsel to bypass the British and to appeal directly to the Americans suggests, however, that progress was not satisfactory and it was time to try other avenues. It is very likely that Scott had formed the opinion that the British were impotent in the matter and that control of the Solomons was still very much in the hands of the American military. Whatever the details, the feelings of the AUC officers were summed up in the words of Victor Stratford in his report to the 1943 AUC Annual Meeting. He declared: "1943 was a year of hopes and disappointments regarding the return of at least some of our missionaries to this group [Solomon Islands]." Acting on the Scott advice, in early 1944 the AUC President and Secretary were authorised to make every attempt to gain an audience with General MacArthur and through him to approach Admiral Halsey.<sup>10</sup>

A difficulty faced by the AUC officers was that the US Joint Chiefs of Staff in prosecuting the war in the Pacific south of the equator had established two separate commands. The South West Pacific under a general and the South Pacific under an admiral. The separate commands reflected the respective roles of US Army divisions and the US Navy marines and the army-navy rivalries evident at the highest levels of military administration. Unfortunately the boundary



Victor Stratford & his wife Agnes

between the two commands passed through the Western Solomons. While Papua and New Guinea were MacArthur's responsibility, the Solomon Islands fell within Admiral William Halsey's command. In attempting this avenue of approach, it was hoped that army-navy rivalry notwithstanding, MacArthur would persuade Halsey to grant permission for the return of some missionaries to the Solomon Islands. MacArthur was, however, a very busy person and there is no record in the Minutes that the two AUC officers were successful in gaining an interview.

Periodically through 1944 there were actions taken by AUC officers to acquire the elusive permits. In March Wilkinson was cabled and asked, with the assistance of Sir Henry Scott, to make further representations. In June it was decided to cable the High Commission directly. Things appeared to change when early in July Wilkinson forwarded a cable that advised he and Scott had enjoyed a satisfactory interview with the High Commissioner. In the follow-up report Wilkinson indicated that while the Commissioner was sympathetic, there were no immediate prospects of re-entry and that press reports of the return of other missionaries were incorrect.<sup>11</sup>

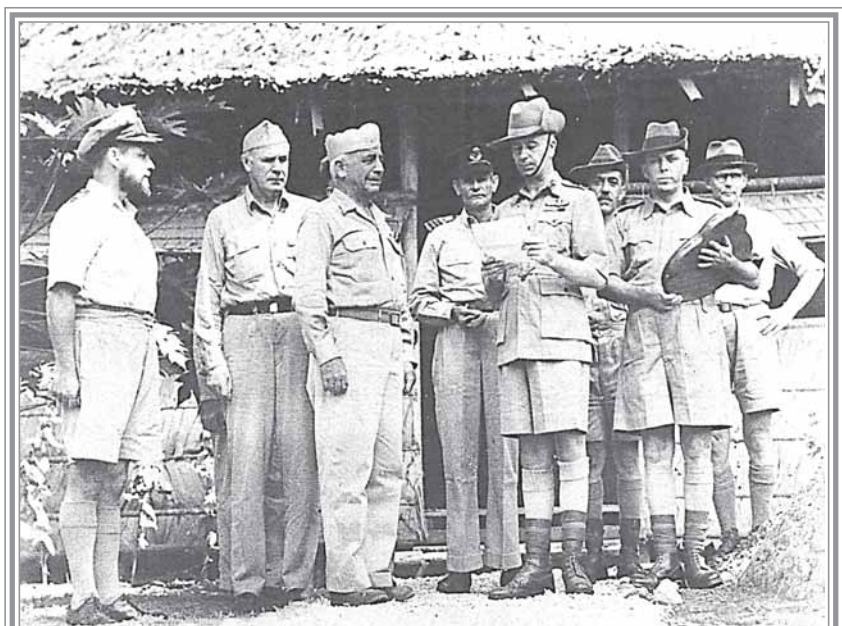
In mid-1944 Norman Ferris was part of a group of civilians in Sydney given opportunity to interview Wing-Commander Widdy then commanding officer of the Solomon Islands Labour Corps. The key question put to the Wing-Commander was "How do civilians get back to the Solomons?" In his response Widdy reinforced what Sir Henry had intimated, namely it was not the High Commission that was the impediment to the return of civilians, rather it was American military policy. Unfortunately Widdy did not hold out hope of a change in American thinking, at least not in the immediate future.<sup>12</sup>

On the positive side, the Widdy interview did explain a number of things that had puzzled the AUC officers. First, there were the newspaper reports that two Anglican nurses had returned to their hospital. Widdy confirmed that this had happened, but the women concerned had done so without permission. Having gone as far as Noumea, they managed to persuade some officers of a convoy ship to hide them until the ship was well at sea. Thus it was as stowaways that they returned to their hospital. It was with reluctance they were permitted to stay,

but with considerable restriction on their work. Second, there was the apparent freedom to come and go exercised by the Bishop of Melanesia. Widdy's answer to this was that the Bishop held special status as the King's representative. Furthermore, the Bishop had cultivated the friendship of some senior American officers and this had helped facilitate his movement out of and return to the Solomons. Widdy pointed out that there were civilians in the Solomons, some ill, who refused to leave because if they did they knew they would not be permitted to return.<sup>13</sup>

A further positive outcome of the Widdy interview was the Wing-Commander's strong endorsement of those expatriate missionaries who had obeyed orders to evacuate. According to Widdy this compliance was appreciated by the administration and when the time was right for a return they would be supported. In a statement directed particularly to Ferris, Widdy observed: "And you certainly have a right to re-establish your work as quickly as anyone in the Solomons." Following the formal interview Widdy spoke again with Ferris and suggested the Mission have a medical person ready to go out to the Amyes Hospital at short notice.<sup>14</sup> This interview went a long way to dispelling concerns that there was an official stance against the Adventist Mission.

The interview also gave Norman Ferris an idea as to how he might return early to the Solomons. He did not suggest being a stowaway, but proposed to the AUC that he apply to join the Solomon Islands Labour Corps as chaplain to Adventist boys. This would also facilitate his carrying out medical patrols. While the idea had some merit, it was finally decided to wait and see how the repeated requests to Suva panned out. In August 1944 the Secretary advised that there was a possibility of arranging, through the Commanding General, US Forces, Base 7, for a representative to visit the Solomon Islands to make contact with native leaders and evaluate the local scene. The argument was that such a visit was essential to enable the Mission Board to "intelligently plan for rehabilitation." Norman Ferris was nominated as the man for the task. For reasons unstated, however, the AUC officers backed off this proposal and reverted to the task of obtaining permits for three men to return.<sup>15</sup>



The British Resident Commissioner, Solomon Islands, Colonel Owen Noel, speaking at a presentation. L to R: Lieut A Macdonald, Capt W Powell, Vice Admiral Aubrey Fitch, Squadron Leader Widdy RAAF, Colonel Noel, Major Hyne

A further hint that the British Solomon Islands Government was prepared to cooperate with the Seventh-day Adventist Church came through a letter received in September 1944. The letter sought an Adventist response to a proposed scheme whereby Solomon Island boys aged 10-11 years be sent to Suva for further education at the Government Provincial School, then Queen Victoria School, and finally the Central Medical School. In response the AUC officers agreed that the scheme had merit and advised that the Adventist church would cooperate. They pointed out, however, that for Adventist boys the beginning point should be Fulton College. After Fulton then the Queen Victoria School and medical training.<sup>16</sup>

In October 1944 the AUC received a letter from the Secretary of the BSIP advising that with civil government re-established in the Solomon Islands, the proper procedure in making application for the return of its missionaries should be through the Resident Commissioner. Quickly applications were submitted for the Ferris brothers and Gosling, but the wheels of bureaucracy still ground slowly. It was not until January 1945 that advice was received that the Resident Commissioner had approved the three names and forwarded them to the High Commissioner whose role it was to recommend them to the US military authorities for final approval. To their delighted surprise approval for David Ferris and John Gosling arrived within days. For some reason, however, there was a hitch with Norman Ferris and they were asked to re-submit an application on his behalf. Approval for the return of Norman Ferris was finally received in April 1945.<sup>17</sup> Thus, almost two years from when they first made application, Adventist missionaries received permission to return to the Solomon Islands and to commence the work of rehabilitating the mission program.

While for almost two years it had seemed impossible to enter into dialogue with BSIP officials, in February 1945 the newly appointed Resident Commissioner, Colonel Noel, was in Sydney and agreed to meet a delegation consisting of Victor Stratford, Will Pascoe and Norman Ferris. A range of issues was discussed and Colonel Noel proved helpful. Will Pascoe made a record of the items talked over and of the important outcomes. Issues included the following: (1) medical instruments and materials were in very short supply and therefore Ferris and Gosling were required to take their own; (2) a new capital was being sited at Honiara and it would be necessary for the lodgment of an application for an Adventist native settlement outside the township area; (3) the Adventist Church was urged to apply as soon as possible for a headquarters site in the capital and a separate application was required if it was intended that there be a European church building; (4) the delegation was advised that three mission vessels—the *Marara*, *G F Jones*, and *Dadavata*—were in use for medical work and the disbursement of food supplies by the BSIP and were not immediately available to the Mission (nothing, however, was known of the *Mizpah* and *Portal*); (5) fairly large sums of American dollars were being directed to the nationals, but the nationals had little confidence in paper money and currency exchange was a problem, therefore the Church undertook to remit such money to Australia and to



Some of the Ferris family in 1947. Back Row from L to R: David & Edith; Christina, Walter's wife & their son Elwin; Ruby, Norman's wife. Middle row L to R: Walter; Jessie & Arthur; Norman. Front Row L to R: Warren, Glenda & Kevin, children of David & Edith.

provide Australian silver; (6) while the male nurses were required to bring instruments and medical supplies with them, there was the problem of ongoing support and it was agreed that the nurses could draw from army supplies on the basis of funds lodged with the BSIP office in Sydney; (7) the Church advised that it wished to pay back wages to its national workers and since this would involve large amounts of cash it was recommended that the matter be taken up with Dr H Evatt, Department of External Affairs, to obtain authority; (8) the matter of land tenure was broached and the Resident Commissioner recommended that this matter be taken up with the BSIP office in Sydney; (9) the Resident Commissioner advised that war damage suffered by British interests in the war areas, including Hong Kong and Malaya, was beyond comprehension, and no insurance existed, nevertheless he urged that the Church effect quick action to ensure its claims in the Solomon Islands were on record; and (10) the Resident Commissioner advised that the British Colonial Office had allocated a sum of £3000 for medical work in the Solomon Islands, that this money had not yet been disbursed between the various mission bodies, but that the Adventist medical programs could expect to receive a share in due course.<sup>18</sup> The AUC officers were encouraged by the discussions with the Resident Commissioner and felt that relationships were amicable and this bode well for the future. Now they could face the logistics of getting expatriate personnel back to the Solomon Islands.

In an assessment of the AUC and its endeavours to get expatriate personnel back into the Solomon Islands, we might identify the following: (1) an apparent lack of understanding of the dynamics of a theatre of war with its total focus on the war effort through a build up of material and the utilisation of human resources—under these conditions civilians, including missionaries, were an unwelcome diversion; (2) this lack of understanding led to impatience and frustration and unreasonable expectations of the High Commission; (3) an attitude of 'we can do it alone' when maybe an approach in concert with other mission groups may have better gained the attention of the High Commission; (4) a reluctance to change their approach mid-1944 when the evidence began to

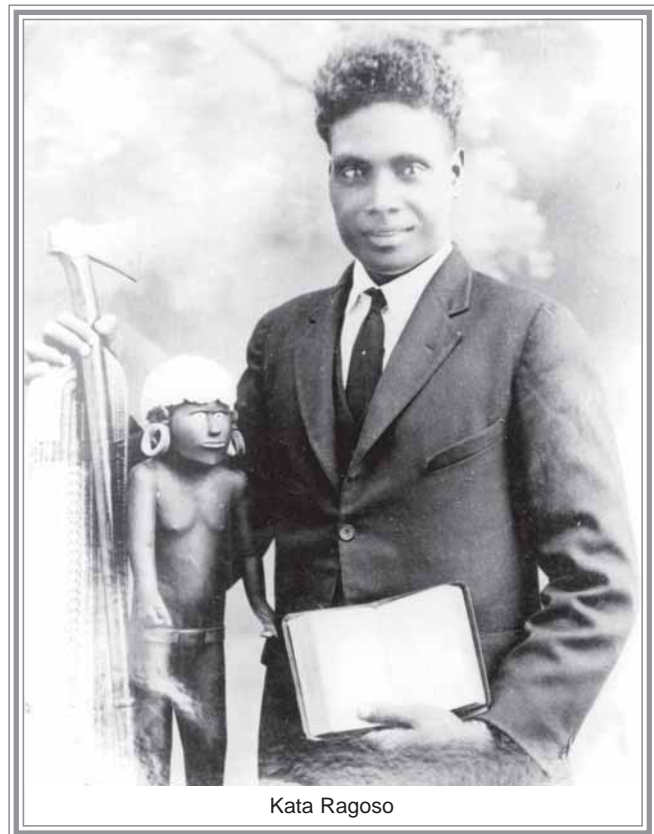
point toward American military command as the 'road block'; and (5) given the role of the American military, there is no evidence to suggest the AUC officers considered eliciting the help of Church leaders at Washington, DC where direct representations could be made with the highest United States military echelons. In fairness to the AUC officers, they were forced to cope with a situation beyond the pale of their experience. To their credit, they did not lose sight of the reasons why Adventists conducted mission programs. Within a matter of months of their amicable discussions with the Resident Commissioner, however, another dark issue came to the attention of the Mission Board. Again, it involved a BSIP district officer.

### The Ragoso Affair

While at higher levels within the BSIP administration there appears to have been no particular prejudice against the Adventist Mission, this did not always hold true at district officer level. Anti-Adventist sentiment in the Solomon Islands was not confined to Major Sanders. In late September 1945 the AUC became aware of some rather harsh treatment meted out to its national leader, Kata Ragoso (pronounced Rangoso), by another district officer, Major Donald G Kennedy, a New Zealander who had spent most of his life in the Solomon Islands. When the Japanese occupied Rabaul and began their infiltration of the Solomon Islands, Kennedy elected to remain and became a key unit in the Coast Watcher network. Commander Eric Feldt, who ran this network, described Kennedy as determined and dominant and one to whom command came naturally. Feldt admitted that given his "dark, heavy face and powerful frame, his determination and transparent faith in his own words," the native Solomon Islanders were left in no doubt that he "was not only a leader to be followed, but a power that it would be perilous to disobey."<sup>19</sup> Ragoso's report endorsed this perception.

Kennedy established his coast watch headquarters at Segi on the southeastern coast of New Georgia and on the western edge of the Marovo Lagoon. As Japanese shipping and aircraft moving southeast toward Guadalcanal had to pass New Georgia, Kennedy's observations and reports played an important role in keeping the allied forces informed. While the primary function of the coastwatcher was to observe and not to fight, this ran contrary to Kennedy's personality. At Segi Kennedy raised a 'guerrilla' army to protect his hideaway and established a network of informants that covered a considerable area of the Western Solomons. The Adventist mission at Batuna was within Kennedy's fiefdom and Ragoso and his Marovo Lagoon boys played an ongoing part in the rescue of downed airmen, both American and Japanese, and in handing them over to Kennedy for evacuation.

According to Ragoso,<sup>20</sup> initially Kennedy had tried to entice him into his direct employment. Kennedy asked Ragoso to accompany him to a council meeting with national representatives and to act as interpreter. As this meeting was to convene on his Sabbath, Ragoso declined. Then Kennedy tried to enlist Ragoso's support in compelling Adventist boys to work on Sabbath. Ragoso advised that he could not comply with this request as it was contrary to both his and the boys' religious beliefs. The follow up to this was an invitation for Ragoso to leave the Adventist Mission and to join him as an assistant in Government employ. Ragoso replied that he could not leave his present work for it was far more important. On a fourth occasion Kennedy invited Ragoso to join him in the conduct of court sessions and in dispensing justice. As Ragoso



Kata Ragoso

felt Kennedy was abusing his authority through the court system he again declined. Ragoso was left in no doubt that with each refusal Kennedy became more and more angry.

Early on the morning of 19 May 1943 Kennedy, ironically using the commandeered Adventist mission schooner *Dadavata*, hove to off Telina and discovered Ragoso and another Adventist, Lodi, fishing from a canoe. He called for both men to be brought onboard. Upon boarding Ragoso was made a prisoner and the vessel proceeded to a small island. Whenever he asked what he had done wrong to deserve this, Kennedy responded with a "Shut up!" and made threat of immediate execution. Actually, beside dealing with Ragoso, Kennedy had other things on his mind. He was aware that a Japanese whaleboat was nearby and systematically reconnoitering the islets in the Marovo Lagoon. In keeping with his aggressive nature, Kennedy had previously armed the *Dadavata* with a .50mm machine gun. With the Japanese getting too close to his headquarters at Segi, he proceeded to attack and sink the Japanese boat and kill all its crew. Ragoso recalled being bewildered at finding himself a prisoner in the middle of a fire-fight and he did what comes naturally to Christians. He prayed.

Following 'the Battle of Marovo Lagoon', proudly referred to by the British Central Office of Information as 'Kennedy's most memorable exploit',<sup>21</sup> Kennedy proceeded to Segi where Ragoso was placed in the stockade. Later that morning he was interrogated. Perhaps interrogation is the wrong word for according to Ragoso he was not advised of the crime for which he was being held and Kennedy proceeded to give him a thorough beating using his fists and the butt end of a rifle until Ragoso lay unconscious. Ragoso recalled Kennedy's anger, his violent swearing (which to Ragoso was indicative of a 'desperate character'), and during the beating Kennedy kept shouting, "You the leader of the Seventh Adventists, you the minister of the worship on Saturday, you think that you are their great leader." When Ragoso had regained consciousness, he was made to stand on a 44 gallon drum

surrounded by six armed men with orders to shoot when Kennedy counted to three. Ragoso recalled, "But he couldn't count."

On four occasions over the next ten days Ragoso was brought before Kennedy and every effort made to extract something that might incriminate the Adventist pastor, but wrote Ragoso, "he found nothing for which he could imprison me." In the end Kennedy declared: "Ragoso I don't want you, nor your teachers, nor your people to proceed to do any mission work in any form whatsoever among the natives of the Marovo Lagoon or anywhere else, you, your teachers and people are not allowed to preach, not allowed to distribute papers or letters, nor to call any meeting. You are not allowed to write anything of the Bible to any one, and you are not allowed to write to any of your white missionaries. And Ragoso you are no longer called a minister, nor the leader of your mission or your people."

Ragoso replied, "Yes Sir! I have heard all that you have said. As for me, my teachers and myself, we will continue to do God's work among the natives of these islands." To which Kennedy responded, "You and your people get out of Batuna, and do not go back there again. . . for you may be tempted to make your work strong there." About midnight on the night of 29 May Ragoso and Lodi, who had also been beaten, were released from imprisonment and told to go home immediately. On their way home by canoe Ragoso and Lodi met some Adventist boys in another canoe and were told that the church members in the Marovo had just concluded a week-long prayer meeting in which they had interceded with God on behalf of the two men. The last 'Amen' had been said just before midnight.

When the AUC officers received Ragoso's statement they were concerned on two points: (1) the brutal treatment meted to their national leader, and (2) the very evident anti-Adventist motivation behind the incident. This again raised the question



Batuna Training School

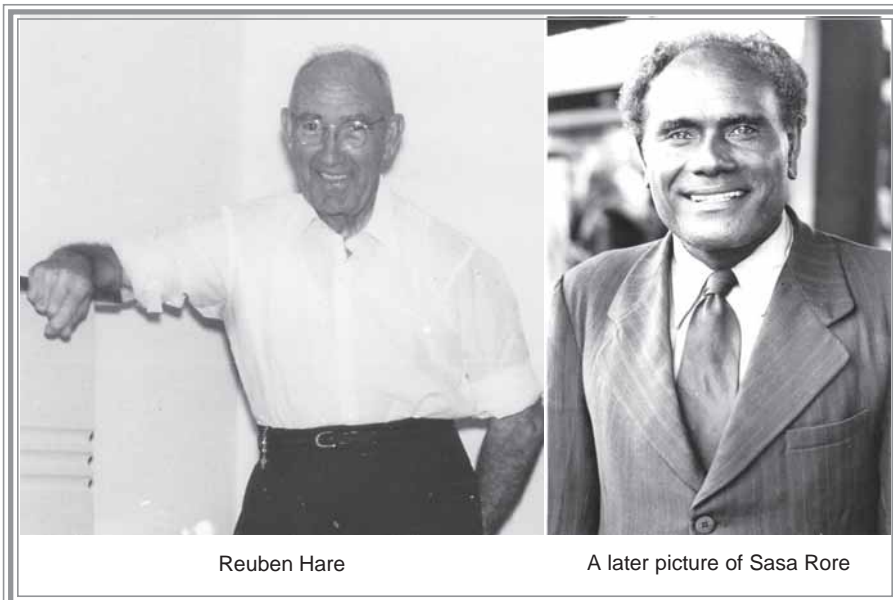
of whether this was the behaviour of a district officer acting independently or did it reflect an underlying attitude within the BSIP Administration? The AUC officers decided to refer these concerns to their solicitors and to direct Pastor Reuben E Hare to investigate further Ragoso's statement. They were not reassured when writing from the Solomons in early 1946, Norman Ferris expressed the view that the treatment of Ragoso was part of a 'well-prepared plan' to close down the Adventist mission program.

Upon his return to the Solomons Norman Ferris discovered that all the national leaders, with the exception of Sasa Rore on Guadalcanal, had been ordered to leave their stations. This seemed more than a mere coincidence. Ferris also discovered another incident in which Kennedy had jailed an Adventist man for six months for refusing to sanction 'a heathen style' marriage between a mission girl and a boy from another faith. Local church leaders, however, believed this was but a pretext as Kennedy needed the services of a skilled carpenter. Furthermore, under Kennedy, there were many instances of men and boys being "thrashed and wounded simply for being SDA."<sup>22</sup> Unfortunately, Ferris did not commit to paper the names or authority of those who purportedly were part of this 'well-prepared plan'.

By May 1946 a letter had been received from the solicitors

and on the basis of its advice it was decided to take no further action except to discuss the matter with Sir Henry Scott at the first opportunity.<sup>23</sup> It would appear, however, that Kennedy's wartime excesses, of which the treatment of Ragoso was but one instance, came to the attention of BSIP officials and in due course he was called to account. The outcome was a dishonourable discharge.<sup>24</sup>

The great heart of Kata Ragoso became evident when in recounting to the church at large the events associated with the war years in the Solomon Islands he focused on the positive things accomplished within the context of war. Apart from noting that he had been forced to leave



Reuben Hare

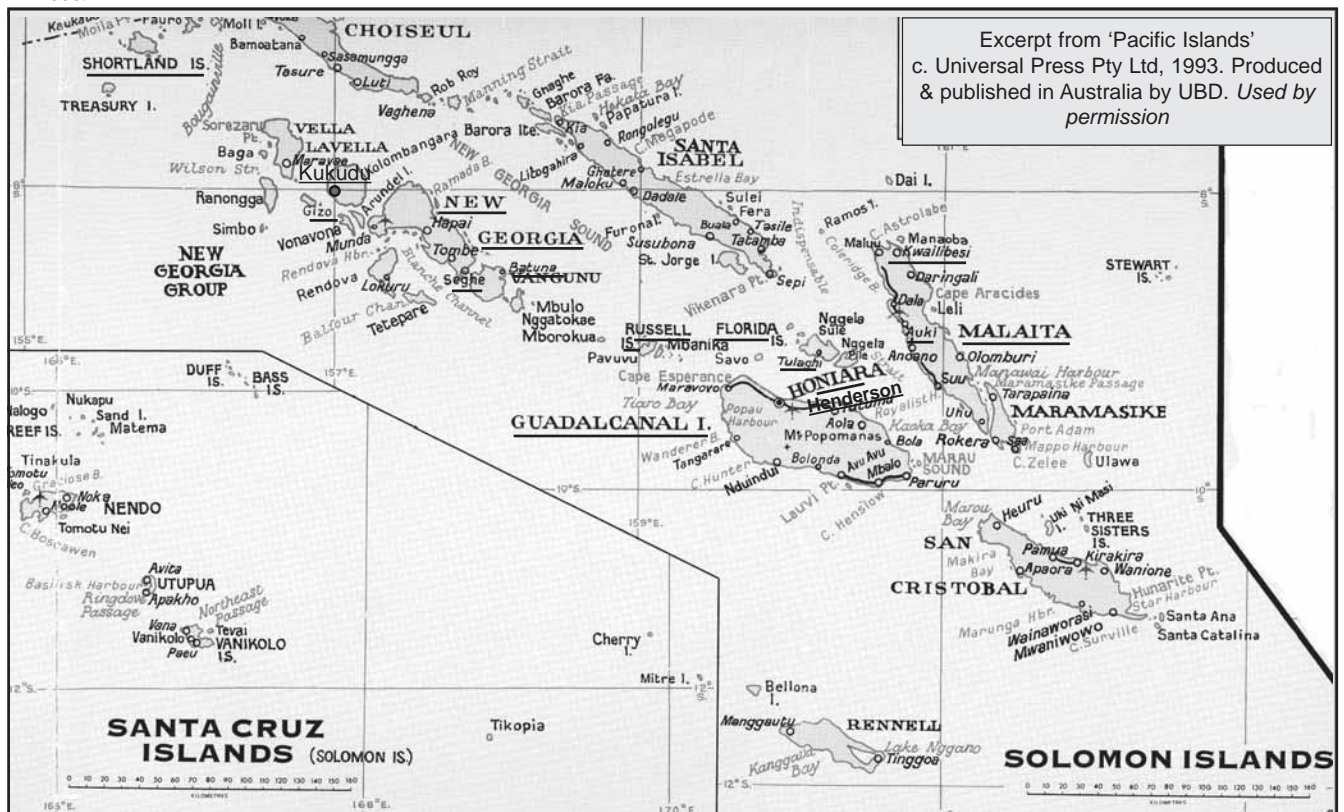
A later picture of Sasa Rore

Batuna for a period of time, he made no reference to his own mistreatment at the hands of Kennedy. To Ragoso it was more important to tell the story of God's providences in the Marovo area: the preservation of mission property, the construction and dedication of sixteen new churches, the baptism of over a hundred persons, and the arrival of forty-five babies at the Batuna maternity hospital.<sup>25</sup>

**End Notes**

- 1 The story of the BSIP government and the work of the coast watchers during WWII is recounted in Central Office of Information (1946) *Among those Present: The Official Story of the Pacific Islands at War*. London: His Majesty's Stationery Office. See also, Allison Ind (1958) *Spy Ring Pacific*. London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson; Eric A Feldt (1979) *The Coast Watchers*. New York: Bantam Books; Walter Lord (1977) *Lonely Vigil: The Coast Watchers of the Solomons*. NY: Viking Books; and Martin Clemens (1998) *Alone on Guadalcanal: A Coastwatcher's Story*. Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press.
- 2 Many books have been written on the Japanese-US conflict in the Solomon Islands. See particularly, Samuel B Griffith (1980) *The Battle for Guadalcanal*. New York: Bantam Books; John Miller (1949) *Guadalcanal: The First Offensive*. Washington, D.C.: Center of Military History, United States Army; Richard B Frank (1990) *Guadalcanal: The Definitive Account of the Landmark Battle*. New York: Penguin Books; Brian Altobello (2000) *Into the Shadows Furious: the Brutal Battle for New Georgia*. Novato, CA: Presidio Press; and Rafael Steinberg (1978) *Island Fighting*. Alexandria, VA: Time-Life Books.
- 3 John Miller (1959) *Cartwheel: The Reduction of Rabaul*. Washington, D.C.: Center of Military History, United States Army.
- 4 Australian Union Conference Officers' Meeting (AUCOM), 17 August 1943 and 3 September 1943. Also, see "Notes for Pastor L.V. Wilkinson re Request of A.U.C. Concerning Return of Three Missionaries to Solomon Islands," n.d., Heritage Room and Special Collection, Avondale College (HRSCAC).
- 5 *The Times*, 11 November 1912, 11 September 1935, 10 July 1937; *Pacific Islands Yearbook*, 1939; Deryck Scarr (1984) *Fiji: a short history*; and James Heartfield, "You are not a white woman!" Apolosi Nawai, the Fiji produce agency and the trial of Stella Spencer in Fiji, 1915," in *Journal of Pacific History*, June 2003.

- 6 AUCOM, 25 October 1943.
- 7 Arnold C Reye, "Adventist Responses to the War in the Southwest Pacific-Part I", *JAPH*, 2 (2) 2002.
- 8 AUC, "Memorandum Re Evacuation of Seventh-day Adventist Missionaries from the Solomon Islands," n.d. HRSCAC.
- 9 AUCOM, 9 December 1943.
- 10 Typed copy of the Secretary's Report to the 1943 Annual Meetings, HRSCAC; AUCOM, 21 February 1944.
- 11 AUCOM, 28 March 1944; 5 June 1944; 23 June 1944; 7 July 1944; 17 July 1944.
- 12 N A Ferris, "Report by Wing-Commander Widdy," typewritten, n.d. HRSCAC.
- 13 Ibid.
- 14 Ibid.
- 15 AUCOM, 7 July 1944; 28 August 1944. To this point in time the writer has been unsuccessful in identifying the location of US Forces Base 7.
- 16 AUCOM, 18 September 1944.
- 17 AUCOM, 24 October 1944; 10 January 1945; 11 January 1945; 30 April 1945.
- 18 AUCOM, 22 February 1945.
- 19 Eric A Feldt (1979) *The Coast Watchers*. Garden City, N.Y.: Bantam Books, pp. 75, 86.
- 20 The following account is based on Kata Ragoso's report "Persecuting (sic) for Obeying Orders," Undated typewritten copy held at the HRSCAC.
- 21 *Among those Present: The Official Story of the Pacific Islands at War*, p. 49. Donald Kennedy also wrote of his exploits in "Battle of Marovo Lagoon," *Pacific Islands Monthly*, March 1944, and "Keeping Watch Over the Japs," *Pacific Islands Monthly*, September 1945. Incidentally, during the 'battle' Kennedy was wounded in the thigh. It was not until 1988, however, that Billy Bennett, a trusted Kennedy lieutenant, confessed that he had come to hate Kennedy so much that during the 'battle' he had attempted to kill him but had only managed a flesh wound. Brian Altobello, *Into the Shadows Furious*, p.51.
- 22 Norman Ferris, "Faith Strengthened in the Solomons," *AR*, 14 January 1946; Letter, N A Ferris, 3 August 1945, HRSCAC.
- 23 AUCOM, 2 October 1945; 16 May 1946.
- 24 Phone Interview, A C Reye with L R Thrift, 20 May 2005.
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# Three Angels Over Norfolk Island

**EDNA HEISE**



*Edna Heise, was born on Lord Howe Island of missionary parents Arthur and Jessie Ferris. She began her education on the Island. She went to High School at the Avondale Central School and later graduated from the Teacher's Course in 1942, and from the Lady Bible Workers Course in 1944 at the Australasian Missionary College.*

*She taught school at the Karalundi Aboriginal Mission when her husband was superintendent there.*

*Edna has been a guest speaker at many seminars, and enjoyed organising Vacation Bible Schools and directing Dorcas & Welfare organisations. She has a great love for writing and has been published in a number of Adventist Journals as well as local papers. She co-authored "In Letters of Gold" with Pastor A G Stewart.*

*She is married to Pastor Vern Heise and ministered with him in different places.*

*They have two sons, Dr Geoffrey, a GP in Thornleigh and Pastor Lyell the Director of the Institute of Worship at Avondale College.*

*Their daughter Vhonda is director of the Nurses Home at the Sydney Adventist Hospital. Edna and Vern Heise live in retirement at Cooranbong, NSW, Australia.*

## Adventists Arrive at Pitcairn Island

The Three Angels with the Good News of the Gospel, did not fly in the midst of heaven to Norfolk Island in 1891; they sailed in the good ship *Pitcairn*. Elder Edward and Ida Gates, Elder Albert and Hattie Read and Mr



The missionaries on the first trip of the *Pitcairn*. Seated L to R: Ida & Edward Gates, Hattie & Albert Read. Standing: Hannah & John Tay

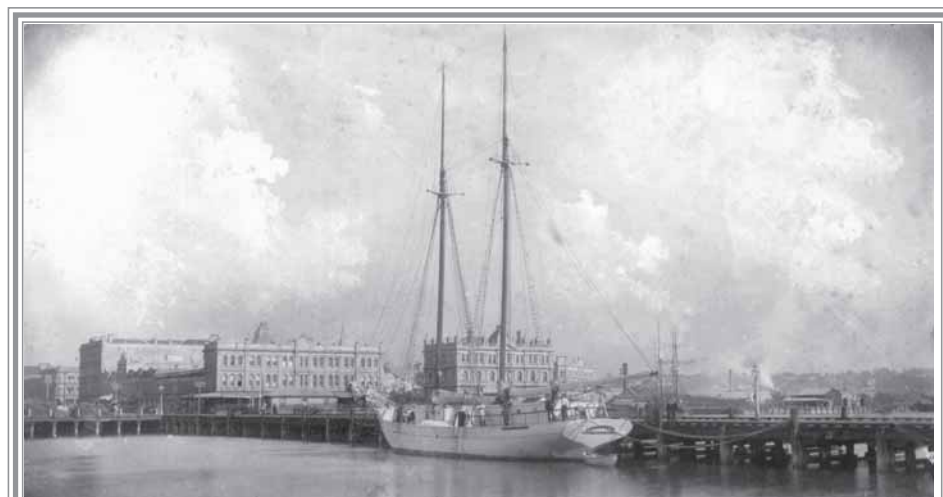
John and Hannah Tay travelled on that missionary ship in 1890 and it took 35 days to reach Pitcairn island. During their stay, as the result of Bible study and the influence of the literature that had been sent so long before, Elder Read reported that 82 believers were baptized in the calm waters on the protected side of the island. The missionaries studied, prayed, ate and explored with the islanders so that a great bond of friendship was established between them. It was therefore understandable that great grief was felt when the time came for the missionaries to move on to Norfolk Island.<sup>1</sup>

## Norfolk Island

Let's share a thumbnail sketch of this island group on which the missionaries on the *Pitcairn* had such a steady focus. Britain, her prisons filled with felons, sought a new direction for her society's unwanted and when the intrepid ocean explorer, Captain James

Cook, discovered Norfolk Island in 1774, the perfect solution was judged to be found.<sup>2</sup> Convicts were transported here over two main periods between 1788 and 1855. When the island was abandoned as a penal colony in 1855, Queen Victoria offered it to the Pitcairn Islanders to solve their problem of overcrowding. Accordingly, in the year 1856, Governor Dennison of New South Wales chartered the transport *Morayshire* for four thousand four hundred and seventy pounds nineteen shillings and sixpence to transport 194 Pitcairn Islanders to their new home on Norfolk Island.<sup>3</sup> The two islands had at least one thing in common: neither had a safe harbour for ocean going ships. It was therefore necessary for long boats to provide the link between ship and shore for visiting vessels.

There were other similarities as well but these did nothing to prevent nostalgia from becoming such a potent force that sixteen souls faced incredible difficulties to return to their



The *Pitcairn* leaving San Francisco for the mission field

native Pitcairn in 1863. Nor were they the only returnees. Twenty seven more followed on board the *St Kilda* just two months later. None of these ever returned to Norfolk. And now the good ship Pitcairn was to leave Pitcairn Island and visit this new home of the Pitcairners - Norfolk Island.

It would be well, at this point, to reveal a piece of ethnic understanding and Christian diplomacy. Between the close-knit islander family and the rest of the world, there had grown, either intentionally or unintentionally, something of a barrier. A common phrase expressed it this way: 'Dem sullen norsa belong with uclun' (Those people don't belong to our tribe. They are foreigners.) The Pitcairn people sensed the reality of this attitude as soon as the missionaries expressed a wish to take the Good News of the Gospel to Norfolk Island. Thus, lest their family on Norfolk reject the wonderful truths of the Bible because of this 'norsa belong with uclun', three people, with exquisite diplomacy, requested permission to travel with the missionaries. They saw themselves as bridge-builders who could verify the Good News that these 'foreigners' would bring.<sup>4</sup>

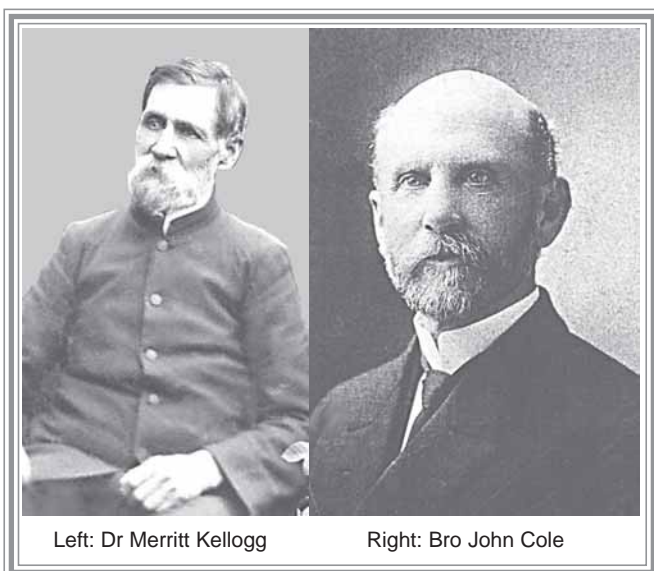
### The Pitcairn Arrives at Norfolk

The brevity of the missionaries' report of the landing on Norfolk Island is impressive. Here is a quote: "We went ashore in the long boats about noon, walked over the island to the town, visited Mrs Adams and Jane Quintal, went to bed at 11pm." <sup>4</sup> So the feet of the evangelists were now stepping on to new territory and, in accordance with the 'business that requires haste', Elder Gates almost immediately began Bible studies to share the Good News.

Three months later the *Pitcairn* returned to take the missionaries on to their next assignment but the efforts of those enthusiastic workers, during those few short weeks, resulted in many Sabbath keeping believers ready to share their faith and be baptized. These were the vanguard of a line of committed missionaries who encouraged, instructed and baptized believers until the Adventist church on Norfolk Island became a light in the Pacific.

### The Line of Missionaries Begins

Brother and Sister John and Fanny Cole, accompanied by the famed Dr Merritt Kellogg, brought inspiration and growth to the newborn group of believers. Dr Kellogg came not only as a physician but as a popular and powerful preacher. Together



they consolidated a group of believers who eagerly asked for baptism. They would have to wait, however, till the missionaries returned from camp meeting in Sydney with new enthusiasm to share in this Merry Month of May. Indeed it was a red-letter month for Norfolk Island.

Firstly, on 17 May, a baptismal service was conducted at Slaughter Bay near where the convict chapel stood. Five days later a leased building was dedicated as the Norfolk Island Adventist Church. There were some interesting backgrounds to the three who composed the charter members of the church.

Brother Steven Belden and his wife Melvina had their names inscribed. This couple had been recommended by Ellen White to Brother Cole who promptly urged them to come and reside on the island. (Belden's first wife Sarah was Ellen White's sister, so she did have a special concern for the couple and was glad to receive the report that Belden and his wife were doing considerable work in caring for the sick on the island.)

Alfred Nobbs, whose wife was Emily, the third name to be inscribed as a charter member, is also a name to remember. He had been a staunch member of the Anglican church and a leader in that communion for some ten years. Biblical truth led him to separate from his beloved church, but at what a cost. Amid fierce opposition, the loss of friends and even possessions, he was finally baptized and found a new spiritual home. Such was the anger of his previous church that a petition was sent to the captain of a ship lying offshore, asking that the Adventist missionaries be deported from the island because of the confusion they were causing and would he remove them on his ship. Happily the Captain did not cooperate and the missionaries were able to remain; a consolation to Alfred Nobbs.

But the passage of years took its toll on the committed layman, Steven Belden. Sadly he went to his final rest in 1906 on the island he loved and had served so well. His funeral service proved to be a momentous occasion. So beloved had he become on the island that the Anglican Archdeacon gladly conducted the burial. Folk came from all over the island, feeling it was a great calamity for such a good man to be taken away.<sup>5</sup>

It was assumed that Grandma Belden (as she had become known) would return to the mainland after the death of her husband but these conclusions were made without a true understanding of this lady's spirit and commitment. For 28 years she had shared her faith, traversing the island in her horse and buggy to do good. Unhappily, on one of these missionary ventures, she fell and broke her arm. The local doctor, considering her age, did not consider the arm was worth setting; she would 'never be able to do anything with it' so he simply bandaged the limb and sent her home.

Mrs Belden called on the current missionary, Arthur Ferris to pray for her. This he heartily agreed to do but assured her that there was more that could be done besides praying, so he proceeded to set the arm, splinted it, and promised to visit her frequently to check on the progress of the broken limb. Finally she chuckled to the missionary, "You see, in spite of the doctor's dire predictions, I am able to do the things I always enjoy doing." And one of the things she most enjoyed doing, as she became less mobile, was to create colourful patchwork quilts - with two goals in mind, firstly to warm cold bodies and secondly to fill empty mission offering boxes.



Above: Back Row, Arthur & Muriel; Jessie, Norman. Fr; David, Esther,, Walter.  
 Right: Muriel, Arthur, Jessie, Edna.

Her death at 99 years of age was announced by the customary tolling of the island bell, a mournful stroke for each year of her life. By her bedside was a quilt she was not able to complete.<sup>6</sup>

The chosen couple to minister on Norfolk Island after the death of Belden, combined rich talents. Henry Mitchell was a builder who gave his evenings and spare time to preaching before accepting a call to Norfolk Island. His wife Esther had been a successful colporteur. In her earlier ventures as a book salesperson, she had introduced Pastor Joseph Steed to the truths of God's Word - quite a big catch for a humble 'fisherwoman'.

The Mitchells ministered on Norfolk Island from 1907 until 1910. A measure of their success can be estimated from the impressive list of baptisms recorded during these three years of service. But, in order to grasp the measure of Henry's courage and Christian diplomacy, one must hear the story of the dispossession of occupants from the Quality Row area of Norfolk Island in 1911.



Granny Belden with one of her quilts. This photo is in the museum on Norfolk Island

When the last of the convicts were transferred from Norfolk Island to Tasmania and other parts of Australia, a row of houses known as Quality Row was allocated to certain local families. These had been the residences of officers and commandants, so it was with some joy that the islanders accepted the offer of these prestigious dwellings. No time limits had been

placed on occupancy, so a sense of security enveloped the residents of Quality Row. Suddenly, out of the blue, there came a peremptory decree that all the houses in Quality Row must be vacated in a short space of time. Only trivial reasons were given for this decree, so questions naturally arose. No answers were forthcoming with the result that tempers boiled over and naked fury escalated. The police and military were ordered to move in and there arose a fear of a repeat of the brutality of the convict days.

Crowds gathered in support of fellow islanders, and loud voices were raised as battle lines were drawn. At any moment it was feared that blood was about to be shed as there was no sign of capitulation on either side. Into this volatile scene of sound and fury moved the calm figure of the Adventist minister. Finding himself a platform Henry Mitchell stood forth with hands upraised to call for silence. Into that silence were injected just four words: 'Friends! Let us pray.' Slowly the sounds of battle subsided and the calming voice of prayer replaced fiery utterances. Spokespersons from both sides seized the moment of calm to reach a compromise. The pastor's prayer had prevailed; no blood was shed that day. The peace that was born at a blood-stained cross was all that was needed to calm the savage breasts.

**The Ferris Years**

Into the shoes of this courageous soldier of the cross, stepped Arthur H. Ferris with his wife Jessie and their children: Norman 9, Walter and David 7 and Esther 5. The year was 1911. Arthur had been somewhat reluctant to leave his fruitful ministry in North East Victoria. Here he had been instrumental in building up a number of church companies while at the same time earning a living on his orchard. But it was during the Victorian Camp Meeting in 1911 that an urgent appeal had been made by a Norfolk Island delegate, Chippy McCoy. The Mitchells were leaving and there had been no one allocated to take their place. His appeal was earnest and urgent, and, as a result, the conference committee recommended Ferris as a replacement.

Arthur and Jessie prayed seriously about this call: they needed to be sure that the Lord was calling them from a flourishing

ministry in one part of the world field, to transplant them to another. The families of the couple were strongly opposed to the call and asked them to think it over very carefully. Finally convinced that the call was truly from the Lord, there only remained 'Goodbyes' to be said and streamers to be broken as the little family sailed away to fields afar on the *SS Makambo*.

They reached Norfolk Island during a violent storm and the captain figured that he should bypass Norfolk, proceed to Vanuatu (the New Hebrides) and land his passengers on the return voyage. Arthur shuddered at the thought of his wife enduring an extended voyage; she had suffered all the way thus far and they prayed that the Lord would change the captain's mind, calm the storm and allow them to land.

Out came the long boats from the shore, dancing wildly in the rough seas. The first to scale the rope ladder and reach the deck was Chinny McCoy whom they had met at the Camp Meeting that seemed so long ago. The smile on his face contrasted with the wretched state of the missionaries. Sensing their anxiety, Chinny took the pastor's hand and said "Don't be afraid, Pastor. We will get you safely to shore—but we can't promise you that we'll get you there dry."

The rolling of the *Makambo* with the attending mal-de-mer was nothing compared to this 'bucking bronco' that was now masquerading as a secure sea-craft. Chinny's prediction came true; not one of those heading for the shore had one dry spot left from head to toe.

This was hardly the way missionary Ferris had hoped to meet his new flock. They had all come to the jetty to meet the new pastor whose squishing shoes and dripping clothes had to do for their 'Sabbath best' introductions.

Arthur was primarily a soul-winner but on Norfolk Island his immediate task was different and demanding. For some years the church members had been worshipping in a stone chapel set amidst convict buildings. Now, however, there were problems needing to be addressed. The old leased building was leaking badly and the sight of umbrellas raised during the divine service did little to inspire the preacher. Further, the lease had expired so that urgent decisions had to be made.<sup>7</sup> The options were either to renew the lease and mend the holes in the roof or venture out into a new building program. The vote came down on the side of a building that could be called their own. Naturally enough, the burden of overseeing the building program fell to the lot of the pastor.

But if Arthur expected the wheels of progress to turn smoothly, he was not living in the real world. First there was the gift of the land graciously donated by Aunt Diana who was



A primitive sawmill. One man on top & another underneath to operate the pitsaw. Arthur Ferris pushing the logs across the saw. Edna & Muriel are standing behind their father.

oblivious to the fact that the title deeds should have been transferred into her name on the death of her husband. A relative had been given authority to transfer the title to her but, not being favourably disposed toward Adventists, he had refused to act. But prayers were made and answered. When they approached the appropriate officer of the law, he promptly reminded the relative of his obligations, adding that there were penalties for failing to do so. The relative chose the less painful path, and soon the property was back in safe hands.

Pine trees were donated and the felling began. A makeshift sawpit was constructed on which the logs were positioned to be sawn into required sized timber. This hard labour continued for three years until World War 1 broke out and able bodied men sailed away to defend their country. Now Arthur's teenaged sons were his only workmen constructing the church

in Old Cascade Road, sometimes known as the Middlegate area.

World War 1 made another demand on the busy pastor's time. It was of his own making really, but it was born of a mix of deep caring and righteous anger. In his visitations he soon discovered that mothers and wives learned of the loss of sons and husbands via a cold, heartless telegram delivered by the local postman. His heart bled for the mourners and he promptly made a request of the island Administrator. Could he please be invited to be present when the telegrams of death were delivered? This request was granted and Arthur soon found calls for his services multiplying, but what a rewarding ministry these calls proved to be. Tender, caring words from both Scripture and his own heart, seemed to bring some measure of ease for breaking hearts. Some agreed to have the pastor pray while others did not accept his offer but there was no doubting the sincerity of the caring cleric.<sup>8</sup>

But the building program continued to make relentless demands on Arthur's time and energy. The concern for the demands he had to make of his young sons, the inadequacy of the makeshift saw-pit, the 'slow march to nowhere', as he described his efforts, weighed heavily on him. Surely help could be found somewhere and for this the family prayed daily. Then it came.

Mr Yaegar owned the only effective saw mill on the island but he had not shown any interest in or sympathy for the Adventist pastor's project, nor for the requests for minor assistance that the pastor sometimes made. Then one day the most unexpected happened. As Mr. Yaegar passed by the pastor's makeshift workplace he suddenly asked the question the pastor had only dreamed of. "Could you do with a hand, Mr Ferris?"

With a deep sigh the pastor replied: "Why, yes sir. With my main helpers gone to war and only my young sons as part time help, I would gladly welcome another pair of hands."

"Well, that is not the kind of help I am offering, explained the miller." The pastor's heart sank. "What I would like to do," continued Mr. Yaegar, "is to mill your logs for you at my sawmill if you could muster enough help to get them down there."

The pastor was temporarily speechless as if an angel had spoken. Then quickly he responded: "Mr Yaegar. I will get my logs there somehow. Your offer is heaven sent."

Kindly neighbours loaned horses and drays and the logs were dragged down to the mill. Soon flooring boards, bearers, joists, studs and rafters were piling up in exciting heaps, soon to be transported back to the building site. When bells were joyously pealing to mark the end of the Great World War, another bell, a church bell, was joyfully announcing the opening of the Adventist church on Norfolk Island. A party of VIPs from church headquarters at Wahroonga, led by Pastor Andrew and Emily Stewart, came to help celebrate this occasion. A baptism of seven on that day added to the joy and fulfilment of long-held dreams. A call for rededication of the entire church membership found a genuine response, heralding a sense of renewal. Now Ferris could give his full energies to the cause for which he had been appointed to the island, evangelism.

Avenues for soul winning seemed to be opening everywhere, not the least of which came with the dreaded influenza that added Norfolk Islanders to its world-wide toll. Jessie Ferris had a special concern for the children who were all too often fighting a losing battle. Tirelessly she worked with hydrotherapy, diet and prayer. So many of her little patients survived that the doctor was heard to remark, "If you want your children to live, then take them to Mrs Ferris."

The missionaries early learned to depend on prayer for, with only First Aid and Home Nursing skills at their command, they were being constantly called to deal with serious health problems. "That's why," they argued, "there is great spiritual as well as physical healing to be seen. Prayer and the power of God are greater ingredients in our ministry than any of our inadequate skills."

Arthur had yet another dream; just one of hundreds that the imaginative pastor experienced. He wanted to attract the public to evangelistic meetings by an innovative plan; a well-run camp meeting. But what to do for accommodation? That's when the indefatigable Jessie came up with her own solution. She scoured the island to see how many tents could be borrowed then set about collecting these, transporting them on the carrier rack of her bicycle. Soon they were filled with eager campers. Guest speakers were invited, children's leadership organised and the series began with a flourish. His dream had come true and, best of all, souls were harvested and members reborn.

Arthur gave generous credit to Jessie for some decisions that were made. Some were backing away from the claims of the Sabbath on their lives. Jessie sympathized with their problem, and shared her own agony of decision years before. "I had to come to terms with this Sabbath problem," she would explain. "You see, I loved Sunday, and when told that the Seventh day, Saturday, was God's chosen day for worship, I

was appalled. You see, Saturday was cleaning day in my house. On it there was a thorough preparation for Sunday's calm and beauty. At the end of Saturday, my house was clean, and I was worn out with the task. So to ask me to worship on that dirty, cleaning day was abhorrent to me. Mentally, I had come to believe, but I had little desire to listen. I knew I had to make a decision sooner or later as my husband had done. So for a while I decided that I would keep both days to please both myself and God. But the plan could not endure permanently. In my own study of the Word, I became truly convinced and found that the love of the Sabbath finally prevailed."

Jessie's argument satisfied many who hesitated. Thus she became a powerful witness to timid would-be believers. There was one method of soul-winning, however, that the pastor could not endorse. A mother had been asking for prayers for her rebellious son but the pastor was never able to contact the lad who was determined to hide from him whenever she tried to bring them together. One day, while visiting the mother, she suddenly sprang up and raced out the door. When she reappeared she had her son in a headlock and was dragging him relentlessly toward the pastor. "Now!" she panted breathlessly. "Here he is! Just bring him to Jesus."

Corporal Buffet, the local police officer, walked past the pastor's home one Sunday morning where he found that cleric working in his garden. With the full authority of the police force, he reminded Arthur that it was against the law to work on Sunday on this island. He further announced that the Administrator wanted to see him in the morning. Arthur was troubled but took to his study to pray and prepare his defense.

It was with some trepidation that he answered the call to enter the Administrator's office the following morning. But the Administrator spoke kindly: "Mr Ferns, there has been a complaint about your church notices on the public notice board. It is of no consequence to me but, since there is a complaint, then I must at least share it with you. However, I do have a suggestion. Since the community is unhappy, why don't you put those notices on my Administrator's board? Just as many will see them there, so there would be no loss to you. How does that sound?"

Arthur was temporarily speechless but finally found words: "Sir, I thank you, but Corporal Buffet hinted that you were unhappy with my working on Sunday and that's why you called me to see you."

The great man laughed: "Oh, Mr Ferris, don't you bother yourself about that. I never did send such a message and you can work nine days a week as far as I am concerned."

Now the island doctor's wife read the Adventist notice on the prestigious Administrator's notice board and concluded that it must be there with the Administrator's approval. So she attended the meetings that were advertised, and was eventually baptized. Arthur reflected later, "Surely the wrath of men praised the Lord on that occasion."<sup>9</sup>

Changes do come even when not entirely welcome. Lord Howe Island, where Arthur had spent some weeks previously, petitioned for the Ferris family to come permanently and build on the work so effectively begun. So, in 1920 a new team was added to the list of luminaries who served as the Three Angels in spreading the Good News of the Gospel on Norfolk.

## The Long Line of Workers

Enter Richard and Miriam Adams who brought professional medical skills to enhance their preaching of the Word. They planned to open a rest home which would provide great opportunities to share the Word of God. When death interrupted the Adams' dream, another layman, George Wise, took the reins of leadership in the church. With the senior elder, Syd Nobbs supporting him, the church continued to let its light shine during these laymen-led years. It was during this time that the Ferris family returned to Norfolk to spend three months each year in continuing the work of evangelism.

With the coming of Pastor William and Louisa Smith in 1938, the regular ministry was re-established, bringing security and revival once more. The dream of a church school was soon to be realized. There was movement in the church air.

The Smiths were succeeded by Pastor Thomas and Edith Howse in 1942. The lasting monument to this family's memory is the Appeal for Missions which they eagerly stimulated. The aim was twenty pounds but the eager collectors gathered in the sum of thirty four pounds six shillings and nine pence. In contrast to this, in 1994, members raised A\$7,823. So the spirit of service that Pastor and Mrs Howse engendered lives on.

In 1945 Pastor Charles and Minnie Boulting gathered up the reins of leadership and helped the island to celebrate its 50th anniversary. The whole island was invited to attend the celebrations with the promise of a guest from New Zealand. But wouldn't you just guess—all those grandiose hopes were short lived when the plane to carry the Pipers from New Zealand found no room for the travellers.<sup>10</sup>

The church continued to flourish under a long line of noble ministers who faced the isolation with courage. Each family brought their individual talents to the needs of the island. There were the George Weslakes (1950-55), who brought medical expertise with them and left behind a son who has served as senior elder for some years. In true Macarthur language this energetic minister said on departure, 'I will return' which he did in 1967 with a new wife.

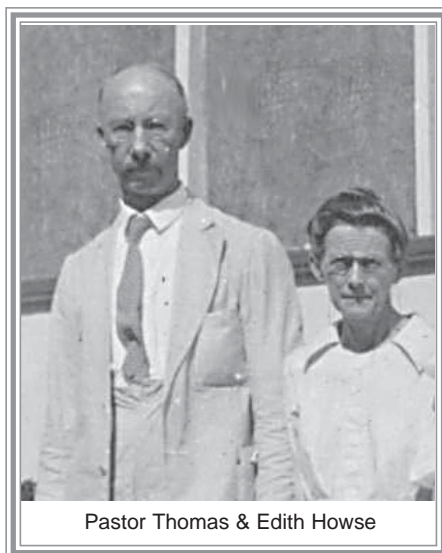
Pastor H. J. Myers gave only a short term of service owing to ill health. Alfred and Emma Ball (1959-60), are remembered for commencing the Pathfinder work. The Ray Clause family instigated the daily religious radio broadcast on the island and initiated plans for a new hall on the recently acquired property.

The Southwell's skills with painting and a knowledge of nature and bird life can never be forgotten by those they inspired.

A new church and hall are the legacy of the Ray Sills (1973-75) ministerial team. Where did he find so much energy?

Many firsts were achieved by June and Laurence Gilmore from 1976 - 78. Among these were Dial-a Prayer and the Pacific Display Centre and gardens, so well looked after—a feature that became a tourist attraction. Also they were expert in organizing big-time celebrations. When the Island reached its 80th year of operation, visitors from near and far came to attend the celebrations.

On more than one occasion both Lyndon and Olive Schick and Syd and Beryl Stocken brought healthful lectures with



Pastor Thomas & Edith Howse

cooking demonstrations to large and interested crowds. Warm memories linger still when their names are mentioned.

A more permanent Display Centre is the legacy of Neil and Nyra Smith, while Don and Una Watson (1965-66), added the name Norfolk Island to a long list of islands and nations in which they had already served.

Keith and Julie Jackson (1983-87) and children added colour and sound to their ministry; he, a brilliant photographer and musician, she the first teacher in the little school near the church.

Jill and Ken Hiscox and family, greatly loved and renowned for their energy and enterprise, served during 1990-91.

The American couple, Ollie and Vonnie Stimson brought new international skills to the island. They were experienced gardeners, producing vegetables, largely for sharing. Vonnie's secret acting talent brought great entertainment when she was pressed to perform.

John and Dorothy Richardson are remembered as tireless workers. Dorothy spent many hours handing out advertisements for the Display Centre and for the evangelistic tool, the film 'Bounty Experiment.' John became the public voice of Adventism with his service on the weekly Radio program.

Barney and Barbara Shelley contributed enormously to the social and spiritual needs of the people on the island. Keen to curb domestic violence, they became part of that community of caring that did what it could. Barbara was a writer of note, contributing a column to the local newspaper and compiling a history of the church on Norfolk Island.



Pastor Laurence and June Gilmore

It is because of the service of this long line of committed luminaries, that the Three Angels of Revelation continue to fly over the pine-clad hills and valleys of Norfolk Island.

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- 2 Merval Hoare, *Outline History of Norfolk*, p69
- 3 Ibid p81
- 4 Milton Hook, *Church in a Convict Chapel*, p3
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# The Growing Cost of Retirement in the Mission Fields of the South Pacific



## RETIREMENT POLICY

**Purpose.**

The church retirement policy is designed primarily to provide financial support to island national employees who have devoted their lives to the work of the Seventh-day Adventist Church and whose home base is in the island fields of the South Pacific Division.

This support is provided by:

- a. The church sustentation plan and in most countries;
- b. Church/employee contributions to government National Provident Funds.

One of the financial issues confronting the church in the Pacific today is the cost of supporting retired employees. There are currently 1,286 retired denominational employees<sup>1</sup> in the Pacific that have rendered faithful service and are now dependent on the church for support in retirement.

The following is a summary of the sustentation fund operating from 1994 to 2001. During that period income increased by 44% and expenditure by 65%. The accumulated losses amounted to almost \$1.3 million. To prevent the sustentation fund collapsing the Division diverted \$2.11 million from other areas during that period to allow time for changes to be made.

ISLAND FIELD SUSTENTATION FUND									
	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	TOTAL
<b>INCOME:</b>									
Sustentation Contributions	1,130,354	1,220,766	997,250	951,265	1,011,285	1,563,252	1,474,197	1,631,639	8,348,369
Interest Earnings	115,563	114,407	95,319	53,128	37,283	40,745	61,859	34,568	518,304
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>1,245,917</b>	<b>1,335,173</b>	<b>1,092,569</b>	<b>1,004,393</b>	<b>1,048,568</b>	<b>1,603,997</b>	<b>1,536,056</b>	<b>1,666,207</b>	<b>8,866,673</b>
<b>EXPENDITURE:</b>									
Operating Expenses									
Administrative Expenses	7,925	8,390	6,963	7,529	10,008	12,064	16,530	5,412	69,409
Sustentation Disbursements	1,188,970	1,303,073	1,280,621	1,414,182	1,429,571	1,500,679	1,657,356	1,964,256	9,774,452
<b>Total Operating Expenditure</b>	<b>1,196,895</b>	<b>1,311,463</b>	<b>1,287,584</b>	<b>1,421,711</b>	<b>1,439,579</b>	<b>1,512,743</b>	<b>1,673,886</b>	<b>1,969,668</b>	<b>9,843,861</b>
<b>Increase/(Decrease) in Operating</b>	<b>\$49,022</b>	<b>\$23,710</b>	<b>(\$195,015)</b>	<b>(\$417,318)</b>	<b>(\$391,011)</b>	<b>\$91,254</b>	<b>(\$137,830)</b>	<b>(\$303,461)</b>	<b>(\$1,280,649)</b>

In 2001 the Division faced a potential crisis with the Island Field Sustentation Fund. Changes had to be made and were. Eligibility for sustentation was changed and a long term transition program was put in place so that employees will increasingly rely on national provident funds for retirement support. Until 2001 Missions contributed a percentage of tithe to sustentation. An increasing number of employees, particularly teachers, now accumulate service credit via non tithe sources of income so the contribution base needed to be broadened.

Missions now contribute to the sustentation fund an amount equivalent to 15% of wages. At the same time they contribute to each employees national provident fund. The church in the Pacific is now in a transition phase where it is funding both past and future liabilities for retirement. The combined cost of this is equivalent to almost one quarter of the cost of wages. The sustentation fund now has sufficient income to meet expenditure but concerns still remain on the future liabilities that have to be funded. The fund needs to accumulate reserves to ensure that funds exist to meet future liabilities and to generate investment income to supplement Mission contributions.

There are several reasons that lead to the accumulated losses. Factors included rising living standards, increased life spans, mission growth greater than tithes increases and inflation. A significant underlying contributing factor is as a result of the phenomenal growth in membership across the Pacific over the last 40 years. Initially the Pacific work had a major component of its workforce provided by expatriates. With the development of the church in the Pacific it has been important to replace expatriates with national leadership and the church has been successful in doing that. With a larger membership comes the need for more ministers and teachers. The following shows the increase in total Mission employees over the last fifty years. The graph shows a decline in the number of ministers since 1980 but total employees has increased. There has been a resource shift to education and most of the increase in employees has been of teachers.



It is also worth noting that the growth in employees (ministers, teachers and others) across the Pacific has not kept pace with membership increases<sup>2</sup>. In 1950 there was 1 employee for every 14 members. In 1980 the ratio had increased to 1:84 and by 2004 1:223.

In 1990 there were 1,017 sustentees in the Pacific and by 2005 that had increased to 1,286. An increase of 26% in fifteen years. This is a ratio of six sustentees for every ten employees. An analysis of current sustentees shows that the average length of denominational service is 28 years and 15 years supported so far from sustentation. Most of those that started work in the Pacific prior to 1970 have now retired. Since the time that they commenced denominational employment rising living standards has meant that they can expect to live longer in retirement than past generations. The workforce has continued to grow so it is anticipated that with more employees and longer life expectancy the number of sustentees will continue to increase and thus the cost of the sustentation program.

After wages, retirement expenses is now the largest single cost for Missions in the Pacific. The biggest single payroll for the Pacific is the sustentee payroll. The number on the sustentation payroll is more than the number of employees in any Union Mission of this Division. It creates a financial challenge and frustration to administrators to fund retirement expenses while at the same time trying to increase the number of employees to nurture a fast growing membership. There is no fly-n-build option to help Missions with this. For the project giving mentality the church has developed, supporting sustentees has little appeal, there will be little exciting results or amazing baptism numbers to report from that project.

It is a costly program for the church to operate, but it was very costly for sustentees to follow their calling into denominational service and leave the comfort of their home and extended families. The church is now ensuring that they are cared for adequately in retirement albeit at a cost.

## References

- <sup>1</sup> Denominational employees in the Pacific with sufficient years of service are eligible to be supported in retirement by the church in a program known as sustentation. The recipients of sustentation are known as sustentees.
- <sup>2</sup> The ratio of members to ministers was 1:596 in 2004 compared to 1:116 in 1980. Papua New Guinea has seen its ratio of total employees to membership move from 1:108 in 1980 to 1:493 in 2004.

## Special Note:

Rodney Brady's CV is in the Vol 5 No 1 June 2005 edition of the *Journal*.





# Finding Education of Value: the influence of Kauma Adventist High School on my life



**JOHN COCORAN**

*John Corcoran was born on the island of Tarawa in Kiribati on 1 September 1959.*

*He obtained his primary, secondary and professional education as stated in this article.*

*He married Lupe Kofe from Tuvalu on 2 October 1982.*

*They have 3 sons, Smith (23), Mark (20), and Virgil (18).*

*He obtained a BA in 1993, a Post Graduate Diploma in 1999, and an MA in Geography in 2003, from the University of the South Pacific in Suva, Fiji.*

*Lupe also studied at USP gaining a BEd in 1992, and a Post Graduate Diploma in Development Studies in 1994.*

*Since 2004, John has served as a lecturer in Geography at Pacific Adventist University in Papua New Guinea.*

## **Introduction**

**K**AUMA ADVENTIST HIGH SCHOOL is a co-educational secondary school, owned and operated by the Kiribati and Nauru Mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. It is situated on the remote island of Abemama (land of the moonlight) in the Republic of Kiribati. The islands of Kiribati straddle the equator in the Central Pacific Ocean, and Abemama is situated in the centre of the Gilbert Islands thus providing Kauma the opportunity to serve all the islands in the group.

A school and the Church Mission Headquarters were established at Kauma on 5 May 1949. The headquarters was transferred to Korobu on the main island of Tarawa in 1968. Kauma started as a primary school, and in 1975 was upgraded to high school level. Initially it offered forms 1 to 5 but in 2002 form 6 was added to meet the growing demand for senior education in the country. Currently, it offers forms 2 to 6 (year 12). Since its establishment, enrolment has fluctuated between less than 100 to more than 450 students.

Since the arrival of the Seventh-day Adventist message in Kiribati, the church has expanded slowly, but significant in this growth has been the impact of Kauma Adventist High School on the lives of those who have attended the institution. Kauma has for many years been a beacon light as it served as the principal centre for evangelism in

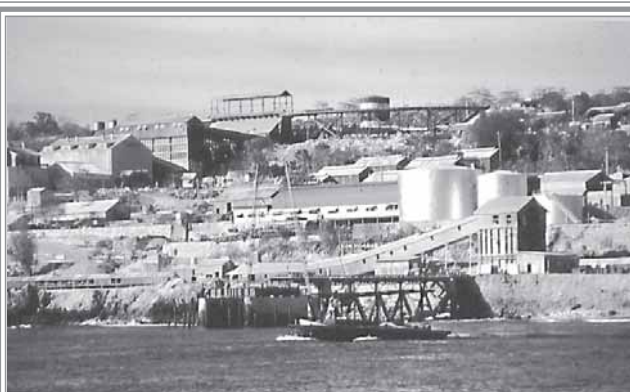
Kiribati. It has produced reliable and dedicated people who are now serving in the church, the government and the private sector in various capacities.

Over the years, many young people have not only gained secular knowledge, which has equipped them confidently to face the challenges of life, but more importantly they have had the opportunity of coming to know Jesus as their personal Saviour. This latter opportunity is the ultimate objective of all Seventh-day Adventist educational institutions. Kauma has been particularly effective in attaining this objective, and I have been fortunate in having been both a student and a staff member of this school. I would like to reflect on the influence Kauma has had on my life.

## **Childhood memories**

I was born into a London Missionary Society (LMS) family in 1959. Never in my wildest dreams, did I imagine becoming a Seventh-day Adventist or becoming a schoolteacher. Most of my childhood years were spent on the phosphate-mining island of Banaba (Ocean Island) in the Republic of Kiribati.

My hardworking dad was fortunate to have a good position with the British Phosphate Commission (BPC) on Banaba. From earliest years my dad had always emphasized the importance of education to my three brothers, Robert, Tioneti and Aboro, and two sisters



Phosphate works on the island of Banaba.



Mining the phosphate

Teruaiti and Emii, and me. Religion was never a topic in any of our discussions. Though he professed to be a member of the LMS, he hardly ever went to church. My mother was very spiritual and went to church regularly.

Kiribati, known then as the Gilbert Islands, was still a colony of Great Britain and was governed together with the Ellice Islands Colony from Tarawa atoll in the northern Gilberts.<sup>1</sup> Primary education was free, and so almost every citizen of both island groups had free access to this education. For secondary education though, the government subsidized fees at the colony's only secondary school, the King George V School. The other providers of education for both the primary and secondary levels were the various churches.

My primary school days were spent on Banaba. Even though the school I attended was a government operated institution, the BPC contributed enormously towards its operation. It even provided free rations of ready mixed milk, biscuits and Vegemite for students at recess time every day. Similarly, free bus transport to and from school was also provided for the students. I enjoyed my years in primary school. At the completion of my primary education, I sat for the Common Entrance Examination to enter the government-controlled King George V secondary school, as I had by then determined to become a lawyer. In my primary years, my academic achievements had been satisfactory. I was shocked when I unexpectedly failed the entrance examination.

I tried other schools, such as the LMS and the Roman Catholic secondary schools. Admission to these schools involved making arrangements with the administration and then sitting for the entry tests. Unfortunately, after sitting several entry exams, I found that my results did not give me admission to any of the schools. By this time my morale was very low and I was convinced that I was nothing but a dummy.

During this difficult time my dad was very supportive, and just as I was on the verge of giving up all hope, my father intervened. This time he suggested that I consider joining my elder brother, Tioneti who was attending the Adventist School on Abemama. Seeing this was the only alternative left, I reluctantly accepted it. Immediately my dad approached an Adventist pastor, who was his own relative, to arrange for me to attend Kauma School. Pastor Bwebwe Tabuariki, the Seventh-day Adventist minister on Banaba, quickly arranged for me to attend Kauma Central School.

### **The Disappointing Dilemma**

At the beginning of 1974 I boarded the colony's ship, MV *Ninikoria*, to travel from Banaba to Tarawa. The pastor who had arranged for my studies at Kauma was also travelling on the same ship. When I reached Tarawa, I was then to take the half-hour domestic flight to Abemama, where Kauma Central School was situated. Upon arrival at Korobu, the SDA Mission Headquarters, Pastor Tabuariki discovered that my name was not on the new intake list for Kauma that was held in the Mission office. For some unknown reason things once again seemed to be going against me. Pastor Tabuariki assured me he would solve the problem.

Fortunately I was able to stay with the pastor and his family at the Mission headquarters so I got updates every day. Soon Pastor Tabuariki came up with a new strategy. He suggested that I travel to Abemama as planned, and stay with our relative on the island while waiting for a vacancy. The school was full and could not accept any more students. He assured me he

would inform the Principal about this arrangement so that they would let me know when a vacancy became available. Amidst the confusion and uncertainty, I agreed to the plan and continued my travel to Abemama after waiting patiently for more than two weeks.

### **The Embarrassing Experience**

Among the passengers on my flight to Abemama were three other students on their way to Kauma. I did not want to let anyone know that I had not been accepted so I just kept quiet. When we arrived on Abemama, I collected my luggage and looked around for my relative but could not see him. Then I followed the other students. When we arrived at the school, the Principal came to the dormitory and directed the new arrivals to see him in his office. By this time, my heart was beating fast, and I was feeling very uncomfortable. I quickly stood at the end of the line and waited there, pretending that everything was just fine.

After the Principal called me, he asked my name, and where I came from. When he checked his list it did not take him long to see that my name was not on it. After a thorough search, he reluctantly sent me to the dormitory to wait while he contacted the Mission Office in Tarawa. The next day there was a long staff meeting and I soon discovered from one of the students that the meeting was all about me.

When the Principal had contacted the Mission Office he had found out that I was not supposed to come to the school. The prefects later told me that the majority of the staff was in favour of sending me to stay with my relative in the village. That is what should have happened to me.

### **The Miracle**

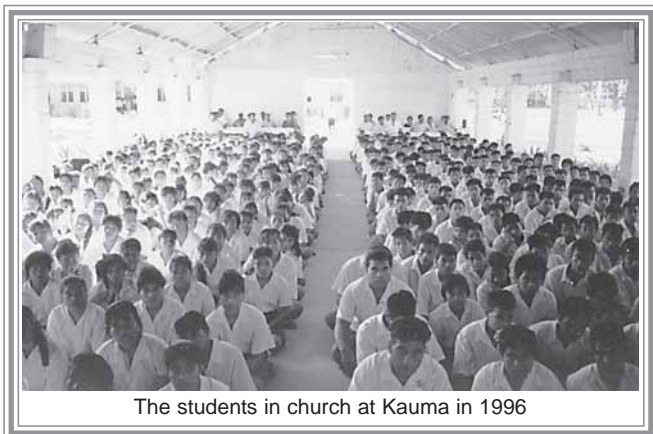
Somehow, for some unexplained reason, things seemed to work in my favour. Finally the school decided to keep me and to enrol me as a student. When the Principal called me in later that day and told me what had transpired in the meeting, I was so thankful that I was given the chance to stay.

At the end of that day, I was grateful that something good had happened to me. It was not until after spending some time in the school and especially after becoming interested in the truths taught by Seventh-day Adventists, that I began to see the experience in a new light. I began to realise that God had actually performed a miracle to enable me to be a student at Kauma.

I stayed at Kauma from 1974 to 1978 and they were very enjoyable and challenging years. In 1975, the school went through a substantial change when it was upgraded to high school level and its full name was changed to Kauma Adventist High School. I was also fortunate to have been educated under three different Principals, Robert Cole in 1974, Brian Hamilton from 1975 to 1976, and Greg Dawkins in 1978, all of whom played an important role in the nurturing and moulding of both my academic and spiritual life.

### **The Light Beyond the Tunnel**

During my younger years I could not see God's plan for me. I had my own plan of becoming a lawyer, and dreamed about my life and my destiny. However, the reality of the matter was that God's plan is far better and more rewarding for each of us in the long run. More importantly, God has his own way of revealing His plans to us.



The students in church at Kauma in 1996

After completing my junior secondary schooling at Kauma, I went to Fulton College, in Fiji, where I spent three years and completed my form six at the end of 1981. Returning to Kiribati at the beginning of 1982, I was fortunate in obtaining employment in the Judiciary Department of the Kiribati Government, where I worked for five years.

During this time in 1982, I married Lupe Lutele Kofe from the main island of Funafuti in Tuvalu. She has always supported my plans and encouraged me to pursue a career in teaching as her ultimate objective was for us to work in the church. I met with Mr Charles Viva, the Principal of Kauma, at the Mission Office during school vacation at the end of 1986. He suggested that I apply to do further studies at Pacific Adventist College (PAC). I asked him many questions about the place and he was even willing to take time to come to our house and show us slides of PAC. With my wife's encouragement, I applied to be a student at PAC.

When I spoke to Pastor Bill Blundell, the Mission President, he recommended that I sit for the Mature Age Test and I did that straight away. After waiting for three weeks I received word that I had passed. PAC also approved my application and I was offered a place in the education department commencing 1987. I now realised that this was God's plan for me so I accepted it and began arranging to go. However I realised that finance was a major obstacle as I didn't have enough money to pay for my study. Fortunately my wife's closest friends, Virgil and Rose Bulher in the United States, upon hearing of our problem, generously provided financial assistance to care for all of my tuition and other educational expenses for the entire duration of my study program at PAC. Similarly my parents provided our air fares to Papua New Guinea as well as our living expenses. I resigned from my job and travelled to Papua New Guinea with my family, where I spent two very fruitful but challenging years at PAC in 1987 and 1988. However, I still never thought of becoming a teacher.

After completing my teacher-training program at PAC, and graduating with a Diploma of Education at the Secondary level, I was privileged to be called to serve at Kauma, the very place where God had performed a miracle for me. After teaching there for two years, I was fortunate to receive a New Zealand scholarship through the Ministry of Education in Kiribati. This enabled me to pursue undergraduate studies at the University of the South Pacific in Suva (USP), Fiji.

After completing my upgrading studies at USP, I was awarded a Bachelors degree in Education with a major in Geography. I then received an appointment in 1994 to replace the Principal, Mr Tekemau Ribabaiti, who had just accepted a transfer to Fulton College at Tailevu, Fiji. I realised that the

task would not be easy but happily accepted the call as a step forward in my teaching career. I spent five most enjoyable and challenging years at Kauma Adventist High School from 1994 to 1998. Fortunately, at the beginning of 1999, I was awarded an Ausaid Scholarship through the Kiribati Government to return to USP where I completed postgraduate studies and obtained a masters degree. Lupe also studied there and is awaiting final word on the success of her thesis for a Masters Degree in Development Studies. Although the time spent at Kauma was short, I thoroughly enjoyed every moment of it, and have many fond memories of my time there as Principal.

## Conclusion

Although the work of bringing people to the truth in Jesus is not always easy in Kiribati, it has continued to proceed slowly. Despite the slow success in soul winning through evangelistic programs, the seed of the truth of God's love has more often been sown through the influence of Kauma Adventist High School. For some people it may only have been a place where they gained worldly knowledge, but for many others it was the place, which changed their lives spiritually.

To me, it is more than just a school. If it had not been for the spiritual influence I encountered at Kauma, I would not be where I am now, nor would I have become the person I am today. While Kauma provided me with the academic knowledge of this world, it also provided me with the opportunity, through its spiritual programmes and its God-fearing teachers, of finding Jesus as my personal Saviour. The highlight of my years at Kauma took place in 1977 when I went through the waters of baptism to show my acceptance of a new life with Jesus. With our human thinking, we may not be able to see the light beyond the tunnel, but God can open wonderful doors for us, provided we trust in His leading in our daily lives. The Wise Man said, in Proverbs 3:5-6 (KJV), "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths." This has been my experience.

## Reference

- <sup>1</sup> The Gilbert and Ellice Island Colonies were governed by Britain until 1975 when Tuvalu (Ellice Islands) voted to separate from the Gilbert Islands. On receiving full independence in 1979, the Gilbert Islands, including the Phoenix and Line Islands, became known as Kiribati.



The staff members at Kauma in 1996. John Corcoran, the principal, is standing in the middle of the front row.

## Early Days in Samoa—Part 1

### a new cultural experience in the 1960s



**GORDON LEE**

*Gordon Lee was born in Victoria, Australia, in 1927, where he received his primary and secondary education. He attended the Australasian Missionary College from 1946–50, graduating from the Ministerial Course. He was a literature evangelist for a year in Queensland. He obtained a Queensland Diploma in Teaching in 1955, & taught classes at the Yeronga government school in Queensland from 1956 – 59. He commenced his service in the church in 1960 as the headmaster of the Si'ufaga primary school on the island of Savai'i in Samoa. His subsequent appointments were as follows: President of the following; 1962-66, Cook Island Mission; 1967-1970, the Central Pacific Union Mission; 1971, the BSUM; 1972-75, the WPUM. From 1976-1980 he was Director of Stewardship and Communication at the SPD; from 1981-85, PresWest Australia Conference; 1986, Pastor Townsville and Director at SPD-PAC of Island National Leadership Development in 1987 – 92. Gordon had married Edna Gilmore of Victoria in 1951. They had three children: Michella, Broderick and Laurana. In 1993 the Lees retired and Edna passed to her rest in 1994. In 1997 Gordon married Anne Kizziar(USA). They live in Bonnells Bay NSW. Over the years they and their friends have raised large sums of money to provide much needed supplies and equipment for the mission field.*

Late in October 1959 I came home from the government school in Brisbane, Australia, where I taught primary grades, to be met by an excited welcome from my daughter, Michella. My wife, Edna, was more subdued. She handed me a telegram from Pastor Laurie C Naden, the Secretary of the Australasian Division of Seventh-day Adventists (now the South Pacific Division). It was a call to teach in one of our mission schools in Samoa. I too began to feel excited. After ten years of waiting I was finally being asked to serve my church in a full time capacity.

I looked up at my wife. I could see that she didn't share the excitement that I felt. Our second child was due in a few months. Although Edna was keeping good health, I could sense the uncertainty, the simple fear of the unknown. As a city girl, she had lived almost all her life surrounded by a large family and had enjoyed all the comforts that city living could bring. Yet since we had met at Australasian Missionary College we had both begun to dream of serving God in the mission field of the Pacific. That night we committed ourselves to the Lord again and said that if this were His call we could do nothing but answer it.

The next day we made contact with Pastor Naden accepting the call to teach in Samoa. We then sought all the information possible about Samoa and the work that we were being called to do. I was being called to conduct the school at Si'ufaga on the large island of Savai'i and so it would be necessary to arrive by late January, 1960. The school was to continue its vangelistic outreach as much as being a school for children from Adventist families. A small house was located on the mission compound next to the church, but as there was no power supply, electrical equipment would be superfluous. We would need to take our own

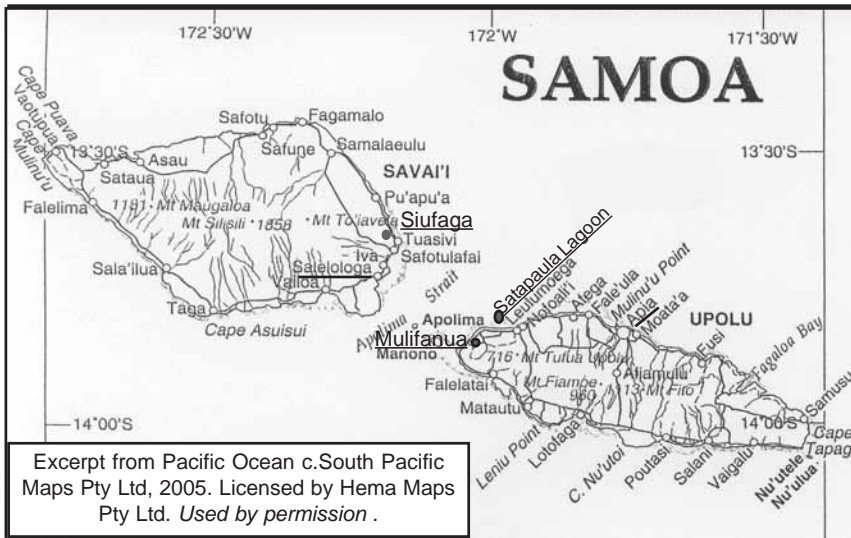
furniture, including a kerosene refrigerator which would be essential in the tropical climate. The information we had sourced was most helpful, but when we arrived we found that it had been completely inadequate!

The next few months were filled with every conceivable task to fit us for the new adventure. There were inoculations to have, passports to get, and visas with work permits to enable us to stay in Samoa as missionaries. Other duties also pressed on my time. For several years I had been senior elder of the South Brisbane Church, one of the earliest churches in that area, but in the mid-1950's the church was dying. Some of us had decided that we couldn't let this trend continue. So we had begun a social and spiritual programme that concentrated on the family and youth and led to church renewal. It was at the height of this transition time that I was called away to mission service.

From the time of accepting the call to Samoa to the time of departure was an extremely busy three months. Edna was having regular checkups, and the doctor was becoming very concerned as the time drew near for our departure. The baby was presenting in breech position so in mid-January he insisted that Edna must remain in Australia for the birth late in May. There was an urgency on the part of the Samoa Mission to have me there no later than the third week of January, as school must commence in the first week of February.



The missionary families in Samoa. L to R: David & Fay Hay & Sandra; Anthea & Neil Hughes, Grant & Lenore ; Douglas & Elva Jenkins, Elwyn & Dennis; Edna & Gordon Lee, Broderick & Michella



John Ryan

What were we to do? We wrestled with this decision for several days before finally deciding that I must go on alone. Edna and Michella would go and live with her parents so that she could attend her regular doctor. After the birth, when mother and baby were well enough, they would join me in Samoa.

We sold all our unneeded furniture, packed and shipped the rest. I was to leave on Thursday evening for Sydney, but I still had to sell the car. Once again we asked for the Lord's help. On Wednesday evening a young man who was about to commence work at the Sanitarium Health Food Company came to look over the car. He agreed to buy it but said that he would not have the money until Thursday. This allowed me to have the full use of the car until the last hour before my departure for the airport. It was a very troubled wife and bewildered daughter who said farewell, but I felt confident that the Lord would be near each of us. We had seen His hand directing, leading and working out in our lives as we had accepted the call to mission service in Samoa.

After flying from Australia to Fiji I then had to travel by flying boat to Faleolo in Satapaula Lagoon. After the long flight excitement began mounting in me as we neared our destination. Pastor Douglas Jenkins, President of the Samoa Mission, and others, were waiting to welcome me as I came ashore from the flying boat. Satapuala Lagoon, where the flying boat had landed, is on the strait between the two main islands, Upolu and Savai'i. From there Pastor Jenkins drove me to Apia, the capital and centre of business and trade, located on the northern coast almost in the centre of Upolu.

The drive around the coastline was an unforgettable experience. We passed through village after village where thousands of people thronged the beach and roadside. The houses were unwallled, of various sizes, and some high set while others were at ground level. Every village had at least one huge church building — it seemed like there was a cathedral every half mile along the road. Apparently there was strong competition between the denominations in this land and so they tried to see who could build the biggest and most ornate church. As we drove along Pastor Jenkins explained all manner of important things to me about the country and the mission. I scarcely understood or remembered any of them, as I was so interested in watching the people who walked dangerously close to the passing traffic or dashed across in front of the car. There seemed to be so much fun and laughter among them. When I waved to them, they would call out, "Palagi,

palagi". When we came upon a spring of fresh water at the beach front, circled with a wall of stones, we saw the ladies doing their washing. They pounded the clothes with large sticks on the smoother rocks in the water and I wondered how long they would sustain such a beating!

Apia was a bustling water-front town. The business houses were spread out in a line behind a sealed road near the harbour where a ship lay at anchor. Barges were busy ferrying goods between the wharf and the ship. Pastor Jenkins swung the car to the side of the road and stopped. He waved to a large man who was in charge of the teams of men working on the wharf. Pastor Jenkins told me that the man's name was John Ryan, and that while he was the chief stevedore for the Union Steamship Company, he was also a faithful Seventh-day Adventist layman. When he came over to the car to greet us, Pastor Jenkins introduced me to him as the new teacher for Si'ufaga on Savai'i. John reached through, shook my hand and welcomed me to Samoa. I sensed then an immediate friendship that continued over many years.

Lalovaea, the Mission Headquarters in Apia for the whole of Samoa, was nestled at the foot of Mount Vaea. On its summit, Tusitala (storyteller) Robert Louis Stevenson is buried. From there the sprawling town of Apia can be seen. On the Mission compound there was a large primary and high school, a large church that faced the road, and a dilapidated wooden building which served as the mission office. A number of workers' houses were nestled among the breadfruit and frangipani trees, and every inch of available land seemed to be cultivated with crops of tapioca, sweet potato and bananas. The Mission President and the School Principal gave me good instruction and advice, but I'm not sure how much I remembered. My mind seemed overloaded with all that I was hearing and seeing in this new environment.

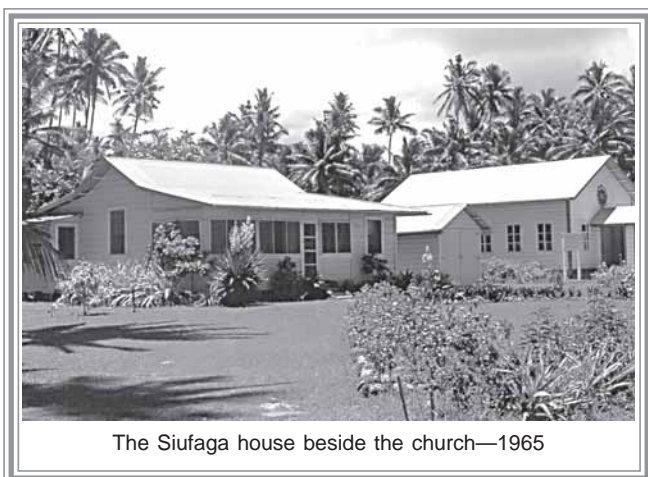
The President was to accompany me to Savai'i so we drove to the Mulifanua wharf early in the morning. The boat journey from Mulifanua to Salelologa on Savai'i would take about an hour and a half. I had my two suitcases and a couple of cartons of foodstuff as luggage as I had been told that there was nothing to buy on Savai'i except bully-beef and rice. The small boat was loaded to the rails with taro, yams, sweet potatoes, tapioca, pigs, fowls and people. The only seating accommodation was on the canvas-covered hold on the open deck. I was very pleased when we pulled into the wharf at Salelologa.

A very distinguished looking, Samoan gentleman, immaculately dressed in his white lavalava, white shirt and tie, with white jacket, stood beside a Landrover. Pastor Jenkins recognised him immediately and introduced me to him. He was Suisala Eti, elder of our church at Si'ufaga and also the senior government officer on Savai'i. Suisala shook my hand firmly and, speaking in perfect English, told me that I was to ride with him in his vehicle to the Mission Station where the church members were waiting to welcome me. He then turned to Pastor Jenkins and enquired whether the new teacher's goods had arrived yet as there was no furniture in the house. Unfortunately they hadn't and there was no trace of them in the ship's manifest at Apia. John Ryan had checked this out for Pastor Jenkins before we left Apia.

The ride to Si'ufaga was not as far as I had experienced the day before on the drive from Satupuala Lagoon to Apia, but the village scenes and the people were the same. Maybe the people were a little more shy. The road ran close to the lagoon all the way. I wished that the Mission compound would be close to the water. And I was not to be disappointed. We turned into a break of the neat hedge and found a small pale blue, wooden church, that would seat about 80 people, a small *fale* apparently for the children's Sabbath School, and another wooden building — small, paint peeling, and old—that I was told would be my home for the next few years.

I wanted to go in and inspect my future home, but a friendly group of men, women and children gathered around. Several came forward and placing beautiful floral leis around my neck shook hands with me, speaking words that I did not understand but had no difficulty interpreting. My first impressions were that these were beautiful people, so clean, neat and polite. A big feast had been prepared in my honour, and was laid out on the floor of the *fale* next to the church. An array of foods which I had not seen nor smelt before, had been placed on mats of banana leaves. Sitting cross-legged on a mat and eating from a banana leaf with my fingers, was certainly a new if not entirely comfortable experience. Various chiefs made long repetitive speeches as they stood firmly, determinedly holding fast to a long, ceremonial stick. I didn't understand a word, but fortunately a young interpreter sat close behind me, telling me what was being said.

When it came time to move away from the food and speeches we slowly walked over to inspect the house that I was to call home. My baggage had already been taken in and we followed. An enclosed verandah six feet wide covered the full length of the front two rooms that constituted the house. One room was the lounge. The other was the master bedroom. Passing



The Siufaga house beside the church—1965

through the master bedroom, which had three doorways but no doors, we found another verandah along the length of the back. To the left was a section for the kitchen, and next to it was the dining room area. Then separated by a thin wall, the verandah became a bathroom from which you stepped down into a lean-to for the laundry. The end of the house, next to the church, was walled in providing space for the children's bedroom and the headmaster's office.



Tesese Tasi

There was no electricity, no running water, no stove. This was genuine missionary living! The walls finished at about eight feet, and the rafters, roof joists and rusty iron roofing were all exposed as there was no ceiling. I wondered how Edna would appreciate this house when she arrived in a few months with a new baby. As I looked back through the bedroom, across the verandah and out to the lagoon, the ugliness of the house was lost completely in the glory of the tropical surroundings. Coconut palms leaning over white sands, and the blue waters of the lagoon were reward enough for me.

There was little time left before the last ferry-boat would return to Upolu, so the President had to hurry. He told me that I should try to have everything ready for the opening of school on the next Monday. He also said that I could contact him by sending a note over with anyone going to Apia if I needed anything. I stood at the roadside in front of the Mission house waving him goodbye, wondering what I could do in five days, to find desks for the classroom and the books for the students! I also wondered how many children would come, or whether any children would come at all.

"You have no mat to sleep on," said a deep voice behind me. "Perhaps you will accept one from our house." It was Pastor Tesese, the district director of Savai'i who lived in a large *fale* at the rear of the mission compound. Nofoa, his wife, stood next to him holding a white cloth. After entering the empty house, Pastor Tesese lay the mat on the floor in the empty room that was to become my bedroom and the white cloth was to be my sheet. As the sun had now sunk low behind the hills, I took the kerosene lantern out from my gear. The Pastor and his wife sat with me for some time, cross-legged on the bare floorboards of the other room. They were gracious people and made me feel so much needed. They were full of hope for the school and they said that many children would come. But they also told me that there were no other teachers to help me in the school.

Over the next four days, I did all I could to prepare. I had had no experience in sole charge teaching and was approaching the opening of school with some trepidation. When the day finally came for school to begin, students came and classes commenced. With the help I had received from a nearby government school principal I was able to make a success of the little school at Si'ufaga—the beginning of many years of mission work for God in the Pacific.



## Letters—a word from you

1. 'A Pioneer Catalyst Gapi Ravu of Eastern Papua', Vol 5 No 1 pg 17,18.
  - a) Pastor George and Mrs Maye Porter of Norfolk Island have indicated that the Namatanai area was "half-way down the coast of New Ireland" rather than on "East New Britain" and that the village of Ganai was on the Rabaul side of the mouth of the Warangoi River," rather than some distance inland from Kambubu. In the interests of accuracy the author, Lester Lock of Port Maquarie NSW, agreed.
  - b) Ken Boehm of Ourimbah, NSW, provides a helpful comment on Gapi and Vera Ravi's family. They adopted three children—Max (1947), now a business man in the Aroma District; Molly who works as a motel receptionist; Ian a fully qualified structural engineer who operates his own business in Port Moresby.
2. 'Betikama Missionary School', Vol 5 No 1 pg 9.

Martin and Olga Ward of Cooranbong, NSW, wrote: "In his second to last paragraph Ray Richter states: 'Kevin Silva was the next principal [of Betikama Missionary School], followed by Max Miller and later Ray Smith.'" There is one omission in this list. We actually followed Max Miller at the beginning of 1967 and Ray Smith arrived at the beginning of 1970. Martin as principal (with Olga as homemaker) was given the task of consolidating and building up the high school section of the school. Max Miller had previously cared for a first year high school class and the students had gone on to complete their high school work at Jones Missionary College." Author Ray Richter has indicated that the Wards are correct and apologises for the omission.
3. 'A Letter to Mother' Vol 5 No 1.

"Referring to Shirley Thomson's story in your latest Journal, which I enjoyed immensely for it was familiar territory for me, it seems there is something of a mix up in the names given the boat in which they were travelling. It appears they started out on the *Eran* and ended up on the *Ka Seli*. I suggest that it is hardly likely and that in fact only the *Ka Seli* is involved." Pr Bert Pietz of Cooranbong, NSW.  
"Pr Pietz is correct," replied the author, Shirley Thomson: "We were travelling on the *Ka Seli* not the *Eran*."
4. 'Breaking New Ground in PNG, Part 9', Vol 5 No 1 p 12.

Ken Boehm of Ourimbah, NSW, adds some interesting details about the Omaura property. Originally it was a gold mining area leased by two European men. They experienced difficult times and because of threats from some of the local people, slept ever ready to defend themselves. When their health deteriorated they visited Pr Stan Gander's station at Kainantu where they received much needed medical attention until they were able to travel to Australia. There, possibly at the 'San' in Wahroonga, they received further medical treatment. Not desiring to return to PNG, they transferred their lease to the church, it would seem, for saving their lives. Teachers from Mussau were sent to live at Omaura to plant gardens and commence a school there. By so doing the Adventists were securing their right to the property in the eyes of others.
5. 'Master Ji -- an Indian teacher's service in Fiji', Vol 5 No 1 p 29.

Brian Townend of Cooranbong, makes a couple of helpful observations relating to dates. "The last paragraph on page 29 says Narain was at Fulton until 1956—not quite correct. he left Fulton at the end of 1952. I am sure of that date, as on 11 January 1953, Daphne and I with our 9 month old daughter, Darralyn, moved into Narain's former house on the top of the hill on the other side of Kings Rd. Actually Narain's house was the only building at Fulton that was not either brought from one of the other locations, or built from army surplus material...it was clad with weatherboards." Secondly "there is a slip up in the date of the picture at the top of the page. I think the date is more likely 1946, as none of those pictured were still at Fulton in 1956." Thank you.
6. Book Review: The Theory and Practice of Music in the SDA Church in PNG, Vol 4 No 2 p 38.

Two corrections. Jennifer and Rodger Jones taught at PAU from 1999 — 2001. Rodger served as the Dean of Science and Humanities and Jennifer contributed to the music programme of the university. She received an M Litt. (Master of Letters, not Literature) from the University of New England, Australia. Editor. ❀

**BERYL STAFFORD**



*Sadly both Beryl & Calvin Stafford have now passed to their rest. They both have contributed to the Journal and have enriched Adventist history.*

*Beryl wrote of her experiences in PNG from a woman's viewpoint in Vol 4 #1, June 2004. Calvin's article was in Vol 2 #1 June 2002.*

### Big Game Hunting at Kumul

Our new house in the East Simbu Province of Papua New Guinea was made with pitsawn hardwood timber, woven bamboo outer walls and inner walls lined with woven pitpit. Kunai grass thatch made up the roof so there was really no way of keeping out mice or rats.

One evening after the children were tucked into bed, Calvin and I were sitting in the lounge room quietly reviewing the day's doings. A big bush rat must have decided he was in need of some company. Finding an entry point into the house somewhere, he scurried across the lounge room and sat under a chair in the furthest corner. Now what? We didn't want rats chewing things and making a big mess. We thought of setting a trap. No! Not with small children in the house. Then a sudden idea came to Calvin's mind. He had recently acquired a 6-foot native bow with a couple of fancy arrows.

Mr Rat continued to observe us from his vantage point under the chair. Calvin quietly took the bow and an arrow and crouched in the opposite corner. Slowly fitting the arrow to the bamboo string he drew it back with careful aim. PING! The arrow flew, but the rat had disappeared! I don't know who got the biggest fright, Mr Rat, or me, when the arrow flew and hit the pitpit wall with a tremendous clatter! We laughed and laughed and still laugh when we recall the scene. Needless to say, Mr Rat was not seen again! ❀

# Raising Evangelistic Horizons

## —successful evangelism in Fiji in 1951

**COLIN SAWYER**



*Colin Sawyer was born in Auckland, NZ. On concluding his secondary education he served as a Junior Worker in the SHF Co in Auckland from 1936 – 1938. After graduating from the 2 year Business Course at the NZ Missionary College in 1940, he became the accountant and bookkeeping teacher there until October 1945. (21 months of this period were spent in the NZ Medical Corps). On 2 February 1943, Colin married Nancy Oldham. He spent 6 years in mission service as Secretary-Treasurer of both the Fijian and Indian Missions in Fiji, from Nov 1945 – Dec 1950. As John L Shuler was to conduct a major evangelistic series in Suva, in 1951, Colin was asked to plan for his visit.*

*After a little more than 2 years in private employment in N.Z., Colin returned to church office work, first for a year in the N.Z. Conference, (1954), and then as Sec-Tr for the TTUC, 1955 – 1962; the Greater Sydney Conference, 1963 – 1966; the TCUC, 1967 - 1974 TAUC – 1980. His faithful work in caring for personnel and financial matters over a considerable period of time was a significant contribution to the mission of the church.*

*Colin and Nancy retired to Forster in NSW, and from time to time Colin helped out in various church offices. He passed to his rest on 22 August, 2001.*

While I was secretary-treasurer of the Fiji Mission of Seventh-day Adventists<sup>1</sup>, I was asked to coordinate the first evangelistic campaign to be held in Suva, the administration and commercial centre of Fiji. Prior to 1951 no evangelism in a public way had been attempted. This was due to the idea that the Seventh-day Adventist Church did not rank in popularity in the community like the larger and well established churches. Adventist members also felt that there were many members in these churches who were better educated, and furthermore, they had larger church buildings, bigger schools and colleges and certainly a very large membership base to support their various activities.

The Australasian Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists with headquarters in Sydney, Australia, advised the Central Pacific Union Mission (CPUM)<sup>2</sup>, that funds had been made available for John L Shuler to conduct a public evangelistic campaign in the Suva Town Hall. It would be for six nights a week and would continue for several months. A ministers' training school would operate during the duration of the meetings. This news brought a very mixed reaction from both Fijian and expatriate mission workers. However, after John Shuler and his wife

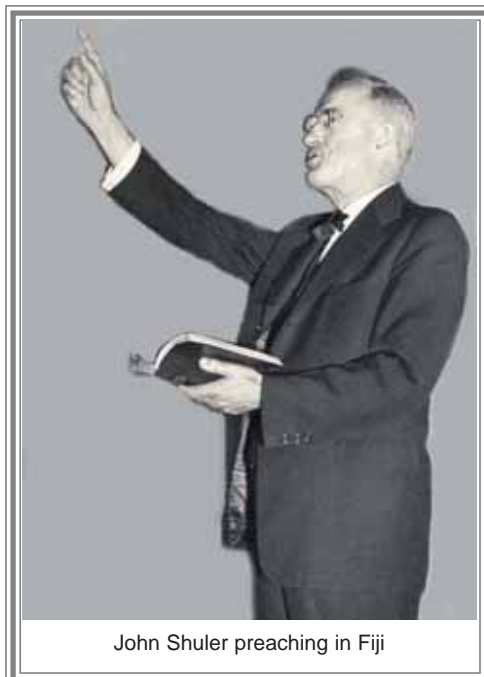
arrived on 15 May 1951, and took up residence in the flat on the Suvavou Mission compound, he sparked a fire in the minds of the Fijians that has never ceased to burn. They were amazed when the Suva City Council welcomed the Shulers, as American evangelists, and gave them priority bookings for the building in Victoria Street for the full time requested. The *Fiji Times and Herald* accepted the advertising contract willingly and cooperated in printing handbills advertising the meetings.

The opening night proved to be a really big event in Suva. The town hall was packed with Europeans, Indians and a number of students from distant Pacific Islands, as well as Fijians. Large numbers stood outside the open windows where they were able to hear John Shuler clearly. We were amazed at the reaction of the community to the Adventist preaching judged by the attendance each night, which was almost as large as the opening night. Shuler conducted his school for ministers each day and instilled his knowledge of the Word in such a way that his pupils caught a vision that changed their lives. They were taught how to give Bible studies to those in the audience who had filled in cards each evening requesting further information. There was indeed, overwhelming evidence of the moving of the Holy Spirit in the lives of the Fijian ministry. Shuler wrote:

The meetings are going fine. We have installed 125 additional seats in the hall, yet hundreds have to stand on Sunday nights. On Sunday 17 June, 390 people gave their names in indicating they were interested in a tract on the sermon. One hundred people have already signed their names for Thursday night Bible classes.<sup>3</sup>

It wasn't long before a group of students from the Marshall Islands, Wake Island and Guam requested Pastor Shuler to give them special studies as they were unable to stay for the full series of meetings. He was glad to do this for he realised the potential of these well-educated young men to carry the Adventist message back to their isolated island communities.

Karl Brook, a minister of the Indian Adventist Church wrote:



John Shuler preaching in Fiji



It was indeed gratifying to see 48 people sign decision cards. Great problems face these dear folk. Some have to give up tobacco, some alcohol, and some have to adjust their lives to the clean way of living, but in all this God is giving the strength and the guidance.

A young Indian man who had been studying at Fulton College attended the town hall lectures and said:

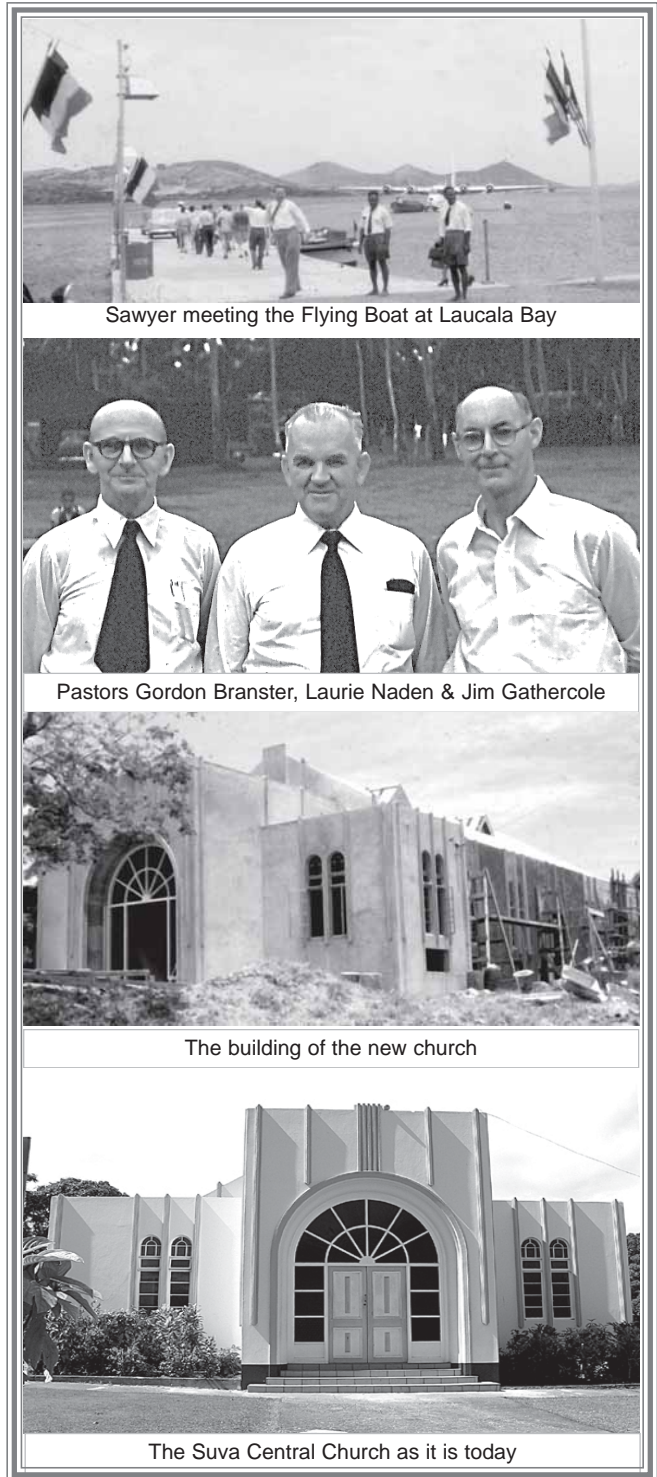
I have made my decision and I feel as though a great load has been taken off my back.<sup>4</sup>

While the meetings were in progress and the interests were increasing, the Mission administrators realised that there should be a church building in the Suva city area where the new membership could worship. But there was no vacant land in the city where a church could be built. The government said that there was no freehold locations available at the time, and that they couldn't help.

Some months before this I had become friendly with an employee in the parcels department of the Suva Post Office. He always wanted to talk with me when I was collecting parcels for the Fiji Mission. I figured he appreciated a chat as he seemed lonely. One day I spoke to him about the shortage of freehold land in Suva and of the need for a suitable block on which an attractive church building could be erected. He said that his mother's land in the centre of Suva just near the main government buildings was freehold but was not available for sale at this time because members of the family couldn't agree among themselves what to do with it. They didn't want businessmen to get it but they were the only people with enough money to buy it. A brother of this man lived in Suva and worked as a customs officer and there was a sister who lived in New Zealand. Apparently the mother had died some time before I mentioned our need for church land and therefore her land was available to be sold as vacant possession. A short time later he rang our office and said that the family had agreed to sell and would be happy for the Seventh-day Adventists to have it. The land was to be sold by tender and the church was invited to respond with an offer as soon as possible.

Fiji Mission administrators were delighted at this turn of events and after consultation with the head office of the church in Sydney, where funds for purchasing the land would come from, offered in 1951, an amount of 2000 pounds for the land. A few days after the tender date had passed, I received an anonymous phone call advising me that I should lodge an additional tender for five pounds more than the original tender amount, and ask no questions. The new tender was to be lodged as soon as possible in a given Post Office box in Suva. I can assure you that Pastor John Keith, the president of the East Fiji Mission and I, wasted no time in following these instructions. After a few days we received a congratulatory phone call advising us that the Adventist tender of 2005 pounds was the highest, and had been accepted by the owners of the land. We were also told to contact the family solicitor, Maurice Smith, requesting him to arrange the necessary paper work at the first opportunity.

When it was publicly announced that the Adventists had purchased the property and planned to erect a church on the site there was rather a mixed reaction in some quarters. Several businessmen had been planning to build a large club room there to make money. It seems that they had figured that no



one would tender more than 2000 pounds for the land. Just prior to my leaving Suva permanently for Auckland, New Zealand, the deal was finalised.

Pastor Albert V Olsen, a vice-president of the church's world headquarters in Washington DC arrived in Suva in February, 1951. He was there to attend the First Quadrennial Session Meetings of the CPUM, and wasn't there very long before he became aware of the need for a representative church building in the city to cater for an increasing membership. On reporting the situation to the General Conference Committee in Washington, 5,000 pounds was made available for the project.

Pastor Jim Gathercole had arrived in Suva in March 1953 to continue the supervision of the construction of the new



Pastor Cyrus Adams

homes and office for the CPUM at Tamavua, now needed since a cyclone had, earlier in the year, mostly destroyed former buildings. Realising there was an urgent need for the church building in downtown Suva, he drew the plans for it and had them approved. Once the work at Tamavua was completed he organised a team of local workers for building the new church facility, and actively involved himself in the building work. He was further assisted by A Mills who built the foundation and erected walls of concrete blocks.

Dedication of the new house of worship occurred on Sunday afternoon 12 June, 1955. Among community dignitaries present were: Councillor Leys, Mayor of Suva, and Sir Alport Barker, owner of the *Fiji Times and Herald*. Representing the church were Pastor Laurie Naden, Secretary at the church's headquarters in Sydney, Pastor Gordon Branster, President of the CPUM, and Pastor Cyrus Adams, President of the West Fiji Mission.

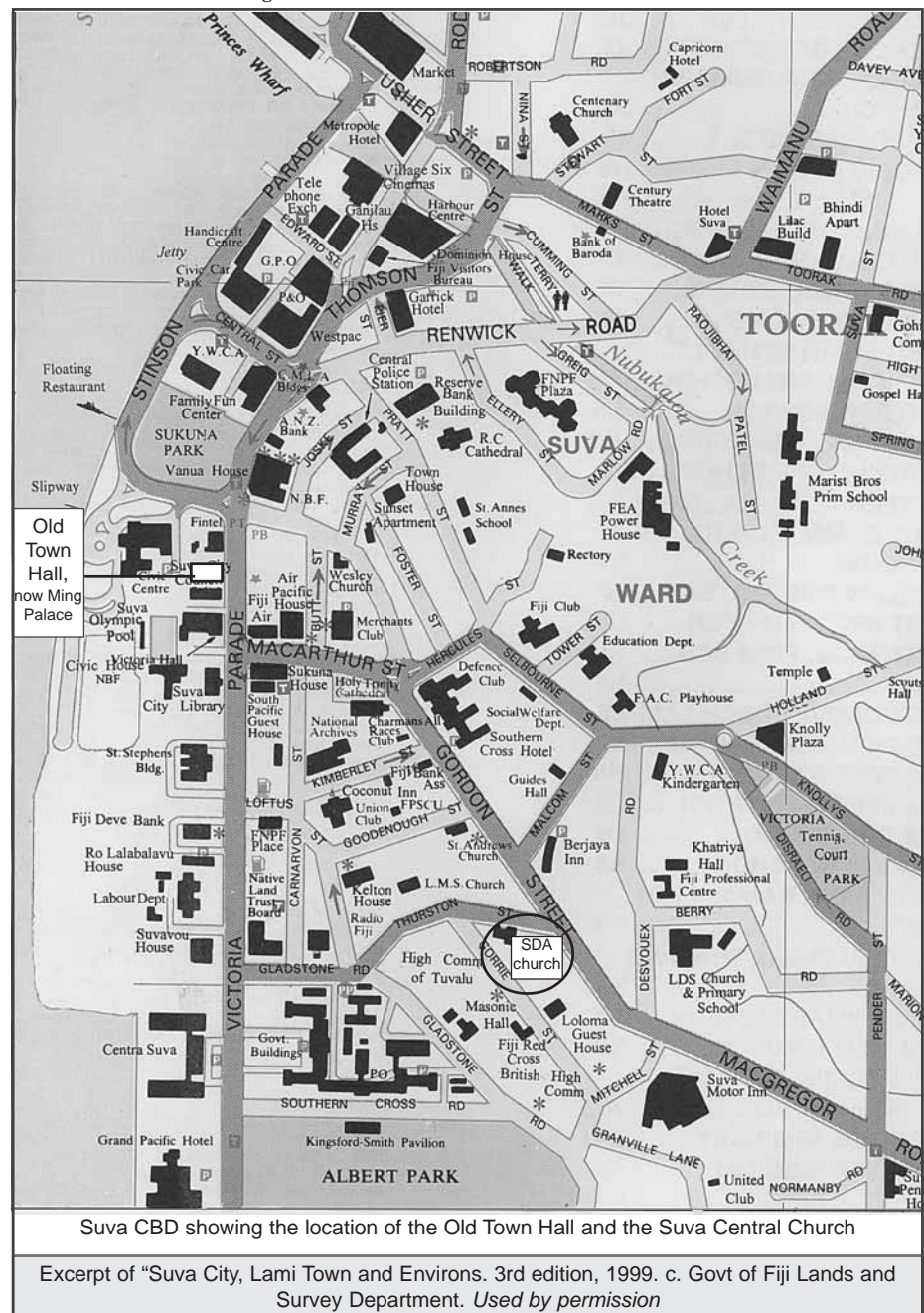
This attractive church complex has, over the years, functioned as a 'mother' church. The last report which I heard of in the 1990s, was that the John Shuler meetings had resulted in a new day dawning for evangelistic outreach for the Fiji Mission. Twenty-five new

Adventist meeting places in the Suva, Samabula, and Point areas, and even in the villages beyond the Rewa River Delta have grown from the Central Church. Indeed, "What has God wrought!"

Years later Pastor Wilfred Pascoe, Treasurer of the Australasian Division, visited some of the islands in the Far Eastern Division lying north of the equator. There in the Marshalls, Wake and Guam, he was surprised to find groups of Adventists worshipping together. This was a result of the conversion of the young men whom John Shuler had studied with in Suva in 1951. Eternity alone will proclaim the true results of the Pentecostal power that came at the time of the public meetings in Suva.

### References and Notes

- <sup>1</sup> Fiji Mission was reorganised in 1951. The Territory was divided into two missions: East Fiji with head quarters at Buca Bay on the island of Vanua Levu; and West Fiji with headquarters at Suva Vou on the island of Viti Levu.
- <sup>2</sup> The Central Pacific Union Mission of Seventh-day Adventists (CPUM), gave overall supervision to the work of the church in the Territories of Vanuatu (the New Hebrides), Fiji, Tonga, Kiribati and Tuvalu (the Gilbert and Ellice Islands), Niue Island, the Cook Islands, Pitcairn Island, French Polynesia and New Caledonia.
- <sup>3</sup> John Shuler, *Australasian Record*, 16 July 1951, 8
- <sup>4</sup> Karl Brook, *ibid*, 20 August 1951, 6



# Kiribati: life with a difference

Cecily Hay

The long green house set amongst the coconut and breadfruit trees looked like an oasis of civilization in the midst of an ancient settlement. Two women, one little more than a girl and the other well on in years were working cleaning some of the 649 louvres in the windows. The tropical sun was shining brightly—there was hardly a cloud in the sky. It was hot, not a breeze stirred the leaves of the trees. The women wiped the perspiration from their faces as it trickled down their necks, through their hair and even into their ears. They were glad that they had begun early in the morning because by noon it would be, almost too hot to do anything except sit and drink cooling drinks.

They watched the life of the people unfold before them—a strange mixture of the modern and traditional. The road, about 70 yards away in front of the house, was busy with all kinds of vehicles; the double-cab utilities, the cars, the small mini-buses tooting and weaving in and out of each other in a bid for passengers, the many small motorbikes and scooters, the push bikes wobbling their way along and as well, the pedestrians crowding onto the road scattering wildly when tooted at. At the back about 100 yards away, the sea glowed with the many colours of the reef— blue, green and the many shades of turquoise.

The women in the settlement had begun their work early. They had swept the ground outside their dwellings. Already clothes were on the lines strung between coconut trees. They had pulled up tins of water from their wells and crouched in front of large basins, scrubbing their clothes assiduously. Now some of them were preparing food to be cooked on their fires underneath corrugated iron shelters. Children roamed around, many of them naked, others in the scantiest of clothing. Roosters, hens and chickens scratched in the ground trying to find something to eat. Pigs with their piglets snorted around rooting amongst what little plant life there was. The two large pigs in their small enclosure not far from the front of the house had received their food earlier and now they slept underneath a crude shelter. Dogs jealously guarded their territory. The air was filled with a cacophony of sound—children crying or calling loudly to each other, women talking and laughing, pigs squealing, chooks crowing raucously, dogs barking, radios blaring forth a programme of local music interspersed with offerings from Radio Australia. And in the background always the sound of the traffic and the sea.

The two women finished their window cleaning for a time. They both gratefully sank into the comfort of a chair and drank glasses of cold bottled water from the mountains of Java. After a time they tried to make order amidst the chaos of unpacked boxes and find places to put things in a house where there were no cupboards, wardrobes, towel racks or anywhere to hang anything—not even a door handle.



The house at Betio, belonging to the gov't, was 12 kms from Korobu

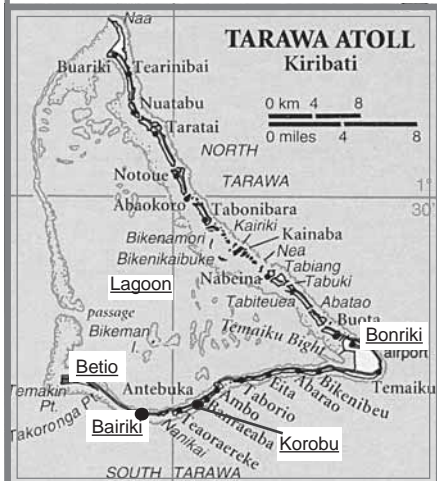


Watching the tide come in over the reef at Korobu

While they worked, the life of the island continued. At the wharf the maintenance men tried to fix the large crane, the only one big enough to unload and load full containers. They weren't particularly worried; the breakdown of the crane was a common occurrence and people would have to wait. Those who couldn't, unloaded their own containers on the wharf and men and lorries were scurrying around everywhere. In the comfort of their new building, customs officers extracted every penny from their hapless importers. Shopkeepers, some in dim little stores just with the bare necessities and others in shops with a more varied merchandise, languidly served their customers. Government clerks, in all kinds of conditions, attended to the affairs of their country and the High Commissioners and Ambassadors from other countries conducted their affairs in the comfort of air conditioned buildings. While his colleagues rode in a car in relative luxury, a lone policeman rode his bicycle slowly down the street, his large frame almost totally enveloping it.

And so the day wore on—the people in the settlement continued to live their lives in open view, preparing food, bathing, talking, arguing, making bush beer, preparing to go fishing in the lagoon, lying in their hammocks and the old men lying on their sleeping platforms. The night came suddenly, lights came on, everyone seemed to be out in the darkness. In the distance could be heard the hypnotic beat of the music and the thumping of the feet as the children and others danced in the local hall. At last quietness descended and everyone slept as the breeze gently blew, the villagers in their crude shelters, and the woman and her husband in their house, until the crowing of the roosters—gaining strength for yet another day of service in this inhospitable environment.

Tarawa Atoll. The 1st house we lived in was at Betio where the wharf is. The administrative centre is at Bairiki, the mission station at Korobu, the airport at Bonriki.



This is almost as far as the road goes. Because Tarawa is a series of little islets joined by causeways, many of the villages on North Tarawa can only be reached by boat across the lagoon.

Excerpt from "Oceania" 1995 James A Bier c. University of Hawaii Press Used by permission

# A Missionary Returns



**LEN BARNARD**



*Len Barnard began his long service for the church in 1933. Apart from attending the NZ Missionary College in 1937-38, he spent 7 years working for the Sanitarium Health Food Co in NZ & Australia. From 1942-1946 he served with the Australian Infantry Forces in PNG as a paramedic. He and his wife Mavis commenced mission service in 1949 when he was appointed superintendent of Mt Hagen Hansenide Colony in the Western Highlands of PNG. Following six years of service there, Len became director of the Omaura & Homu districts in the Eastern Highlands in 1955. From 1962 till 1972 he was director of the Laiagam District as well as a pilot for the CSUM. His vision & perseverance led to the setting up of the work of aerial evangelism in the SPD. He spent 12 years in pastoral work in the NNSW Conference and then retired. During that time he initiated the establishment of the Adventist Aviation Association. Mavis assisted him by working in the outpatients clinics and was a midwife for many of the women. Sadly she passed away on 15 October 2005. She and Len had two daughters, Sharyn & Kaye. Len is now married to Noela Shinnars & they live at Alton Villas in Cooranbong, NSW Aust.*

Over thirty years ago I came back to Australia from my mission field in Papua New Guinea, and since that time I have often wondered how the people that I had left were now getting on and what changes had taken place there. On 13 November 2005, I was privileged to be able to spend two weeks visiting my former mission stations. The people's delight in seeing me again was heart-warming and helped to heal my sad heart after the passing of my beloved wife. What I saw and heard thrilled me beyond words.

My first mission appointment in 1949 was to Togoba where I was to build and operate a Hansenide (Leper) Colony. This was a mighty challenge and I had the privilege of organizing the treatment of the first eight hundred and fifty lepers. When I left after six years there were ten church members in the Colony. Today there are eleven churches in the area bursting at the seams and continuing to grow.

I spent the next ten years of intensive mission activity at Laiagam. During that time I initiated the mission aviation program with our first plane, the *Andrew Stewart*. The enthusiasm of the people to worship their Lord is unbelievable. In my mission days there were about three hundred church members in the district, but now there are over three thousand, and the numbers are still increasing.

Two amazing stories of faith and deliverance stirred my heart. One concerns Pepom who was a faithful church deaconess in my days. Her bush house with all of her belongings had previously been burnt by tribal enemies when they attacked and burnt the whole village. Some time later the enemy tribe was returning to fight again. She was too old to run away so she sat in front of her hut and prayed. A fierce storm arose. Brilliant lightning

flashes and rolling thunder were followed by large hail stones that pounded her enemies. They fled in great fear and never returned as they recognized this event as an act of God.

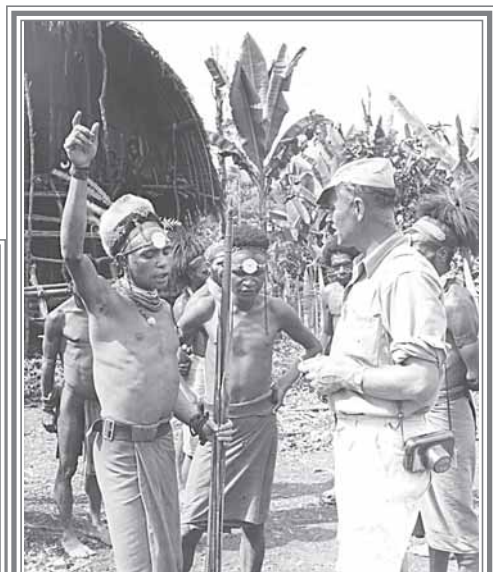
The other story concerned an attack on Paip Village nearby where the enemy was planning to burn the church. Alo, the church youth leader, could not stand idly by so he grabbed the trumpet attached to a long pipe that is used to call the faithful to worship. He blew this loudly in all directions, and from nowhere, a swarm of bees appeared and mercilessly attacked the enemy. They all fled in complete disarray. I found these stories to be glorious examples of God's care for His people when they need Him.

Then we travelled over the mountainous road, with countless large potholes scattered over it, to Porgera which is now a large gold-mining town. There I was joyously met by many church members and a delightful choir that sang a special song along with other items to welcome me. It was a pleasant surprise to hear this harmonious singing while I was in such a rugged and remote area. What a contrast to former years!

My travels then took me on a thirty-minute flight from Mt Hagen to Karimui. Nearly fifty years previously, Eric Were and I had walked, around for forty days in the then notorious cannibal country where he filmed *Cry of New Guinea*. The Karimui district is still very isolated as there is no road into the area



Pastors Laurie Naden & Len Barnard at the dedication of the *Andrew Stewart*.



The modern Macedonian call. The Luluai's (the chief's) invitation to go to cannibal country

because of the rugged terrain, and flying is very costly. Nevertheless, instead of the evidences of cannibalism and the dirges of heathenism that we saw and heard back then, I now heard songs of praise to God sung by the many Adventist villagers who greeted me. The people there are flocking to the churches in the hundreds and rejoicing in their release from the ways of heathenism and in their hope of Christ's soon return.

This is an amazing contrast from my first visit. The filth, degradation and their dejected stare of hopelessness defied description. In my book, *Banish The Night*, page 44, I wrote of this visit:

Besides the ever-present mud and rotting rubbish we smelled the sickly sweet odor of of human flesh of the dead drying in the sun. The only domestic animal was the filthy pig which lived with the people... Such was the setting for cannibalism. For offensiveness no village equalled Diwei, where on the second day the chief asked me, 'Why are my people dying?' The answer was so obvious that at first I was bewildered. Why indeed. I pointed out to him the pollution surrounding his hut and the habit of devouring the dead. This was not the way the true God intended human beings to live.

He then made a passionate plea for someone to teach them how to live a better life. This request could not be ignored. These people responded to the teacher sent to help them and today what is seen is the result of their willingness to renounce their former ways and follow the Lord. Their faces now beam with joy and their villages are a pleasure to visit.

At Homu station, which I had pioneered nearly forty years ago, church members gathered in thousands. They had started

planning for special district meetings long before I had planned my visit, so it was fortunate for me that I was able to arrive at this time. Speaking to several thousand on the Sabbath morning was a sheer delight for me. The meetings started at 8 am and continued non-stop until the last meeting which was a baptism that concluded at 3.15 pm. And that was after a 4.30 am prayer meeting and no breakfast! They surely love their Lord and delight to sing His praises and worship Him.

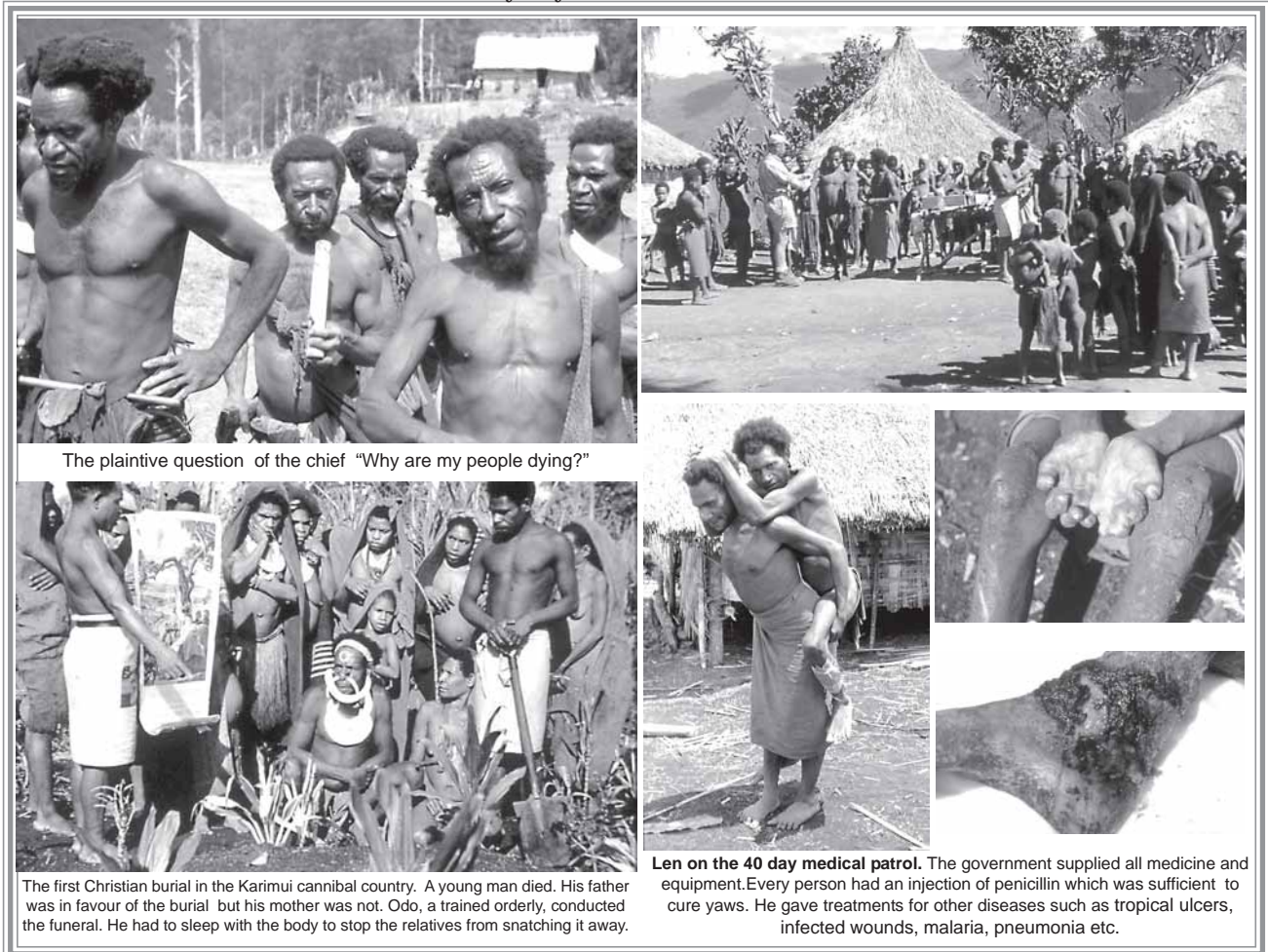
In the villages I visited I gained the strong impression that the membership is solid, as is the local leadership. The district directors are well organized and have several assistant pastors as well as many volunteers who are invaluable. Many of these volunteers are sponsored by the Australian organisation, Volunteers In Action, which is essential to the program. There are also many retired pastors who have not lost their zeal for the Lord, and who are a strong influence in the local districts.

The mission plane was not flying while I was in Papua New Guinea, and had not been for some time, which made it the subject of much discussion wherever I went. It was tragic to see the mission had gone back to where it was over forty years ago before we had acquired the first mission plane. But it was encouraging to see the newly painted Cessna 206 that Lynden Millist has been lovingly restoring. I have just heard that the plane has commenced flying. Praise God.

The phenomenal growth of the church in the cities of this land creates unique problems, but what I saw in the villages convinced me that the membership was strongly led by the local leaders, in spite of the fact that they have limited resources. The challenges are still great in Papua New Guinea, so let us continue to remember our church members and their leaders in our prayers.



The pictures below and at the top of the next page show the situation as it was in those early days.



# Then, and Now!



Lomdopa, a national missionary, shows a picture roll to local headhunters who are still clutching their bows and arrows in case of a surprise attack.



In one area was a special hut for the women, who were very shy. Notice a woman nursing a pig, which lives with them in the hut.



1



2



3



4

**Pictures of today:** 1. A baptism at Karimui—the gateway to the cannibal country of old. 2. The church members at Laiagam. The church was built by Len in 1968. 3. The choir at Mt Hagen. It sang for Len in November 2005. 4. The church members at Karimui. How greatly things have changed. All Glory to our God and Saviour Jesus Christ.



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# Life Sketches

## Uiliame N Ligabalavu

*Uiliame came into this world on 13 August 1918 in Fiji. On 29 October 1942 he married Milika.*

*His life-long service for the church, first as a teacher and later as a minister began in 1940 at Suvavou school on Viti Levu. Later he was appointed to the following schools in Fiji: Naqia, Wainibuka 1942-43; Lewa 1944; Waiyala 1945; Vatuvonu 1946-47; Fulton College Primary 1948; Naqia 1949-51; Suvavou 1952-52; Waiyala 1954-55; Nadarivatu 1956-58; Suvavou 1959-61; Rotuma Is 1961-62; Nadala, Colo North 1963-64; Naqia 1965-66.*

*His line of work changed direction and he became a district director supervising the churches in the following areas: Suva 1967; Mualevu, Lau 1968; Waiyala, Navosa 1969-71; Ba, Lautoka district 1972; Suva district 1973-76.*

*He was ordained to the gospel ministry.*

*Uiliami and Milika had two children: Samuela (1958) and Seniosi (1959).*

*Uiliami laid down life's burdens in 2004.*

## Roger Muke

*Roger was born on the Island of Malaita in the Solomon Islands on 8 December 1936. He gained his early education at Kukudu in the Western Solomons.*

*On 28 December 1961, he married Evey (Everlyn) and his long and fruitful service of 33 years in church work began the next year. Roger Taught at the following primary schools: Viru Harbour 1962-67; Buri 1969; Ruruwai 1970-71; Dovelleville 1972-75; Kuzi 1976-80; Buri 1981-1984; Kukudu (headteacher) 1985-86; Tuki 1987-89; Koketi 1990-92; Ghatere 1993; Kukudu 1994.*

*Roger passed to his rest in Nov 2001, at almost 65 years of age.*

*He was known as a faithful teacher, dedicated to his work. He was open to advice and was prepared to serve wherever he was called to go.*

## Sasagi Tualega

*Sasagi of Satapuala Village in the north-western district of Upolu in Western Samoa was born on 3 March 1914. He married Paulua Afamasaga.*

*He commenced his ministerial service for the church at Faleula in 1955. Subsequently he was appointed to American Samoa 1956-60; on Upolu Is to Vaialele 1961-64; Afega 1965-68; Samatau 1969-70.*

*He retired in 1971 because of ill health.*

*Four boys graced the home of Sasagi and Paulua: Iosua (1960); Taylor (1967); Sasagi Jnr 1968; Pa'uuli (1971).*

*Sasagi died on 26 September 2002.*

*He was a quietly spoken gentleman who loved his Lord and who served Him well in the pastoral care of the churches.*

## Photographic Credits

**Australasian Record:** 3 t#2 5.5.55; 4 (45)#1 28.5.45; 4 (28 bl 29.11.43; 28 b#4 21.4.47; 4 (49) #1 28.5.45; 45 tl 8.12.41; 45 t3 2.10.46; 62 b 5.8.68. **Ida Aveling:** 3 t r (35); 35; 36; 37. **Len Barnard:** 3 (31); 4 (76); 47 b; 76 r; 77; 78. **Ken Boehm:** 38t; bl; 40 t; br; 41 b. **John Corcoran:** 67. **Robert Dixon:** 39 b. **Phil Ellison:** 3 (38); 41 t. **Robert Frame:** 22; 27; 43;44 b; 47 t. **David Hay:** 2; 4 (65), (68), 68; 70; 73 m; 75. **Allan Hedges:** 26. **Edna Heise:** 4 (57); 53; 59 t; 60. **Jo Lee:** 28 t; 29 bl. **June Macaulay:** 20; 21. **National Library NSW** 52 b. **Ward Nolan:** 44 t. **Eric Orongo:** 40 bl. **Pacific Press:** 57 t. **Joyce Pascoe:** 32. **Rose-Marie Radley:** 38 br. **Arnold Reye:** 62. **Owen Ryan:** 69. **Nancy Sawyer:** 73 t. **Signs Publishing Co:** 14. **South Pacific Division Heritage Room;** 3 tl,m, (27); 4 (43), (49), (72); 6; 7; 8; 9; 11; 12; 13; 19; 27; 28; 29; 31; 38 m; 39 t; 45; 46; 48; 51; 54; 55; 58 r; 59 b; 72; 76 l; 80. **Sydney Adventist Hospital:** 58 l. **Beryl Stocken:** 3 (22); 24;25. **Bob Stratford:** 53 t. **Sunnyside Heritage:** 57 b. **Alec Thomson:** 65. **Gwen Wilkinson:** 50.

### "The Earth Has a History—"

**The earth has a history** that man will never understand until he walks with his Redeemer in the paradise of God. "For the lamb which is in the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them into living waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes." Rev7:17

Ellen G White, *Mind Character and Personality*, Southern Publishing Assn, Nashville TN



# Central Pacific Union Mission—

47 years ago

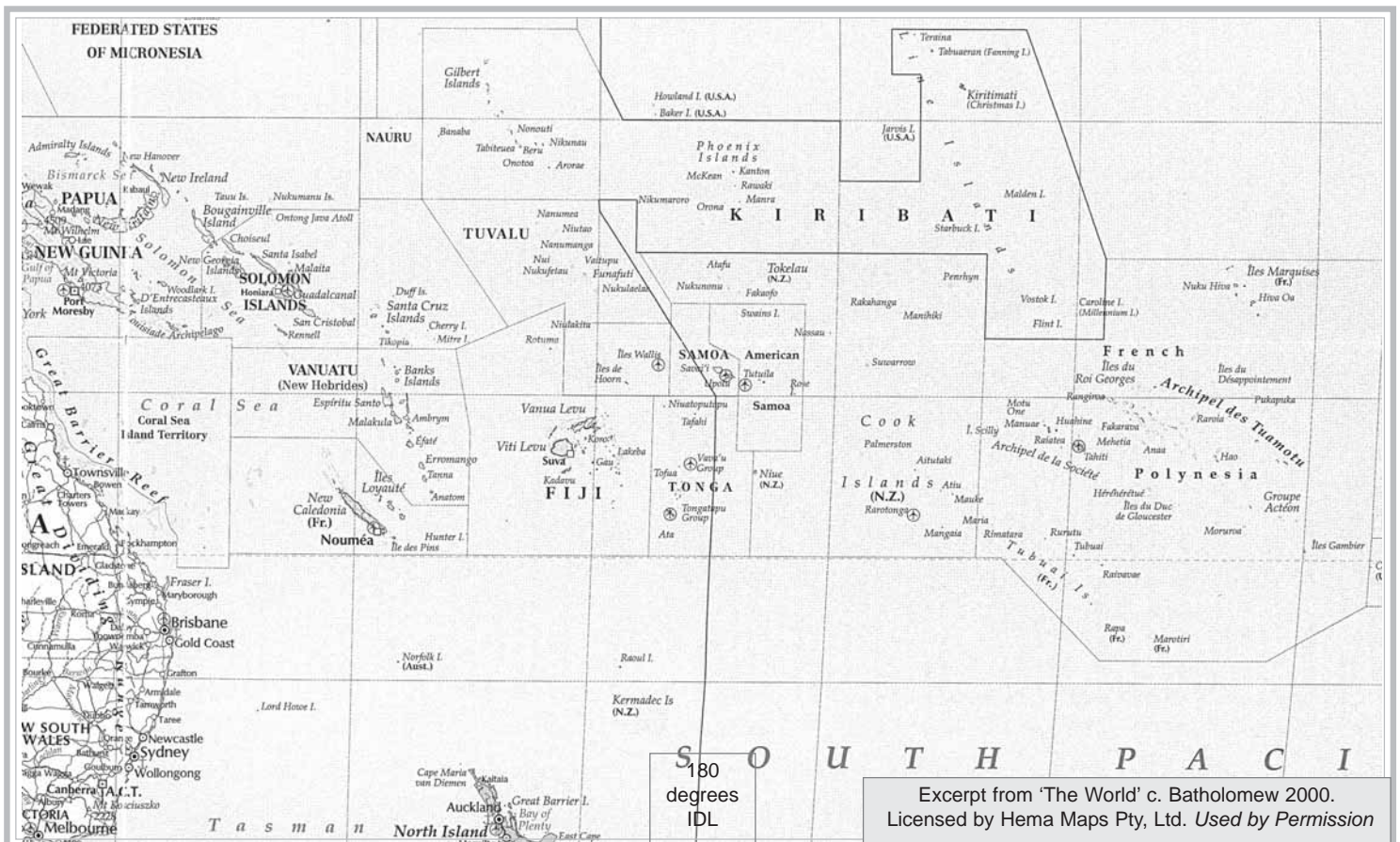
Fifty- two delegates from nine Pacific countries who attended the third Four-Yearly Session in the Suva Central Church in December 1958



**Front Row:** Barry Crabtree, Douglas Jenkins, William Coates, Walter Ferris, C Richard Thompson, O D Freeman McCutcheon (President CPUM), Laurie Naden (Secretary Australasian Division of SDAs), M V Campbell (Vice President General Conference of SDAs), Eric Johanson (Treasurer Australasian Division), Walter Simmonds (Secretary-Treasurer CPUM), Eugene Landa, H Clive Barritt, Alec Thomson, Leon Hillare, John Sherriff, Arthur Jacobson.

**Second Row:** Robert Sutcliffe, Manase Niuafe, Uiliame Fuka, Ilaisa Teapa, Pita Manu, Cyrus Adams, J Valetini, K Nadabe, Wynstan Dowling, Ratu Semi, W Ligabalavu, Aisake Kabu, Keith Miller, Tasi Tesese, Hans Voigt, Papu Siofele, Fereti Puni, David Hay.

**Back Row:** Filimoni Bera, Ilat'ia, Nemani Tausere, Lawe, Marica Tuiwawa, Raymond Wilkinson, Saimoni Vula, Takau, Donald Crombie, Horace Watts, Masengnalo, Marcel Bornert, Francis Doom, Joseph Vati, Rene Malarde, Brian Townend, John Slade, Errol Arthur



Excerpt from 'The World' c. Batholomew 2000.  
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