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Papers from

**Waves across the Pacific**

*Uncovering Adventist Mission*

Held

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## *Journal of Pacific Adventist History*

### **Statement of Mission**

*Journal of Pacific Adventist History* serves historians, researchers and others interested in the mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the South Pacific Islands. The journal focuses on people and events involved in the establishment and development of the church in preparation for the second coming of Christ.

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### **Editorial**

Fulton a University College, in conjunction with *the Journal of Pacific Adventist History*, published by Pastor David Hay and his team was thrilled to hold two ‘Waves Across the Pacific: Uncovering Adventist Mission’ Conferences on its new campus in Sabeto – Nadi, Fiji Islands, 2016 and 2017.

We welcomed presenters from Australia, PNG, Tonga, Solomon Islands, Fiji and Fulton’s own academic staff. The stories and experiences of the past shared during the weekend, allowed us to retrace the roots of the Seventh day Adventist church in the Pacific islands.

We’ve discovered the foremost motivating factor of our pioneers and missionaries in the Pacific islands as being **SERVICE** and **SACRIFICE**. The call from God reached those men and women to “go and make disciples” (Matthew 28:19) as they understood by the challenges they faced remembering the words of the Lord as recorded in Matthew 10:16 “Behold I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents and harmless as doves.” They accepted partnership with God as “in the work of salvation, God requires the cooperation of man” (White, 1888: RH October 30, par.3).

The objective of the conferences is to restore in the heart of our members the same desire to serve our Creator God, despite challenging and difficult circumstances experienced by our national and expatriate pioneers, as they took to heart the promise, “I am with you always even to the end of the age” (Matthew 28:20).

We would like to invite church members from around the Pacific region to research the history of the Seventh-day Adventist church in their respective islands, to record stories and experiences of local missionaries which could be published in the *Journal of Pacific Adventist History* and why not present their findings and work during one of our upcoming conferences.

Cecile M. Trief

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## Ode to Pr Peni Tavodi: God's Hero

### **From Bula land, the Island of Fiji,**

With its white sandy  
beaches,  
And very friendly people,  
A young child - a boy,  
Was born.

### **The Tavodi family nurtured him,**

And he grew to be a boy,  
Later matured as a youth,  
And became a man,  
Full of energy.

### **He was called by the Almighty God,**

The God of Heaven and  
earth,  
The God of Abraham,  
The God of nature,

And the nations.

### **He braved treacherous seas,**

To sail uncharted waters,  
To sail to New Guinea,  
A land of cannibals,  
And head hunters.

### **He toiled hard day and night,**

Walking the Sogeri plateau,  
In search of lost souls,  
To share the message,  
Of God's love.

### **He worked long years without success,**

His efforts seem vain and  
fruitless,  
With no single soul

converted,  
In spite of the toil,  
And his sacrifice.

### **Then on his death bed he appealed,**

To the stubborn people,  
To accept the gospel,  
And two souls,  
Responded.

### **God's daring man: Ben Tavodi,**

You were a great pioneer,  
The brave missionary,  
A great man of God,  
And his hero.

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2017**

## About the Presenters



**Simon Davidson** is lecturing at Sonoma Adventist College, PNG and has been teaching for the last 7 years (2001-2018). His specific research interests are in Church Growth, Sorcery and Cargo cult.



**Kela Hana** works as Church District Director of Central Kolombangara in the Western Province of the Solomon Islands.



**Wilson Liligeto** (1932-1917) was Deputy Director in the Peace and Reconciliation Office in Gizo, Western Province, Solomon Islands and the Regional Youth Coordinator for the Western Region of the SDA Church. He authored *Babata - Our*



*Land, Our Tribe, Our People"*, 2007, USP.

**Pastor**

**Piuka Tasa** worked for the Seventh-day Adventist Church for 40 years. He is now Manager of the Western Sub-office of the Solomon Islands Mission based in Kukudu, in the Western and Choiseul Province.



**Peter Karave** is lecturing at Pacific Adventist University. He was born into a missionary home from Efogi, a village along the famous Kokoda Trail in PNG. He has served as a church pastor, district director and departmental director.

**Jillian Thiele** is currently assisting David Hay with the *Journal of Pacific Adventist History*. She spent 38 years in Papua New Guinea, as a

child and then as an academic at Sonoma Adventist College and Pacific Adventist University.



**Akanisi Kristina Tabore-Lanyon** has taught in 9 primary schools around Fiji



from 1987 to 2011. But then decided to take up

tertiary teaching in 2012 and now serves HOD for Primary Education at Fulton University College.



**Cecile M. Trief** worked as a personal Administrative and HRM assistant in French Polynesia and served in Vanuatu as a secondary teacher at Aore Adventist Academy before moving to Fulton University College as the librarian.

**Ode to Fulton University College**

***Fulton College, how beautiful are you to behold,***

With the majestic blue sky hovering above,  
And green covered mountain hills nearby,  
With fertile fields of abundant crops,  
And magnificent buildings!

***You are a cosmopolitan University College,***

Which is a home to people from Oceania,  
That are very warm and friendly,  
Also tender and caring,  
And cordial to live with.

***The food there is wholesome and great,***

Availing in greater abundance,  
Cooked by hard working souls,  
Served by smiling faces,  
And very good to eat.

**The academic quality is excellent and first class,**

Taught in a truly Christian environment,  
By dedicated and competent scholars,  
Familiar with Christian ethos,  
And church beliefs.

**The spirituality of the college environment,**

Is pervaded with an atmosphere of awe,  
That by being in its precincts,  
Makes the people know,  
That God is there.

**Fulton College of Fiji,**

You were ordained and blessed by God,  
And mandated by him for training,  
His church's mission workers,  
From the entire Pacific.

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## **Sunnyside: Ellen G White's home in Australia**

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# Recollections from the Solomon Islands

## **LOTU ZUAPE RANE: SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH AT UGHELE, RENDOVAH ISLAND**

**By Kele Hana<sup>1</sup>**  
**No credits provided for the pictures included in this paper.**

As early as 1914, the Seventh-day Adventist church was brought to the shores of the Solomon Islands by Captain Griffith Frances Jones<sup>2</sup>. He had been given an invitation by Norman Wheatley, a very successful trader and plantation owner, who resided and built his empire in the Western Solomons, in the late 1800s. Norman Wheatley had his first contact with the Seventh-day truth while he was a patient in the Sydney Adventist Sanitarium in 1912 and 1913. Wheatley was most impressed with the treatment, care and compassion shown by the medical staff at the hospital. He greatly appreciated the singing of the staff at the regular daily worships and the cleanliness of the institution. He began to recognise the Adventist health practices. Wheatley became friends with the chaplain and Bible Teacher at the Sanitarium, Captain Jones, a former Welsh sea captain, who trained for mission service in Keene, Texas, U.S.A.

On returning to the Western Solomons in early 1914, Wheatley informed his employees to make ready for the new mission that was coming to the

area. It was called the *Lotu Zuape Rane*, the local name for the Seventh-day Adventist church.

On 30 September 1913, the Australian Union Conference asked Griffith and Marion Jones to be the first *Zuape Rane* missionaries to the Solomon Islands. They arrived at Tulagi, met with the government commissioner, and shared their plans to establish a mission in the Western Solomons. The Jones arrived at Gizo on 29 May 1914.

Jones, with his boat, the *Advent Herald*, sailed to Lambete, in the region of Munda. There he hired a Malaitan boy to serve as part of his crew. From there, the *Advent Herald* sailed to Nusa Tava, the site of a Methodist School, then on to Bebea. At this site, Jones hired Kusolo and another young man who joined the crew before they sailed to Valaghata Harbour, at Rendova Island, and the site of the village of Ughele. Arriving in the Western Solomons, at Valaghata (now known at Ughele), Jones introduced himself to the local leaders. "I am a missionary of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, I come to bring a school in which you can learn to write and speak English. I come not to destroy your customs, your sacred places

and your nuts, and not to take your ground or land, but to set up a school.” He further asked if they would allow him and his wife to establish a mission station in the area.

Bubule, one of the local leaders who knew a small amount of Pidgin English, told Jones that there was a beautiful harbour at Eghole, uninhabited, but a suitable place for the mission station. Jones replied that he would like to stay with the people and not be sent to an isolated place. He asked again if he could stay with them next to Valaghata. Another leader, Hebala, suggested that Jones establish himself at Korare, a land just next to the village of Kobi. Jones replied he needed a place to build a wharf. Kobi was too rough to anchor and not suitable for a harbour.

In further discussion, it was suggested Valaghata could be a suitable place for the mission station. Without any solution, Bubule had to leave and Jones left for Viru harbour with Tabara, Hebala, Gaga and Kusolo.

After a few weeks at Viru Harbour, Tabara, Hebala, Gaga, and Kusolo returned to Valaghata on the vessel *Tetepare*, a ship owned by Wheatley. He owned the land at Tetemara and further discussion took place on the location of the new mission station.

However, the problem was that the people of Rendova were not ready to accept the mission and the biblical

teaching of the Seventh-day Adventist church. Eventually Jones established a mission at Ilemi in the Viru Harbour area. He then established the first school at Sasaghama on the Marovo Lagoon. It was interesting that the sons of Chief Tatuga were the first to attend the school and they became very influential in spreading the news of the Seventh-day Adventist church to other parts of the Solomons.

What did catch the attention of the people was the mention of *Zuapa*, seven. This was a significant number; a number in headhunting and three sevens was a number that guided people. When Jones mentioned seven, the people became interested.

Jones quickly discovered the island of Rendova was divided into three zones: the first central zone was from Voruki to Ovuzu. This area contained Zuapa Batu Veko (Seven Bold Head). The second zone on the southern side of the island, was from Ovuzu to Rava which contained Zuapa Meki (Seven Dogbabatu). The last zone was from Rava to Voruka on the northern side of the island, including Zuapa Batatu (Seven Mamula).

Even with the obvious problems, influential leaders, Bubule, Tavusio, Soga, Tabara and Hebala, asked Jones to establish a Seventh-day Adventist mission at Buruku. In establishing the mission there, trees and sago leaves were cut down. Traditional building materials were used to

build a teacher's house, a classroom block, a dormitory and a church. Now the mission station was semi complete, and they waited for a teacher.

Samuel and his wife and young son from Marovo Lagoon opened the mission station at Ughele on the island of Rendova. Local people came to build local houses and most importantly, the church. The new church was greatly admired with its shining floor of evenly-laid bamboos, and orthodox pulpit draped with crimson cloth. Mrs Maunder installed her organ on one side of the church. The pews were made of local timber and painted green. Sabbath School picture rolls hung on the fancy woven walls. Around the building were paths covered with white gravel and garden edges of colourful flowers. The beautiful church and its surroundings created a sense of holiness and reverence.

The school enrolment varied from forty to sixty, starting at 6:30 am and finished at 1:00 pm. Two hours were spent on mission labour, including vegetable gardens. The focus of the teaching was instruction in basic reading, writing and mathematics, all conducted in English.

According to Bamu, the mission at Rendova was considered a successful mission. The mission was orderly, the students showed respect, enthusiasm and reverence. Seeing this initial success,

quicken the establishment of more mission stations in the Solomon Islands.

Most of the elders of Ughele travelled to Ngata Leana, to Hopongo and finally to Ou-Baniata, talking to the chiefs in an effort to find further sites for mission stations. Tomikai, the local chief at Ou-Baniata, agreed that a new Seventh-day Adventist mission could be established in his area. Work started immediately to clean the land. People from Ughele shared their experiences with the church, sang beautiful gospel songs and read inspiring stories. These testimonies reassured the people regarding the new religion in their district. Ou became the first Seventh-day Adventist village in Baniata.

The team moved across the lagoon to Lokuru. There Chief Paura allowed a mission station to be established in the village at Patuane. The same rejoicing testimonies were shared with the local people. The team returned to Buruku before sailing back to Marovo on the *Advent Herald*.

Jones, with Vakapala, Lesley and Radley travelled on the *Advent Herald* to see the successful progress of the church. On this trip, they took with them Bamu and Ngali when they travelled to Dovele. There they made contact with the people.<sup>3</sup>

Reflecting on the advancement of the *Zuape Rane* during the early years of the church, I am impressed: first quickly the church was established, and secondly,

with the number of women who were part of this pioneering work. I salute these women from Ugehele who accompanied their husbands.

Below are examples of pioneering missionary couples:



Traditional village life in the Solomon Islands before the advent of Christianity. Photo courtesy of the Adventist Heritage

- Pastor Piuki Tasa and Darviner Piuki:  
Solomons and PNG
- Pastor Wilfred Billy and Sarah Wilfred:  
Solomons and PNG
- Pastor Wilfred Liligeto and Roselee Liligeto:  
Solomons and PNG
- Pastor Lianga Romity and his wife:  
Solomons
- Pastor Panda Romity and his wife: Solomons
- Kubere Bamu and Bamy Sevi: Western  
Solomons
- Pastor Maepeza and Hezilyn Navoko:  
Solomons
- Maekala Jonga: Sioka Aniani:  
Solomons
- John Harry and Vaela John:  
Solomons
- Bezo Harry and wife: Solomons

There were many other women who stood beside their husbands, traversing the sea, lagoons, rivers and walking mountains to bring the light of the Bible in far flung corners in the Solomon Islands. Many lost their lives while serving their Lord. We need to be thankful for the initial work conducted by G. F. Jones. If Jones had not sent Maunder and his wife, maybe the people in the Solomon Islands would still be in spiritual darkness. 2017 marks 100 years of the Adventist presence.

END NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> Much of this information was sourced from Bamu Sevi, the son of Sevi and Zima, the author's great grandfather. The interview was conducted with Pastor Wilfred Liligeto at Bamu's home at Kobi village, Ugehele, Rendova Island. Bamu was approximately 16 when the Seventh-day Adventist church arrived at Rendovah Island.
- <sup>2</sup> Bamu Sevi was a crew member with Captain Jones and saw the establishment of *Lotu Zuapa Rane*.
- <sup>3</sup> In 1919, Jones left Dovele on one of his missionary journeys. He took Bamu and his wife Ngali from Rendovah and Vakapala from Boro. On this same trip, they visited Kolobangara Island. Most of the people thought Jones, Jack Radley and the crew were traders, not missionaries. As a result, the people brought bananas, taros, and yam to sell. They were disappointed when they discovered the people were missionaries. The visitors spent a night on board while anchored off the island. Radley, Bamu and Ngali went on shore but the local women, being partly naked, ran out of their houses into the nearby bushes. Eventually the women were encouraged to come out of hiding to see the missionaries. Eventually, the women convinced the men to accept the new religion.



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## What became of the crew of the *Herald*?

By Wilson Gia Liligeto:

Sources of some photos are unknown

In all the early pioneer missionary stories, there has never been any mention of the four crew members of the *Advent Herald*, who traveled with Captain Griffith Francis Jones around Western Solomon Islands in this early period of the Adventist movement. There is little known about their lives, experiences and their contribution to the spread of the Seventh-day Adventist church.

The steamer *SS Minindi* left Sydney on May 16 1914 with two pioneer missionaries, Captain Griffith Frances and Marion V. Jones. On the steamer was also their small 32 foot boat and their pre-fabricated house. After 13 days, they arrived safely at the Burns Philip wharf in Gizo, the Administrative Centre of Western Solomons<sup>1</sup> on Friday May 29 1914. This site was locally known as “*panarogo*”, meaning place of mosquitos<sup>2</sup> After making clearance at Gizo, the *Advent Herald* was taken off the *SS Minindi* and Jones and his new crew sailed to the New Georgia group of islands<sup>3</sup> with the express purpose of finding a location for the first mission station of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Captain Jones wished to reach Rendova to see Chief



Model of the Advent Herald  
Photo courtesy of *Seventh-day Adventists in the South Pacific 1885-1985*. Warburton, VIC: Signs, p. 206.

Romiti and Chief Tatagu of the Marovo Lagoon. He heard from his Australian friend, Norman Wheatley, a plantation owner in New Georgia, that these two chiefs may be accepting a new religion in their area.<sup>4</sup>

In his diary, Apusae Beibangara, an old patriarch of Ranogga, recorded that his father, Chief Beibangara, was a good friend of Norman Wheatley. They established a friendship and alliance with other traders and prominent chiefs in Western Solomons, including Chief Romiti of Ughele, Chief Igolo of Nusa Tava and Chief Tatagu of Marovo.

Following instructions given by Wheatley, Captain Jones sailed with Chief Igolo<sup>5</sup>, John Stratham, Norman Wheatley’s plantation manager, Tetemara, and his new crew appointed by Wheatley. Sailing out

of Gizo Harbour, they visited Wheatley at Lambete and then sailed to Nusa Tava, Rendova and Marovo Lagoon. Who were these Solomon Island crew members of the *Advent Herald* assigned by Wheatley?

**Bulehite** was the eldest son of Penaka and Vaza. He grew up around Roviana, Kolombangara and Rendova Islands. He had no status in the community due to the fact that his grandmother, Horto was captured at Kilokaka on the island of Isabel during a head hunting raid, and was regarded as a slave. Her daughter, Vaza, Bulehite's mother, died and was buried in the sea. Bulehite's guardian, Bubule, decided to send him to Tulagi to train as a local constable. This plan did not eventuate. Instead Bulehite was employed as a surveyor's helper defining government land areas. This gave him opportunity to travel around the Solomon Islands to become familiar with the leaders of various islands, including the trader Norman Wheatley.

Bulehite and Wheatley agreed with Chief Igolo that there needed to be a new religion in the district due to the conflict within the Methodist churches. The chief asked Wheatley to find a good religion. While in Australia, Wheatley met Jones and convinced him to spearhead the work in Solomon Islands.

Chief Igolo and Bulehite assisted Jones in piloting the *Advent Herald* along

the safe routes to Lambete then to *Nusa Tava* and Bebea. While at *Nusa Tava* and, after considering the pros and cons, Marion Jones concluded that the island was not large enough to accommodate the establishment of the SDA Mission. Chief Igolo then decided they should proceed to Rendova with a hope that his friends and the local chief might meet Marion Jones' criterion for a mission station. Chief Igolo remained at Nusa Tava but asked his nephew Kusolo to continue on with Captain Jones and the rest of the crew to Ughele.

At Ughele, Bulehite and the team told the people about Chief Igolo and Norman Wheatley's idea of bringing a new mission to Ughele. Even though the idea sounded good to the local leaders, they felt they needed time to moderate the influence of the Methodist presence and time to hide the pagan worship shrines, relics and skulls in an effort to avoid annoying the ancestral spirits.

The *Advent Herald* proceeded to Viru. Jones and his wife with Bubule, Kusolo, Zamaghira, Lubo, Alekosi, Kimitora, Qaqa and Bulehite were accepted by the people. Jones conducted a worship service beginning with songs proclaiming 'Come to Jesus'. The Ulusaghe people were greatly impressed with the music and the sermon. They seemed favourable towards the idea of a

new church but the people needed to wait for a formal decision by the chiefs before a mission could be established in their area.

Bulehite left *Advent Herald* and returned to Bebea to wait for the mission to enter Ughele. He helped clear the land ready for a mission at Buruku.

**Alekosi** one of the four crew members who worked with Jones on the *Advent Herald* came from a Methodist background and attended Kokeqolo Methodist Mission School in Munda under Rev J. F. Goldie in 1912. Alekosi married Niu and they had many children. Two of their children, Moses and Lidi and their families made up the majority of the population of Aqaqana and Egholo Villages. Both Alekosi and Qaqa volunteered to be crew members of the *Advent Herald* as far as Viru on New Georgia Island.

In 1917, the *Advent Herald* returned telling the people that the leaders had agreed to a mission station in their region.

When Bulehite's wife died, Bubule decided that Bulehite should return to his people at Kolombangara. He arrived at there on 11<sup>h</sup> July, 1930 and Bubule arranged a second marriage for him. Bulehite continued to be a positive influence and encouraged the people to uphold the practices of the *Lotu Juapa Rane*<sup>6</sup>.

**Kusolo** was one of the sons of Ghaso and Pago. When his father Ghaso died, Kusolo stayed with his uncle Chief Igolo and attended a Catholic school at *Nusa Hibi* (Hibi Island). When Kusolo finished his schooling, he worked on Norman Wheatley's trading boat as a greaser.

However, Chief Igolo perceived his children were being mistreated at the Catholic school. He requested that Norman Wheatley establish another school. He assured Chief Igolo that a new mission will arrive in the Solomons and open a school for his children.

Wheatley agreed that Kusolo, Chief Igolo's nephew, could become a crew member for Jones. He was confident that Kusolo could maintain the engine fitted in the *Advent Herald* as it was the same type of engine as in one of Wheatley's boats. Kusolo boarded the *Advent Herald* at Nusa Tava in 1914 and traveled with Buhehite, Wheatley and Jones to Bebea and then to Ughele, on Rendova Island. There, they were later joined by Alekosi and Qaqa who traveled with them to Viru in South New Georgia. In all their travels with Jones and the *Advent Herald*, Kusolo learnt about the love of God.

One day, when the *Advent Herald* returned to Viru. Kusolo fell in love with a young lady. Kusolo and Vurusesu were soon married. After their wedding, Kusolo left the *Advent Herald* and took his wife back to his home village where he sold religious literature to his own people.

Kusolo had four children: one son and three girls. Their son Haren attended Kokoda School and later Jones Missionary College in Papua New Guinea and trained as a teacher.



Qaqa Robeti's son Nathaniel and daughter Eda with Wilson Liligeto and Via at Baniata, 2011: Photo Courtesy of Wilson Gia Liligeto

When Kusolo died, he was buried at his home village at Boboe, Vonavona Lagoon awaiting the Lord's return<sup>7</sup>.

**Qaqa Roberti** was from Ugele village, on Rendova Island. He married Lisavea of Peihougai Village, also on Rendova Island. They had four children: John, Paula, Nathaniel and Eda Kese. John and Paula have since passed away. At the

time of this writing, only Nathaniel and Eda still alive.

Qaqa Robeti attended Methodist Mission School at Kokeqolo Munda, with Alekosi. After completing his education around 1913, he was recruited by Wheatley to assist on a small sail boat, as Wheatley traded with villages on Roviana and Rendova.

One day while Wheatley and his crew were trading along the Rendova's western coast of Ghorepe River near Hopongo village, Qaqa jumped overboard and swam ashore. He did this because he was very excited about his Methodist Mission and was not afraid of the sharks. He swam ashore to tell the people who were fishing that they should follow the Methodist Mission.

On 29 May 1914, when Jones arrived in Gizo, he was met by Wheatley. Qaqa Robeti volunteered to be a crew member for Jones. In 1915, when the *Advent Herald* traveled to Marovo Lagoon to look for Chief Tatagu, it was Qaqa Robeti who told Pana that the mission was good because they spoke, wrote and sang in English.

All of Qaqa Robeti's children and siblings belong to the Christian Fellowship Church in Baniata. One of his grandson, Jonathan, is the only Seventh-day Adventist member in the family due to being adopted by his uncle, Paul Havea<sup>8</sup>.

## Summary

Bulehite became a convert to the Seventh-day Adventist Church and decided to become a missionary to his own people in Kolombangara. He is still remembered by this extended family as one of the original crew members of the *Advent Herald*<sup>10</sup>. Kusolo became a colporteur selling Seventh-day Adventist books, as missionary to his own people at Boboe on Roviana. Alekosi never accepted the message of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. He returned to his home village and practiced heathenism and later joined the Christian Fellowship Church. Qaqa Robeti returned home to Baniata. He married and continued practicing heathenism. It is interesting to note that the

## Vagara Tasa Hivana (Hivalavata)

**By Piuka Tasa, son.**

**Photos courtesy of the author** Vagara Tasa Hivana was born in the bush, in the small village of Tahanae near Limbo on the island of New Georgia, Solomon Islands, some 50 kilometres from the coast. The coastal village of Limbo is situated beneath the Tirua range of mountains, and was the original village of the people of Viru Harbour. When Vagara was born, his father Timi, and mother Nami, planned to kill the baby as they were not married. Instead, Chief, Kula, and his wife, Pendi, demanded they adopt the

descendants of these four original crew members of the *Advent Herald* always attend any Seventh-day Adventist anniversaries.

### END NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Bamu Sevi was a crew member with Captain Jones during the establishment of *Lotu Zuapa Rane*.

<sup>2</sup> George Rusa, *The Floating Log*. 2005. Morisset, NSW: Heather Dixon,

<sup>3</sup> W.Kazikana, Gizo local church history: 2014.

<sup>4</sup> Rusa: *The Floating Log*.

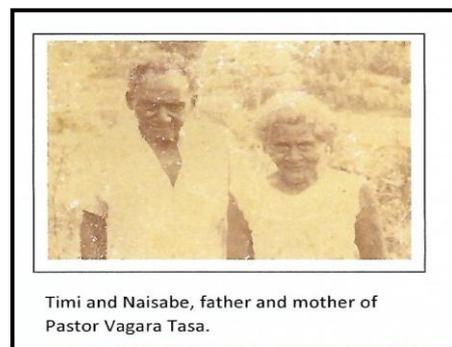
<sup>5</sup> Apusae Beibangara - Personal diary of Chief Beibangara, 2003

<sup>6</sup> Eddie Moses, The story and experiences of Kusolo, 2016.

<sup>7</sup> Sovo Samuel, The story and experiences of Alekosi, 2011.

<sup>8</sup> Nathaniel Qaqa – The story and experiences of Qaqa Robeti, 2011. 2016.

child<sup>2</sup>. Eventually, Vagara, replaced his adopted father, as the chief of this area. Kulu was the chief of Limbo. His wife, Pendi originated from



Timi and Naisabe, father and mother of Pastor Vagara Tasa.

Choe, a village near Nazareth. They already had two children, De and Ochepate. Eventually De married Peo and they had sons, Joseph, Timothy, Joshua, plus other children. Joseph later became chief of the village after Vagara decided to

hand his chiefly position to his nephew. He wished to be more involved in the mission work of the Seventh-day Adventist church which came to his district in 1914. Ochebate married Kuka, a man from Kolombangara (Vavanga) and gave birth to Ruth, now married to Lawrence Kilivisi.

The surrounding villages were scared of the people from Limbo because they believed they were cannibals<sup>3</sup>, head hunters, and stole women and children for slaves. The people of Limbo practiced heathenism and worshipped the carved stone and wood god *kibo*. The ancient people communicated with the spirit of *ponda*. When the gods had a request, they would shake the person's hand with great intensity. This was known as *sabukaec*. In comparison, was *Tahore*, a softer hitting of a person's right hand. When the hitting and the shaking took place, the victim would ask the following questions:

Which spirit *ponda* are you from?  
Is it male or female?  
What do you want to do?

The spirit *ponda* could also communicate through the practice of *getugetue*, the *shaking of the canoe*. To understand the requests of the spirit *pond*, a *matermateana* would be asked to interrupt the interaction and provide protection from the angry spirit *ponda*.

Peo, the husband of De, and Wagara, the adopted son of chief Kulu, were given a

*matermateana*, named Piula, for protection and guidance. Both men saw Piula do some extra ordinary things: for example,

1. If the men needed coconuts, Piula would look at the coconut and it would fall to the ground.
2. If they went pig hunting and the men could not find a pig, Piula would point his knife toward a bird and it would fall to the ground, as food for them to eat.
3. If Piula, needed friends, he would have a conversation with people or objects the men could not see.
4. Sometimes when men and Piula went to feed the pigs, they would hear a voice. When they turned around, they saw a snake talking to them.
5. One day, the men and Piula saw a leaf fall off a tree. Piula announced that the leaf was holy.

Even though Peo and Wagara saw the power of Piula, they could not decide if they wished to remain as heathens or follow the ways of the new Seventh-day Adventist church. Vagara had heard about the gospel of Jesus in 1922 and was interested. Vagara was impressed in the way Jesus changed people's lives for the better. After three failed predictions by Piula, Vagara was convinced the heathen worship was inferior to the worship of the Seventh-day Adventist mission's God.



From left to right: Leghiyn (adopted daughter), Vailisi Ilianu, Pastor Vagara Tasa and Naesambu (mother of Pastor Tasa)

Piala told Timi, Varaga's biological father, that there were many different religions coming to the area. Piala asked Timi to choose a religion but to limit the answer to just one of two religions: the Methodists or the Adventists. Before an answer was given, Piala predicted that the family would chose the Methodist church. Even on his death bed, at North New Georgia, Piala was sure the family would chose the Methodist church.

This prediction was never fulfilled.

On one occasion Vagara was sick and Piala enquired of the source of the illness. Varaga believed he was being punished for lying. Instead of being continually sick, as Piala had predicted, Vagara became well.

One day Vagara felt his right hand shake when he said, "I saw the old man wearing [a] clothe on his shoulder." He enquired of Piala, "What happened? He was told by Piala that, "It was me, I wish to eat Talangini. It is good food." This fish was prohibited by the Seventh-day Adventist church, as based on the Biblical verse in Deuteronomy 14: 9 and 10. Vagara knew immediately that Piala was lying and trying to force him to disbelieve the Bible. This was the turning point for him. He decided to become an Adventist and he accepted the church's health message.

The coming of the Seventh-day Adventist church was through the

influence of Captain Griffiths Frances Jones and his wife Marion. Before sailing to the Solomon Islands to establish a Seventh-day Adventist mission, Jones met Norman Wheatley in Australia at the Sydney Adventist Sanitarium. Wheatley had purchased land around the Tetemara area, not far from Viru Harbour, for his coconut plantations. He then invited Jones to visit Viru Harbour. With recommendation from Wheatley, the people accepted Jones.

About the same time, to create space for additional plantations, the people of Tetemara moved to Elim in 1914 and many people from Limbo settled in Tombe. In 1933, other people left Limbo village and settled at the present locations of Tetemara, Tombe and Bareho.

In 1914, the Seventh-day Adventist church established a mission station including a small school, for the people of Viru. Vagara was amazed to see the changes in the lives of the young people.

To him, the girls were beautiful and the boys were handsome. Their clothing was clean, their teeth were white, and their hair was well groomed and neat. He was also impressed with their beautiful singing of Christian songs. Vagara decided to make changes to his own life.

He made a comb from an Edeve palm so he could copy the boys' hairstyle; cleaned his beetle-nut covered teeth, and

rubbed his skin with coconut oil.

One day, Pastor Anderson came to the village of Limbo and told the people, that the Seventh-day of the week was the true day of rest. Timi, Vagara's father was not sure what this meant. One Sabbath, Vagara, Timi and his sister Maegula went to look for coconuts. Vagara climbed the coconut tree and with a stick pushed coconuts out from its branch. After the coconuts had all fallen, Vagara dropped his stick so he could climb down the tree. The problem was that the stick hit Maegula in the thigh. She was badly hurt. Timi challenged the 'new God'. "If Maegula is made well, I will become a Seventh-day Adventist." She became well! On 30 December 1928, Vagara was baptised at Viru Harbour with Peo, Timi and Maegula by Pastor John Anderson.

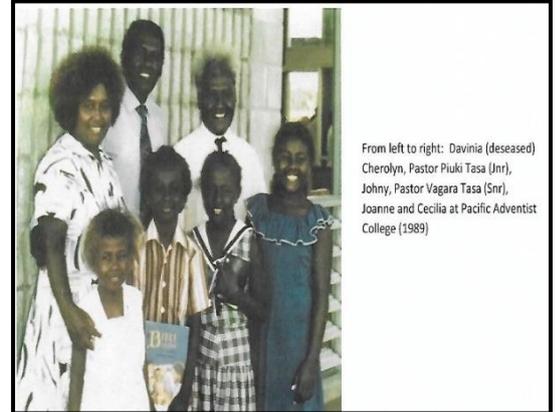
Vagara attended the new school that was established at Limbo (now known as Kuba) in 1924. He remembers his teachers: Pijaka, from Viru; Kilivisi, also from Viru, Kuka from Duke and Sukiveke from Lauru. In 1930, he left to attend Batuna with the aim of training as a teacher. On one of his practical sessions, he travelled to Ramata and taught young people from Rennell, Bellona and Bughotu, under the supervision of Miss Evelyn Totenhofer from Australia.

While at Batuna, his interest in translating and publishing was awakened.

In 1931 he was given the responsibility to work at the first printing press.

With the advent of World War II, the expatriate missionaries were forced to leave.

Vagara was the last person to leave Batuna before the



Japanese inhabited the school. He was also the first person to return after the Japanese left, to begin the restoration process. In total, he served 12 years at Batuna.

Eventually in 1945 Vagara was asked to serve in the village of Jella in the district of Hovoro, as a village teacher. While there he married Eliamu Ghatulu. They were blessed with two sons and an adopted daughter. It was in this village, from 1947-1959, that he became the district assistant teacher.

The family returned to Batuna and then between 1950 and 1951 in Australia, he commenced the translation of the Bible into the Ulusaghe Language. They returned to Jella, first as village teacher and in 1956, Vagara was appointed District Director and moved to the village of Ughele. As a district director Vagara attended the mission session at Kukudu in 1959. It was at these meetings that he was

ordained as a minister of the Seventh-day Adventist church by Pastors Edward E. White, Pastor Itulu and Pastor Wallace Ferguson.

After his ordination, the family moved to Bougainville for nine years: three years at Buka; three years at Iruniolu in the district of Buin and three years at Kieta in the Rumba region. It was while he served in Bougainville that he became good friends with a Roman Catholic priest. This priest was impressed with Vagara's missionary service and commented that he was 'a good man'.

Returning to the Solomon Islands, Vagara and his family served at Tau, and then Buinitusa, on the island of Guadalcanal as District Director from 1966 to 1969. Then he moved back to New Georgia in 1970 as District Director before retiring on 16 October, 1970.

Vagara wished that his people had a bible and portions of Ellen G. White, a founding member of the Seventh-day Adventist church, writings, in their own language. While at Kukudu and Rumba, during 1958-1960, he translated *Steps to Christ*, written by Ellen G. White, into the Maravo language, titled *Tohaini la pate Kraist*. His first set of Bible translations were published in 1931 and the whole New Testament was published in 1941. The complete Bible was published in 1952 with 3,000 copies printed by the British

and Foreign Bible Society. Further reprints followed, including one in 2014.<sup>4</sup>

From 1949 – 1951, he took time in Australia to translate the Bible into the Ulusaghe language, now known as the Maravo language. He was assisted by Pastor Barrett, Pana Kapo and Rini 11.

Vagara told his family that he believed he was given special gifts for this translation work. Even with very limited education, he learnt to type and to translate from English, Greek and Hebrew<sup>5</sup>. For the duration of this project, he typed without difficulty but when the project was completed, he could no longer type.

After serving the church for 40 years, Vagara retired. His wife Eliamu died in 1984. He continued to serve his Lord. He visited his sons and grandchildren in Honiara and Pacific Adventist University. He died in 1995 satisfied he had done all to assist his beloved church.

Before Vagara died, he gave this last testimony to his extended family and friends, "The bible contains the mind of God, the state of man, the way of salvation, the doom of sinners and the happiness of believers. Its doctrines are holy, its precepts are binding, its histories are true and its decisions are immutable. Read the Bible to be wise, believe the words to be safe, and practice the contents to be holy. The Bible contains light to

direct you, food to support you, and comfort to cheer you. It is a traveller's map and a pilgrim's guide. In the Word, we know that paradise will be restored, the heavens opened, and the gates of hell disclosed. In the Word, we learn that Christ fills our memory with hope and guidance. We should prayerfully seek our God. Remember to read the Bible frequently and prayerfully to understand the paradise of glory. Being a Christian involves the highest responsibility and presents the greatest rewards for service.” He paused and looked around at the gathering and said, “Brothers and sisters, my great desire is for all of us to be together again in the new earth; have faith in God and do the right.”

## END NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Throughout this paper Vagara Tasa Hivana has been shortened to Vagara.

<sup>2</sup> Adoption in the Marovo culture is very significant. Whoever is adopted has the same right to the land and sea of the tribe as the biological children, especially if they are adopted into a chiefly family.

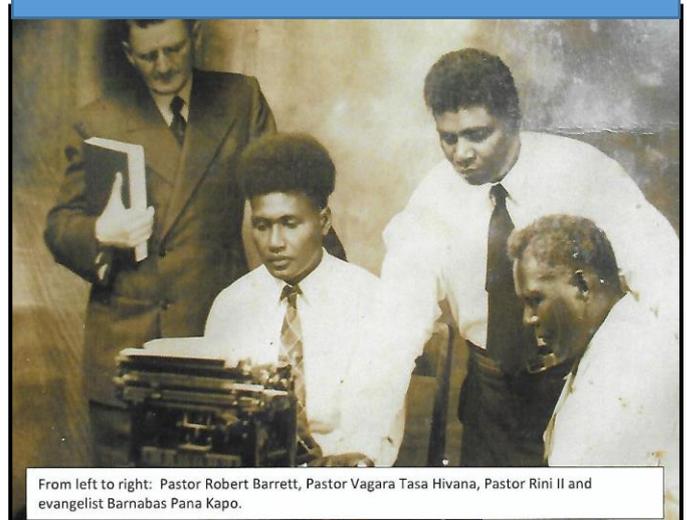
<sup>3</sup> Not once did Tasa suggest that his ancestors were

cannibals but the neighbouring villages have ancient tradition relating to cannibalism.

<sup>4</sup> In a letter written by Dr Alfred Liligeto to his brother Pastor Wilfred Liligeto, there were concerns expressed about the reprint of the Bible to be done in Fiji. Pr Liligeto emphasized, “I told them that the original Marovo Bible was translated by speakers of the Marovo language. The spoken language is a mixture of Bareke, Vagunu, Vahole, Hoeje and perhaps Roviana and therefore cannot be authentic. I made myself clear that as far as the SDA community is concerned that they wanted the original Marovo to remain intact, the same and no changes be made. I hope my explanation is clear so that the re-printing can start after the endorsement from the SDA community.” (6 Sept, 2013 at 10:00am). Anglican Father Michael Katea from Tikopia and the secretary of the SICA (Solomon Islands Christian Association) can be commended for his support for the Marovoa Bible re-print of the original.

<sup>5</sup> On a trip to Australia via Port Moresby, Vagara told some people that he and a group of others were going to do biblical translation work. They were asked if they knew Greek and Hebrew. When it was obvious the answer was no, the comment was made, “How can you translate the Bible without knowing Hebrew and Greek?” Vagara just smiled.

Model of the Advent Herald Photo courtesy of *Seventh-day Adventists in the South Pacific 1885-1985*. Warburton, VIC: Signs, p. 220.



From left to right: Pastor Robert Barrett, Pastor Vagara Tasa Hivana, Pastor Rini II and evangelist Barnabas Pana Kapo.

# **RECOLLECTIONS FROM PAPUA NEW GUINEA**

## **World War II and the Seventh-day Adventist Church**

**By Peter Korave and photos are courtesy of ‘Along the Kokoda Track’, *Signs of the Times*. 31 March, 2017. Issue 3, Vol 132.**

The establishment and growth of the Seventh-day Adventist church in Papua New Guinea (PNG) has a long and fascinating history. The Adventist church arrived in Papua and New Guinea twice at different times and from different locations. First, the Church arrived in Papua in 1908 when Pr Septimus W Carr and Beni Tavodi, a Fijian missionary reached Bisiatabu. Their arrival occurred 45 years after the Adventist Church was formally organised and 34 years prior to World War II (WWII). The second arrival was 20 years later, in 1929, G. F. Jones, G. Peacock and A. G. Stewart landed in the New Guinea Islands. A mission station was established at Matupit which became the first mission headquarters in the New Guinea Islands Region. From Matupit, the church then spread to other neighbouring islands, the Saint Mathias groups (Mussau, Emira and Tench), the Admiralty Islands (Manus) and finally to mainland New Guinea in 1934. The headquarters was established at Kainantu in the Eastern Highlands Province<sup>1</sup>.

While there has been much written about the history of Adventist work in PNG, most of the information is in regards to the establishment of the early Adventist work, its growth and development, but little attention has been given to the impact of the Adventist church in Papua on the events of WWII.

Jill Anderson explores the work of Pacific Island missionaries who worked along-side European expatriates to establish the Adventist church in Papua. The author’s description of the Fijians, Cook Islanders and Solomon Islander missionaries’ work seems to be biographical in nature.<sup>2</sup> Milton Hook explores the establishment and progress of the early Adventist work in Papua. He cites the key pioneer missionaries who played important roles in spreading the gospel in spite of the challenges. His discussion focuses on the Adventist church prior to WWII without any hint of how the Adventist church impacted WWII.<sup>3</sup> Robert Dixon makes reference to the important pioneer missionaries who contributed to the spreading of the gospel in WWII, while inadequately he connects the Adventist church with WWII.<sup>4</sup> Lester Lock, provides

the narratives of the Lock family as missionaries in PNG and the Solomon Islands. He also highlights the indigenous missionaries whom he worked closely with. The book is basically a biography that contains his family experiences. While, the author highlights how the indigenous SDA workers provided assistance to the Allied forces during WWII. He narrows his discussion to one particular person, Faole.<sup>5</sup>

The first missionaries, Pastor Septimus W Carr, his wife Edith and Benisimani (Beni) Tavodi, a Fijian missionary teacher, arrived in Port Moresby, the capital of Papua, on Friday, June 7, 1908. John Fulton, a missionary to other South Pacific Islands, recommended Beni as he recognised that Fijian missionaries were dependable and adaptable to the steamy climate, local food, and leafy houses.<sup>6</sup> Thus, other Fijians, Cook Islanders, Solomon Islanders and the Australian Aboriginals.<sup>7</sup> followed to establish the church prior to WWII.

Prior to the arrival of the Adventist church, three separate mission groups had already arrived in Papua and New Guinea. The Roman Catholics attempted to base a mission on Woodlark Island in 1847, but abandoned it eight years later. They began at Rabaul in 1882 and at Yule Island on the Papuan coast in 1885.

The London Missionary Society sent New Guinea teachers to Papua in 1871.<sup>8</sup> The Methodists started a mission in Rabaul in 1875. The three major mission bodies: London Missionary Society, Anglican and Methodists agreed not to enter each other's territory.<sup>9</sup> Due to this agreement-Comity Agreement-Pr Carr and Beni Tavodi could not secure the land along the Papuan coast. Carr eventually chose an inland property due to its cooler climate and the fact that no other mission was in the area. It was his plan to establish an industrial school to train national missionaries at Bisiatabu.<sup>10</sup> The leased land of 130 acres (53 hectares) was approximately 43 kilometres from Port Moresby.<sup>11</sup> Bisiatabu then became the first Adventist mission station in Papua and New Guinea.

More missionaries were sent to assist Pr Carr at Bisiatabu. In 1909, Gordon and Julia Smith, and Solomona, a Rarotongan, arrived at Bisiatabu. Although, their success was slow, much effort was given. While at Bisiatabu, the missionaries ventured further inland and visited villages on the Kokoda Trail <sup>12</sup> The first visit occurred in 1910, two years after their arrival in Papua.

At times, Beni would leave Bisiatabu for weeks, walking from village to village conducting services with his picture roll. Initially, the people found it

strange to gather around him so they would sit with their backs to him. Part-way through his prayer, he would say to them, “Do not speak, you must keep quiet.” They parroted, “Do not speak, you must keep quiet.”<sup>13</sup>

On one trip Beni met with an unfriendly group who planned to murder him. As they surrounded him, waving their spears, he took out his pocket watch and held it up for all to see. This captured their attention so they lowered their weapons, drew closer, and stared at the second-hand moving around. He held it to their ears to let them hear the ticking. They thought the watch held some strange spirits. This confused their plans because they were unsure how this new imaginary spirit would react. They were afraid to attack Beni so they changed their tactics and treated him kindly.<sup>14</sup>

Towards the end of 1913, Beni paid another visit to all the villages along the Kokoda Trail which may have been his last visit. He stopped over in one village and “the people sat up till midnight listening to Beni.”<sup>15</sup>

In a letter written in 1927, Andrew G. Stewart points out that wherever Beni was known, his memory is still highly respected.<sup>16</sup> Through the work of Beni, the villagers along the Kokoda Trail accepted the Adventist Biblical message.

In June, 1913, Pr Carr and A. N. Lawson together with a string of carriers, walked over the mountain range to the government patrol post at Kokoda. During this visit, they discovered that there were people already observing the Sabbath. Pr Carr reported, “We found quite a number of tribes in Efogi and Kagi who were keeping the Sabbath as far as they knew how.” This was apparently due to the work of Beni and Faole.<sup>17</sup>

In April, 1921, Captain Griffith Francis and Marion Jones arrived in Papua to assess the situation at Bisiatabu. During this visit, Captain Jones walked across the Kokoda Trail and reported on interests he found. Pr Norman and Molley Lock, his four children with nurse, Emily Heise, came to Papua in 1924. Pr Lock was sent as superintendent (president) to oversee the Adventist church in Papua and pioneer the work at Efogi. This implies that in 1924, Efogi, a village along the Kokoda Trail, became the first Adventist headquarters in Papua and New Guinea. This village is significant because thirty-four years later, this area became the battleground between the imperial Japanese forces and the Allied soldiers.<sup>18</sup>

The Lock family, with about 50 carriers, hiked the mountains to Efogi which took them six days. There they set up a school and a medical centre at Efogi. In July 1924, Pr Lock conducted his first

baptism of 11 people, eight men and three women. This was the second baptism in the country. Progress attracted the approval of the government officials in Port Moresby who urged the Adventists to commence work along the coast on both the east and west side of Port Moresby.<sup>21</sup>

Further, they built a church building mostly of local materials, except for the nails. This was the first Adventist church building in Papua and New Guinea.<sup>20</sup> Pr Lock also visited neighbouring villages and made a trip to Kokoda.

Other families assisted the Lock family: Nafitalai and Vasiti Navara, in January 1926, and Pastor Charles and Evelyn Mitchell in February, 1927. They supervised and advanced the work in Efogi with the assistance of the indigenous leaders such as Timothy<sup>21</sup> and Gobeli, a village policeman.

In November 1929, Pr George and Christina Englebrecht travelled to Vailala and established a new school near Belepa, which later became the mission station. In the same year, Charles and Evelyn Mitchell transferred from Efogi, travelled to the Marshall Lagoon area and opened up the work there at Korela.

In December 1931, Ross and Mabel James and Alma Wiles opened the mission work at Aroma, east of Port Moresby. By 1932 and 1933, the church

headquarters and the training school were established at Mirigeda near Port Moresby.

Prior to WWII, the Adventist church had reached major parts of the Papuan region. By 1940, the church in Papua had reached a total membership of 1,780. The Adventist church had existed in Papua for thirty-four years and along the Kokoda trail, almost twenty years. Even though many Australian expatriates were deported, the local people along the Kokoda Trail remained loyal to their missionary friends.<sup>24</sup>

The Australians and their allies had limited knowledge of the geographical area and relied heavily on the indigenous people for local knowledge. Faole, an indigenous Adventist missionary, also shared his compassion and his Adventist faith. Pr Lester Lock shares this fascinating story:

**Faole: Adventist Hero to many Allied Soldiers on the Kokoda Track**

Photo courtesy of the Adventist Heritage Centre



One time, Faole and his daughters were camping near the stream when five Australian soldiers emerged into a little clearing. One of these five soldiers was wounded and another was weak. Faole's daughter had a knowledge of simple medical service due to association with expatriate missionaries' wives. She immediately applied her skills to relieve the soldiers' suffering and provided them with nourishing food. Despite her effort, unfortunately the elderly man died. Faole conducted the funeral service and then took the other four soldiers safely back to Port Moresby through another route because the main track was occupied by the Japanese.

This was the track that Pr Lock had walked but Faole was not familiar with it. There were times when Faole completely lost the path. Faole would ask the group to rest while he talked to Jesus and prayed for guidance. He would set off in the opposite direction and pick up the illusive trail. All along the way, Faole's daughter continued her ministrations to the wounded with hot and cold treatments using what medicine they had with them.<sup>23</sup>

The party finally arrived safely after days of walking. Soon after, one of them wrote a letter of appreciation to Pr Lock:

Dear Pastor Lock,

I am writing this letter to tell you of the outstanding job done by local people of your mission. During the recent activities against the Japanese here, I had the bad luck to be cut off with a patrol.

After working our way back across the range, we came across a mission village a couple of hours north-west of Menari. We stayed at this village for three or four days tending a wounded man, and then moved on to a small garden on the side of the ridge.

Unfortunately, at this stage one of the men had an accident which eventually caused his death. Whilst at this garden I received a visit from Faole and Geita, and with Geita acting as interpreter, they made it clear that they would be prepared to guide us on as soon as my wounded and injured men were able to get along. Unfortunately, it was a matter of between two and three weeks before we were

able to move. It was not until after we started that I realized that apart from waiting all this time themselves, they had held all their plans to move the women, teachers, and kiddies of the mission.... Through their great assistance in every way, we were able to get through to our own side again. Actually, when we arrived there the situation had ceased sufficiently to enable them to go to Bisiatabu.... I felt sure that you would be interested to hear of the good work of your people who apparently have by your example and teachings reached a stage where they can teach us something of Christian ideals.

Yours very sincerely  
R W Mc Ilray<sup>24</sup>

The local Adventists provided physical and spiritual support. They shared Jesus in the midst of terror and war. A soldier returning from Efogi reported hearing the singing of hymns, and on investigation found a group of Adventist boys led by "an old chief," veteran teacher Faole, upholding the banner in the front line of battle.<sup>25</sup>

The gospel was both preached and applied practically during the war. They provided care and compassion for the soldiers in pain and distress during the Kokoda campaign and inspired Sapper H. Beros to write the poem that later became very famous, entitled, the *Fuzzy-Wuzzy Angels*.

Many a mother in Australia,  
when the busy day is done,  
Sends a prayer to the Almighty for the  
keeping of her son;  
Asking that a [Kokoda angel] guide him,  
and bring him safely back.  
Now we see those prayers are answered,  
on the Owen Stanley Track.  
Though they haven't any haloes, only holes,

slashed through the ear,  
 And their faces marked with tattoos with  
 scratch pins in their hair,  
 Bringing back the badly wounded just as  
 steady as a hearse,  
 Using leaves to keep the rain off, and as  
 gentle as a nurse;  
 Slow and careful in bad places on the awful  
 mountain track,  
 And the look upon their faces makes us  
 think that Christ was black.  
 Not a move to hurt the carried, as they treat  
 him-like a saint,  
 It's a picture worth recording that the  
 artist's yet to paint.  
 Many lads will see their mothers, and  
 husbands we-uns and wives,  
 Just because the fuzzy wuzzies carried them  
 to save their lives.  
 From mortar or machine gun fire or a  
 chance surprise attack.  
 To safety and the care of doctors at the  
 bottom of the track.  
 May the mothers in Australia, when they  
 offer up a prayer,  
 Mention these impromptu angels with the  
 fuzzy wuzzy hair."<sup>26</sup>

In reply to "Fuzzy-Wuzzy Angels"  
 poem, Linda M. Hanbury wrote *From  
 Mothers to the Fuzzies*, which caught the  
 attention of many people.

We, the mothers of Australia, as we kneel  
 each night in prayer,  
 Will be sure to ask God's blessing on the  
 men with fuzzy hair;  
 And may the great Creator, who made both  
 black and white,  
 Help us ever to remember how they helped  
 to win the fight!  
 For surely He has used these men with  
 fuzzy-wuzzy hair to guard and watch  
 our wounded with loving tender care;  
 And perhaps when they are tired, with  
 blistered aching back,  
 He'll take their yoke upon Himself and help  
 them down the track.  
 And God will be the artist, and this  
 picture.  
 He will paint, of a fuzzy-wuzzy angel with  
 the halo of a saint;

And His Presence shall go with them in tropic  
 heat and rain,  
 And He'll help them tend the wounded in  
 sickness and in pain.  
 "So we thank you, Fuzzy-wuzzies, for all  
 that you have done,  
 Not only for Australia, but for every  
 mother's son;  
 And we're glad to call you friends, though  
 your faces may be black,  
 For we know that Christ walked with you  
 on the Owen Stanley track."<sup>27</sup>

These two poems express one's  
 heartfelt words of gratitude to the Papuan  
 who assisted during the Kokoda  
 Campaign. The poems suggest that those  
 who assisted the Australian soldiers and  
 allies were Christians transformed by the  
 power of the gospel. Christ's love was  
 evident through their kind acts and  
 gestures during WWII. The local people  
 assisted the Australian soldiers as carriers,  
 medical orderlies and stretcher-bearers  
 over some of the most difficult terrain.  
 Many of these men were Adventists living  
 along the Kokoda Trail.<sup>28</sup>

An Australian soldier foretold that  
 "when this war is over and its history  
 written there is one chap that should get a  
 large share of the praise. He is the  
 [Papuan]. He sometimes arrives with  
 bleeding shoulders, puts the wounded  
 gently down, shakes himself, grins and off  
 he goes for another trip."<sup>29</sup>

Just before reaching Port Moresby,  
 the Japanese were withdrawn from Imita  
 Ridge, about 34km from Port Moresby.  
 They had met stiff resistance from the

Australian troops supported by Papuan carriers, stretchers-bearers and armed police.<sup>30</sup> The battle for the Kokoda Trail was won by the Australians in the territory that the Adventist church had occupied.

While in PNG, Japanese claimed to be liberators but their actions were not. They destroyed homes and killed people, even Adventist missionaries. For example, Deni Mark, a Solomon Island missionary was left in charge of the training school at Kambubu in East New Britain. He was severely beaten by the Japanese so he eventually became ill and died. He was buried on the north bank of the Kambubu River.<sup>31</sup> It was during the Kokoda campaign, that Japanese destroyed homes and churches. Lock states that the SDA church building on the west side of the trail was bombed by Japanese aircraft. Faole, the caretaker of the church, escaped, but the building was damaged.<sup>32</sup> When the Adventists saw that their church buildings were destroyed, they were saddened. To them this was disrespect of God. Many faithful Adventists along the Kokoda Trail had been praying for the Japanese defeat. Faole, also prayed daily that the Japanese must not advance over the last mountain before reaching Port Moresby.<sup>33</sup> Their prayers were finally answered when the Japanese withdrew forces 34 km just before reaching Port Moresby. Pr Elodo, current President of the PNG Union

Mission, affirms, that today, the Adventists along the Kokoda Trail believe the Japanese lost the war because they destroyed God's church buildings.<sup>34</sup>

Both the Seventh-day Adventist church along the Kokoda Trail and WWII are closely associated. Adventist converts assisted the Australian troops as a means of showing their loyalty to their missionaries. While WWII was fought in most parts of PNG, its fate was decided in a territory that the Adventist church had already occupied. It seems evident that God saw into the future when he directed his church to settle in the area that would become the centrepiece of war. Today, the Adventist church still maintains a presence in the area, and about 5000 Australians visit the Kokoda Trail each year and are still being influenced by the Adventist church. There is praise for God's foresight and wisdom in bringing the Seventh-day Adventist church to the area in 1908.

#### END NOTES

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3. Milton Hook, "Lotu Bilong Sevenday-Early Adventism in Papua New Guinea," *SDA Heritage Series*. (Wahroonga, South Pacific Division, Department of Education), pp. 1-22.
4. Dixon, "The Pacific Islands," pp. 200-232.
5. Lester Lock, *Locks that Opened Doors*.

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  7. Beside the European missionaries, Jill Anderson highlights the names of Pacific Islanders who worked among the Papuans: Fijians such as Beni Tavodi, Mitieli Nakasamai, Nafitalai Navara, Ratu Tevita Daivalu, Maika Daunika, Terete Nigara and Semeti Gadi Solomon.
  8. Noel Gash & June Whittaker, *A Pictorial History of New Guinea*. (Adelaide, Jacaranda Press, 1972), p. 11.
  9. In 1890, Sir William MacGregor called a conference in Port Moresby with the representatives of the London Missionary Society, Methodists and Anglicans who resolved to divide the field of labour called "sphere of influence." In this agreement, the southern coast of Papua from the West Irian border to Milne Bay belonged to the LMS. The Methodists occupied the islands in the East. The Anglicans occupied the North coast of Papua and the Roman Catholics were limited to Yule Island and the adjacent mainland because they did not participate in the 1890 Conference. *Readings in New Guinea History*, eds B. Jinks, P. Biskup & H. Nelson. (Sydney: Angus & Robertson, 1973), p. 65.
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  12. Kokoda Trail is a rough and narrow foot track through the Owen Stanley Ranges which the Japanese hoped to use as a route to capture Port Moresby in World War II (WWII). It connects Port Moresby and Popondetta (Northern Province). Ann Turner, *Historical Dictionary of Papua New Guinea*, (London: Scarecrow Press: 1994), p. 116.
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  25. William Lock, "Our Island Field," *Australasian Record*, 23 Nov, 1924, p. 4.
  26. Sapper H. Beros, *Australasian Record*, 14 Dec, 1942, p. 3
  27. Linda M. Hanbury, "From mothers to the Fuzzies" Ed S.V. Stratford, *Australasian Record*, 3 May, 1943, p. 3
  28. Dixon, "The Pacific Islands," p. 213.
  29. "New Guinea Heroes tell their battles stories," available at: <http://www.Theses.xlibx.info/t/1-history/1213301-2->
  30. Turner, *Historical Dictionary of Papua New Guinea*, p. 116.
  31. Dixon, "The Pacific Islands", p. 212.
  32. Locks, *Locks that Opened Doors*, p. 38.
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## Dr Aaron Lopa

By Jillian Thiele  
Photo courtesy of  
author's private  
photo collection.



Aaron was my friend. Most Sabbath mornings, I would look out my kitchen window at Pacific Adventist University and see my friend waiting for transport to take him to one of his many preaching appointments.

Aaron Lopa was a man I greatly respected, not just for his thought-provoking sermons, his sensitivity, his comprehensive wisdom given at dozens of weddings, or his extensive academic and theological knowledge but also as a wonderful and supportive friend.

It is believed he was born in 1946, a guess as his parents were illiterate. Maybe, he was older, as he remembers being carried on his father's shoulders as they ran for cover when the Japanese bombers and fighters were flying overhead. Aaron used his baptismal date, 2 November, as his date of birth. He was born in Auna village, on Wuvulu Island, approximately 240 kilometres from the north coast of Papua New Guinea, way out in the Pacific Ocean, beyond the island of Manus. Aaron was born into a culture of people who were animists and believed in ancestral devil worship. Their lives were

dominated with the constant fear that their ancestors would show their disapproval by allowing disaster to occur. To avoid calamities, the local devil priest would intervene. Aaron's father, was the local devil priest, and was often asked to instigate sacrifices and provide good luck charms for his people. As a very important mediator in the village, he hoped his son would follow in his tradition.

Aaron was part of a people group known as the 'tiger people'. As great warriors, they engaged in fierce battles with other clans and with people from the nearby islands.

It was the Germans who first saw the potential of the land on the island as suitable for extensive coconut plantations. To obtain a large section of fertile land, the Germans moved all the people to two villages, Onne and Auna, the latter being Aaron's village, thus creating a suitable space for the newly planted plantation.

The Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) church visited the island but their attempts to evangelise the Wuvulu people, had little success. The opportunity for the church to establish a mission on the island came through unusual events. Government health workers were concerned with the rise of tuberculosis and the deteriorating health of the people on the islands of Aua and Wuvulu. The sick were sent to the government hospital at Lorengau, on the

island of Manus, and placed in semi-isolation, and treated for tuberculosis. These people were isolated from food sources and social support.

Local Adventist church members befriended these people and regularly provided fresh fruit and vegetables but the problem was that these people had no means to return home when they recovered. These same Adventists organised with Pastor Frank Maberly to take these people home on the mission vessel, the *Light*.

Arriving on the island of Wuvulu, the people were ferried ashore to the tears of joy from their relatives. The local chief was so impressed with the support from the new church that he was adamant that the vessel could not leave until they arranged for a missionary. With no available missionary, Pastor Mave, volunteered to stay until an appropriate missionary could be found, asking the boat crew to look after his wife back home at Manus. Pastor Mave quickly grabbed items from the *Light*: a knife, a spear gun, a cooking pot, a plate and cup, a bag of clothes and his Bible.

Great kindness was shown by the chief. He offered Mave a house in Onne village and encouraged him to commence morning and evening worship and start a small school. Pastor Mave taught the rudiments of phonics, the alphabet and

counting, all with the aim of reading the b. The small school taught students ageing between 20 and 30. Aaron Lopa was only a small boy, but out of curiosity, he visited the school, hoping he could attend when he was older.

Mave's fishing skills with a spear gun gained notoriety. The new local pastor and teacher told the chief and the people that his success with fishing was all due to the power of God. People wanted to hear more of Mave's gospel message. The power of God prospered on the island of Wuvulu and the people were very proud of their 'missionary'.

The *Light* returned and took Mave home to Manus where he was ordained as a minister of the SDA church. As he wished to continue his ministry on the island, he and his wife Orovo returned to the joy of the people. By the time, Mave and Orovo left permanently, the power of the gospel was felt on the island. A succession of other missionaries continued the work, baptising, educating and supporting the people.

Kilengit, who arrived later, built a permanent church and a mission house at Musiki. By 1956, representatives from the Coral Sea Union Mission dedicated two churches, baptised people at the Lou beach and conducted Christian weddings. As a result of the work of Mave and a succession of teachers and minister, the

whole island became Adventists.

At the age of 11, Aaron's wish for education began in 1957 at the Sum Valley Primary School on the island of Wuvulu. He progressed to Nagam Central School out of Wewak, and then to Kabiufa High School, in the Eastern Highlands Mission. Following his high school graduation from form 4 in 1966, he began the first year of the Ministerial Course at Kabiufa College in 1967 before being transferred to the newly formed Sonoma Adventist College (SAC) on the island of East New Britain, in New Guinea, where he graduated with a Diploma of Ministry in 1968, as part of the inaugural graduation class.

Between 1969 and 1971, he began his field work as a minister in Port Moresby, as one of the three ministers serving this large town. At that time, there were only two main churches, one at Ela Beach, and the other at Hohola. Part of his pastoral duties included conducting religious instruction at Kilakila High School and conducting Daniel and Revelation Seminars in the district. It was recognised by senior pastors, church administrators and his church members that Aaron would make a good Bible teacher.

As a result, Aaron Lopa was asked to return to teach at SAC in 1972. It was there that he married Elizabeth Kumako, whom he had met when they were both at

SAC, a few years earlier.

In 1975, Aaron took his family to the Philippines. He first completed a BA in History and Philosophy and then an MA in Religion. They returned from the Philippines to PNG in 1979 and travelled back to his distant island for his short annual holidays. Again he was appointed as minister in Port Moresby, in the recently independent country of Papua New Guinea.

In 1981, the family transferred back to SAC, where Aaron was first a theology teacher, ultimately becoming Head of the Ministerial Training Department. It was not long before he was called again to Port Moresby as chaplain at the PNG Government University of Papua New Guinea. Briefly he returned to SAC and taught in the Ministerial Training Department until 1988. Due to his excellent teaching skills, he was transferred to Pacific Adventist College, in Port Moresby, and taught there from 1989 to 1993.

Aaron and Elizabeth's family expanded. Jamie was born in the Philippines in 1976, while Jennifer and Nathan were born in Nonga Hospital in Rabaul on the island of East New Britain in 1981 and 1983 respectively. Never to be overshadowed by her famous husband, Elizabeth not only managed the home, she became involved in numerous local church

activities. Wonderful meals were provided to the many visiting dignities, church members and students. Aaron was often away to present papers at conferences, preach at surrounding churches, and conduct Workers' Meetings.

In early 1993, the Lopa family moved to Adventist premier Andrews University, Michigan, in the United States of America, where Aaron completed a Doctorate of Ministry in 1996, the first Papua New Guinean ever awarded with this qualification.

On returning to Papua New Guinea, the family expanded to include Alice, a niece from Aaron's birth island. The family settled into a routine as Aaron resumed teaching in the School of Theology at Pacific Adventist University, being the first lecturer to be ranked as a Professor in 2000 by the Pacific Adventist University Council, for his outstanding teaching and important community involvement.

His heavy teaching load, administrative responsibilities and his frequent appointments off campus, started to take a toll on Aaron's health. He started to complain of shortness of breath and in 1998, Dr A. Sengupta, a consulting Physician and Cardiologist of Sir Buri Heart Institute attached to Port Moresby General Hospital, advised Aaron to go to Australia for further ventricular and

coronary angio tests. A fundraiser held at the University's dining hall was organised to cover some of the surgery costs.

In June 2000, Aaron was rushed to Sydney for major surgery. Another fundraising event was held at the Park Royal Hostel on July 30, 2000 to raise PNG K50, 000 to pay for his hospital expenses. Many Adventist and non-Seventh-day Adventist raised the necessary funds.

With his failing health, Aaron started to talk of retirement in the early 2000s. There was never a good time, due to the lack of suitable theology lecturers but he did attempt to reduce his teaching load. He actually retired in 2009.

Due to shortage of appropriate lecturers, Aaron and Elizabeth resided at Pacific Adventist University as a theological consultant. His community activities increased and he was often called to teach a subject or two. At one stage, the academic program was slightly modified so many of the theology students could attend his classes. In recognition of his incredible contribution to Pacific Adventist University, he was honoured with professor emeritus, (a professor in retirement) the only person ever to be awarded this honour.

Aaron's community activities were well recognised and highly valued across Papua New Guinea and other island

countries. In 2008, he was bestowed as Officer of the Order of Logohu, an award conferred by his Excellency, the Governor General of Papua New Guinea. In 2013, the General Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist church recognised his service by presenting him with a service medal for the ‘honourable retired’.

On the 20th April, 2013, sadly Aaron died of heart complications. As his valued neighbour and friend, I delivered food each night to the hundreds of church members from various church communities who came to show their respect. Elizabeth and the children grieved over and over again as they welcomed,

worshipped and prayed with each different church group. As is tradition in Papua New Guinea, Aaron’s body was taken back to his village, and buried in his traditional land. Out of respect a naval vessel transported Aaron and his family back to the island.

While still working at Pacific Adventist University, on my daily walk, I would stop by Aaron’s roses still growing in the garden he tenderly cultivated and offer a silent prayer of thanks for the life and service of this great man. He is missed by his family, friends, work colleagues and numerous church members.

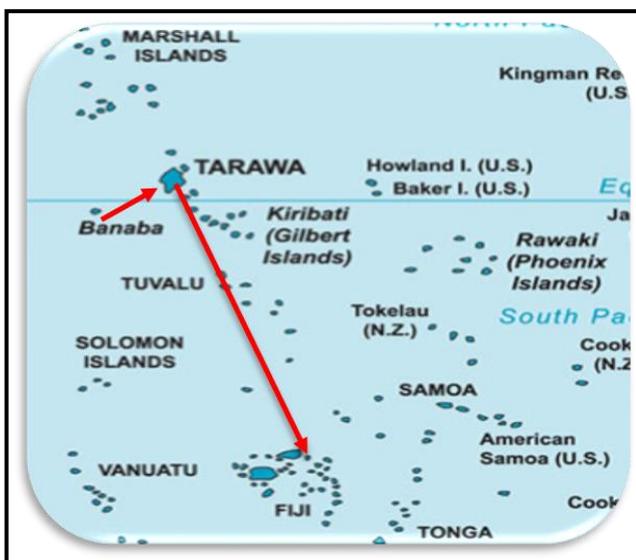
## RECOLLECTIONS FROM THE BANABA PEOPLE

By Akanisi Kristina Tabore-Lanyon

Photos of people are courtesy of the author and Maude, H. C., & Maude, H. E. (1932). The

social organization of Banaba or Ocean Island, Central Pacific. *The Journal of the Polynesian Society*, 41(164), 262 – 301 & <http://www.google.com.au/search?q=Map+of+Ocean+Island+-+Banaba&tbm=isch&tbo>

The people of Rabi Island originated in Banaba, also known as Ocean Island, a coral island in the central Pacific. It is about 6 square kilometres and is located near the equator, between Kiribati and Nauru. It was annexed by the British in 1900 for phosphate mining. In 1919, the island was made part of the crown colony of the Gilbert and Ellice Islands, known as Kiribati, today. Later, it was occupied by Japanese forces during World War II from 1942 – 1945. During this period, the entire



population was displaced to the islands of Kosrae, Nauru and Tarawa. After the war, the British Government relocated the Banabans to Rabi, a small island 2100 km southeast of Banaba, in Fiji.

On their arrival on the 15 December, 1945, the inhabitants of Rabi were predominantly members of the London Missionary Society (LMS) with a small community of Catholics. The Banaban community wanted to keep their island exclusively LMS and prohibited visits from other missions. Attempts by Adventists and Roman Catholics to enter the island were unsuccessful. Continual religious tension resulted in the appointment of an officer to act as an advisor to the community who was however instrumental in bringing about religious liberty for all.

#### **Pastor Bwebwe Tabuariki (1955 – 1966)**

A bright young man from the island by the name of Kariatabwewa Tabuariki (Bwebwe) was selected to attend the government teacher training college in Suva. There, he met some Adventist friends who invited him to Suvavou church who introduced him to the Voice of Prophecy (VOP) course. Returning to Rabi, he was assigned to teach at the Banaban School, where he shared his VOP lessons with his students.

In June 1955, Bwebwe visited Doug Hokin, the principal of Vatuvonu

Adventist School and requested him to visit Rabi with some of his students. With this proper invitation, Hokin visited the island with the President of the East-Fiji Seventh-day Adventist Mission, Pastor Walter Ferris on the mission boat, *Viking Ahoy*. They called at the island on Friday, just before the opening of Sabbath.

Awaiting them in the settlement of Eritabeta in Tabwewa Village was a group of twelve Sabbath believers; five of whom were ready for baptism. A 67 year old elder from Eritabeta settlement, Kaota Taan recalls the landing of these pioneers and says,

They brought with them big, colourful picture rolls with interesting stories and showed rolling movies' ('Faith for Today' series). On Sabbath morning, the first Sabbath school was conducted and it was thrilling to hear this interesting meeting being translated into the Banaban language. Later in the day, the visitors were given the Sabbath school offering and the tithe. The young people's meeting was held in the saloon of the *Viking Ahoy* and the men related stories in connection with their acceptance of the advent message.

Bwebwe had a dream which he told to Pastor Ferris. He was walking with an old spiritual leader and they were climbing a steep hill. On reaching the top of this hill he noticed a man standing at his side all dressed in shining clothes. With sincerity the man started to speak to our brother about his religious

beliefs. Turning to see if his friend was listening, he found him walking away down the hill to the darkness of the valley below. The angel continued by saying that the lessons from the Voice of Prophecy were messages from God, and that it was God's wish that he accept them fully.

When he awoke he realized that God had truly spoken to him and that he must leave his old spiritual advisers to their darkness and begin to keep the true Sabbath. This he has faithfully done and so today we have on the island of Rabi the first-fruits of seed well sown.

**1967– 1978**

### **FIJIAN MISSIONARIES**

**Talatala (Minister) Jione Kaiyanuyanu (1967 – 1972) the first Fijian teacher-missionary to Rabi. *His story is based on an interview with his daughter, Akanisi, the author of this article.***

The late, Talatala Jione was known to the Rabi people as a humble and kind man, dedicated and committed to the Lord's work. He was also sensitive to the culture. His ability to communicate in the language strengthened his relationship with the people. In turn, the Banabans loved and



respected him. He was a teacher-pastor by profession with qualifications from Fulton College. Prior to his call to Rabi, he taught at the Central Adventist School Apia, Samoa, and at Kauma SDA School in Kiribati, but had to return home due to his wife's illness. His son only survived a few days and passed away in Kauma. In fact, according to his daughter Akanisi, (from his second marriage), their son was buried by the Tongan teacher in Kauma. Due to finding medical treatment for his very sick wife, they boarded a naval ship bound for Fiji on the same day. His wife later died. He later married a school teacher Ema Naqasenivanua. They had three children, Akanisi Tuwai, Baba and Boy.

Shortly afterwards, they established an Adventist two-teacher school for the Lower Primary (classes 1 – 4). Besides being a teacher, Jione conducted Bible studies which often meant he was away from home for long periods.

Pastor Kabung described him to Akanisi as 'a man of faith' because even during thunderstorms, he would cross a flooded stream but he always arrived in time for Bible studies without a trace of 'water' on his clothes and with a kind smile on his face.

One of Talatala Jione's greatest challenges was visiting the most remote village on Rabi – Buakonikai, which was 25 kilometers distance from Nuku where

the mission was situated. The only means of transport was by canoe or small boats. No one had ever thought of crossing via land because its mountainous structure could take a couple of days of difficult climbing. The only logical route was by sea but since there were no boats available, Talatala decided to cross the uncharted mountains. As he struggled to reach the first peak, he could see the tiny jetty of the village miles away. He stood and closed his eyes to pray for strength when suddenly, he felt a force from behind pushing him forward. All he remembered was holding tight to his little bag containing a few clothes and Bible study materials. As he somersaulted downhill, his thoughts were that the devil was trying to hinder him from spreading the gospel and trying to harm him. He continued rolling without obstacles until he stopped.

As he picked himself up, he looked up and to his surprise, just a few steps ahead of him was the little jetty of Buakonikai Village. He realized that this was no coincidence but providence from the Lord. He managed to have his scheduled Bible studies and successfully communicated the Gospel.

When the last Fijian missionary, named Malakai Motu, left Rabi in 1978, our local people took over the ministry of the Seventh-day Adventist church from 1979.

### **THE RABI ISLANDERS: Pastor Baraniko Mooa (1979 – 1987)**

Pastor Baraniko Mooa's tenure was one of robust evangelism which started in 1979 with the arrival of Pastor Ray and Joyce Holt. Together, they conducted an evangelistic campaign in the island's Teitinikauriri Hall, resulting in two baptisms. Bible studies followed and additional people gave their lives to the Lord.

After their return to Fiji, Pastor Holt's, evangelistic campaigns were conducted by Pastor Baraniko and the Lay Ministry leader, Burentau and Tabunawati. Both were powerful and dynamic speakers who attracted a lot of questions from people on the island regarding the Sabbath and Mrs White. The author recalls a few occasions when stones were hurled on the roof of the shelter where the meetings were held but the meetings continued. Church members would camp at the Mission Compound for weeks to support these meetings with prayer and fasting. The youth group was also a pro-active ministry under the Youth Leader Ken Sigrah and choir master, the late Burangke Tebaka. With their singing ministry, they drew the Biblical interest of many young people with their harmonious singing leading them to join the singing group.

In 1982, a rather frightening experience took place at the height of these

evangelistic meetings in the last village, Buakonikai. As told by Pastor Baraniko the erection of the meeting shelter began with great opposition from a neighbor. But with assurance from the house owners, they completed the shelter. As the meetings commenced, a concerned neighbor sat at the rear. On the third day, as he walked in, he accused the Adventists of false doctrines and argued that Jesus was just an ordinary man who did not deserve honour. Calmly, the pastor invited him to take his seat while he responded to his questions from the bible. As the pastor looked up from his bible he saw the man falling slowly to the ground. People rushed over and tried to revive him but he was dead. This caused an uproar from his immediate family but created fear within the villagers. The meetings continued without opposition and today there is an organized church in Buakonikai.

### **Talatala Teatu Rewi: 1990–1998 & 2001–2005**

Talatala Teatu was the longest serving minister who served the island. In his second term, he was also the Chairman of the Rabi Island Council. Besides being well educated, he was also a talented musician. His talents led him to be a popular guitarist in the famous island band ‘Teitinikauriri’ which would play for many island gatherings and important functions and even extended their services to the

surrounding Fijian communities across the island.

This is his story as he told it in an interview.

Early one morning, at around 4.00 am, he returned after a whole night’s activity with his band and went straight to bed. He dreamed that there was total darkness on the island and he felt that the end of the world had come. He became scared and saw a bright light coming from the east of the island and resting on a particular place. As he looked closer, he realized that it was the Seventh-day Adventist compound. He woke up with a conviction that the Adventists had the truth but left it at that.

Two years later, he was invited by the lay Ministry leader, Burentau Tabunawati, This lay person told Teatu Rewi his own dream.

The lay leader was crossing the island’s playground on his way to the mission compound when two Europeans confronted him. They pointed to a corner of the playground where the ‘Teitinikauriri’ band was playing. Teatu was singled out.

He then woke up from the dream.

As Teatu thought about the two dreams, he was convinced that God had a plan for him. He requested Bible studies, was baptized later by Pastor Baraniko in 1984 and decided to become a minister.

In 1986, Teatu Rewi completed his Pastoral training at Fulton College. He worked for one year as a literature evangelist and began his ministry in 1990. During his term, he saw the need to complete the church building at Nuku Mission Compound that had been left in its

foundation phase since the 1970s. It was in the 1990s that the construction of the church started again with the help of Roger Lutz and the Napa church members from America. The local church members then completed the remaining work left from Roger's group. Finally in 1998, the church at Nuku in Tabwewa was officially opened by the President of the Fiji Mission, Pastor Tom Osbourne

In 2002, the island experienced the devastating impact of Cyclone Emi which left many families homeless. Donations from the government and churches came to assist including mission volunteer workers from MacBride church in Canada who previously came with Roger Lutz. They repaired 10 homes in Tabwewa Village and three years later in 2005, returned to the island and replaced the thatched church building in Buakonikai Village. The church was opened by the Secretary of Fiji Mission, Pastor Usaia Baravi. In the same year, Talatala Teatu resigned from the Ministry and concentrated on his role as the Chairman of the Rabi Island Council. However, his link with the JABEZ Humanitarian Foundation, a church ministry headed by Roger Lutz, continued and in 2012, the team from MacBride church returned and extended the church building at Buakonikai eventually becoming the Dorcas Hall. Teatu Rewi's vision for the hall was to open it for

evening study periods where the students from the community could come to explore content with various tutors. Also included were worships and prayer as part of their evangelistic program. Further, church members would supply afternoon tea once a week when they would share interesting Bible concepts with the young people.

Roger Lutz and Teatu Rewi also visited a church company in Uma who requested a church building on donated block of land for the late Tebana and Tekoieta Tabore's dream was to have a church built on their land. Lutz then encouraged the church members to submit a quotation in three days so he could take it with him and see what could be done. He then left them with these words "work your faith".

In the new church, Bible storytelling sessions and invitations for children to attend Sabbath School were given. The children sang, distributed Bibles, and visited the needy and old people. The church members continue to praise God for their new church and how it is serving the community at large.

## **Talatala Naibo Kataobure: 2006–2012**

Pastor Naibo came in 2006. He was an active pastor who made home visitations throughout the island. During his term the Dorcas Hall was repaired from damage caused by Cyclone Amy. Funding for the project was by Ruth Ellis, an Australian who was a former school teacher at Vatuvonu Secondary in Fiji in 1977. As a result of Pastor Naibo's evangelistic meeting 25 people were baptized.

The members remember Roger Lutz's words to begin to work their faith. With only one male member and a few elderly women, they prayed. Tekea, the son of Tebana and Tekoieta, leader of the Uma church company, said that God intervened in a miraculous way by opening the hearts of their community members who were predominantly Roman Catholics and Methodists.

The youth and small children offered their services and assisted in carrying sand and stones needed for the foundation of the church. After three weeks, the materials from Roger arrived and the same group of young people under the leadership of Kareo (Tekea's nephew) completed the foundation of the church.

The minister from the Pentecostal church, Pastor Taan, also helped in plastering the foundation and commented that anything to do with the Lord's work

was everyone's task.

In 2014, the construction continued with assistance from Pastor Greg Philips and his church members from Portland, Oregon, in America who sent in money for the materials and labour costs. Also they also came to help with the construction in the same year. In 2015 and finally in 2016, the two-storey church was completed.

The lower floor of the church building was officially opened in 1917 and is currently used to conduct the first SDA Kindergarten School, operated by Mareta (Tekea's wife) and Temweri, an active church member. They have a roll of about 30 students, mostly from Methodist and Roman Catholic backgrounds.

The members are grateful for the leading of God and for the generous assistance and service given by many members in the United States.

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## Participants of the September 2017 Pacific Adventist History Conference, held at Fulton College



Photo courtesy of Bruce Potter

### **Standing: Back Row**

#### **Left to Right**

Silivenusi Puniani , Livai Saukuru RU, Titus Alomon Anil Singh, Pr Meveni Kaufononga, Bev Norman, Kepeerieli Duora Lawedrau, Siosaia Vaihala, Dr Glynn Galo, Dr Graeme Humble, Pr James Alagappan, Dr Rejeli Liligeto, Wilson Liligeto, Pr David Hay, Dr Jillian Thiele, Pauline Potter, Vaseva Ratu, Elisapesi Manson, Fulori Sususewa Bola, Elise Napas, Tesimale Latu

### **Kneeling: Front Row**

#### **Left to Right**

Barrie Abel, Jr, Luther Taniveke, Henoa Mea, Josephine Gray, Debra Tavita, Akinis Tabare-Langon, Simon Davidson, Mere Vaihola, Cecil Trief

**THESE EXPATRIATES ALSO SERVED IN EARLIER YEARS IN THE PACIFIC ISLANDS**



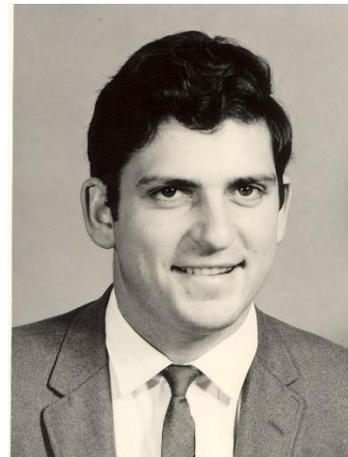
Roy & Lorna Harrison (Samoa, PNG, Solomon Islands)



Alec & Emily Campbell (PNG, Solomon Islands)



Frank & Liela Maberly (PNG)



Saleem & Grace Farag (PNG)



Ernie & Delys Lemke (Solomon Islands, PNG, Cook Islands)



Hugh & Royce Dickins (Fiji, Samoa, PNG, Solomon Islands)