

Booklet

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LAND OF THE LONG WHITE CLOUD
BEGINNINGS OF ADVENTISM IN NEW ZEALAND

By Milton Hook



Seventh-day Adventist Heritage Series

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SDA Heritage Series: Entry into the Australian Colonies
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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr Milton Hook is the author of "Flames Over Battle Creek", a brief history of the early days at the Review and Herald Publishing Association as seen through the eyes of George Amadon, printer's foreman at the institution. Dr Hook's doctoral dissertation researched the pioneering years of the Avondale School, 1894 to 1900, and he has published some of these findings.

He spent three years as a mission director in Papua New Guinea. His teaching years include primary, secondary and college level experience, especially in Bible subjects, in Australia, New Zealand and America. He is an ordained minister, married and the father of two sons.

He would welcome any information which may enhance the content of this series.

Californians in the nineteenth century would often speak of the Pacific Ocean as "the big mill-pond". This understatement reflected a certain kinship with fellow colonials across the water. They made little distinction between the British Colonials of the Pacific Islands, New Zealand, Australia, and South-east Asia for they were all thought of as just on the opposite shore. The Californian's evangelistic thrust was naturally projected over the waves in that direction. For this reason, prior to 1885, some Adventist literature found its way by the sea-lanes to these various Antipodean ports.

Pastor Stephen Haskell and his small band of American missionaries crossed the mill-pond in 1885 and were in Melbourne only a short time before they became acquainted with a Sunday-keeping Adventist minister, Pastor Brown. He told Haskell there were similar believers in Auckland, New Zealand. On September 7, 1885, Pastor Mendel Israel wrote from Melbourne to Pastor Willie White saying,

Elder Haskell... is now thinking of going to New Zealand in a short time.., so he can establish a mission there. There is kind of a first-day Adventist church there that he is aching to get amongst.

Sure enough, by October Haskell was in Auckland seeking the Sunday-keeping Adventists and trying to sign up news agencies who would sell his proposed magazine, "The Bible Echo". He was impressed with the willingness shown by captains prepared to accept Adventist magazines for their lounge-rooms aboard ship, and

their offer to take bundles of papers to addresses among the small Pacific Islands. Haskell believed that these endeavours would not yield much success. However, future years proved that this seed sowing did provide a harvest.

Haskell rented a room from Edward and "Lizzie" Hare who were devout churchgoers. They were the means of introducing him to the Sunday-keeping Adventists known as "Christians". Haskell was invited by their pastor, George Aldrich, to speak at their Thursday evening Bible discussion in Central Auckland. He broke an evangelistic rule and launched straight into the topic of the Saturday Sabbath. On a second occasion he discussed the personal and visible second coming of Christ with another group of "Christians" in suburban Mount Eden. These talks prompted a few to accept his teachings, among them the Hares. Edward threw himself into the task as Auckland agent for Adventist publications, selling a large number of "Great Controversy". His wife devoted herself to letter-writing and sending Adventist magazines to Europeans scattered throughout the Pacific. A little seed-sowing had therefore taken place before the PITCAIRN called at these scattered island groups a few years later.

It was Haskell's original plan to steam on to the General Conference session but he had taken ill on the boat and decided to postpone his return to America. Hare then persuaded Haskell to visit Kaeo in the north where the rest of the extensive Hare clan lived.

The patriarch of the family, Joseph Hare, was an Irish Orangeman and a local preacher for the Methodist Church. His twenty-six-year-old son, Robert, also took his turn at preaching.

Haskell was given the pulpit for the three Sundays he stayed with them. He also held meetings in a public hall almost every evening. Throughout the day he visited from home to home giving Bible studies. A few accepted his teachings. The one who had the toughest decision to make was Robert Hare. He was engaged to be married, his new home was built, and much of the furniture was

installed or ordered. His bride-to-be, however, objected vehemently to his new convictions and threatened to cancel their marriage plans if he persisted with Saturday-keeping. Robert would not compromise and the breach became irreparable. Soon after, in the New Year of 1886, Robert left for ministerial studies in America.

Haskell returned to Melbourne and stayed there throughout January and February. In March he arrived in Auckland again, once more en route to America. During his three-week stopover he made a second visit to Kaeo and soon the news of an impending baptism was in the air. No-one had previously seen a Seventh-day Adventist baptism and some warped rumours flew around the district that the candidates would be immersed naked. Some who were convinced that Haskell's message was true were therefore reticent to be baptised. Nevertheless, in a nearby stream on Sunday, March 21, 1886, a small number ventured to take part. Family heads, Joseph and Hannah Hare, set the example for Metcalfe Hare and his wife, Maria, as well as William and Elsie Hare and their eldest daughter, "Maggie". This disarmed the fears of others and two days later Haskell baptised more adult members of the family as well as twenty-five-year-old Tom Brighthouse, nicknamed "The Noble Bushman".

Brighthouse was raised a Baptist and earned the respect of fellow axemen because he refused to swear, smoke, or drink alcohol. He, like Robert Hare, was persuaded by Haskell to take Biblical studies in California. He did well at Healdsburg College but soon after commencing ministerial work nearby he contracted high fevers. He recovered sufficiently to begin similar work in Chicago, only to be stricken with tuberculosis. His girlfriend, Etta Heald, still wanted their wedding to go ahead even though they both knew his case was incurable. They were married at his alma mater and Etta nursed him until he passed away five months later.

On the same day of the second baptism at Kaeo, March 23, 1886, Haskell organised the Kaeo church in Joseph and Hannah Hare's home. It was the first Seventh-day Adventist church organised in

New Zealand. This occurred less than six months after Haskell first began work in the colony. The breakthrough had not come with the Sunday-keeping Adventists as he had hoped, but rather among the Methodists.

The Hare clan peppered the district with Adventist books and magazines. Cottage meetings for evening Bible study were held in the homes of Joseph Hare, Jr. ; Wesley Hare; Brighthouse; and Francis and Sophia (Skinner) Letts, a married daughter from Hannah Hare's first marriage. Their witness won some. It also angered others and two of the new converts were arrested for working on Sundays. This level of prejudice did, however, subside.

The Kaeo group of believers were not appointed any ministerial assistance when Haskell left them the day after their church organisation. Their experience as leaders in the Methodist Church made them self-reliant and for years Adventist ministers simply made periodic visits. "Father" Hare was ordained as their elder and his eldest son, William, was ordained as deacon.

In November 1886 Pastor Arthur Daniells and his wife, Mary, arrived from America to begin public meetings in Auckland. There was already a small core of believers in that city besides Edward and "Lizzie" Hare. A church member, Mrs Anderson, had made her home available for regular cottage meetings. Daniells brought a pedal organ and a fifteen metre marquee from America to use for his public evangelistic meetings. It would seat approximately three hundred people. Metcalfe Hare came from Kaeo to help Daniells pitch the marquee in Ponsonby Road opposite Weston Park. It was not very far from Turner Street, where the Hare's lived, and at that time one of the choice suburbs. Hare stayed on as tent master, sleeping each night behind the rostrum to guard against vandals, while the Daniells lived in a smaller tent alongside.

On Wednesday evening, December 29, 1886, Daniells launched into his preaching series. Attendances were small at first because it was the holiday season, but these improved slowly. In the New Year he took the unusual step of inviting a local minister to speak in the

marquee about Sunday sacredness. Then in the following meeting he preached in favour of Saturday sacredness. The Sunday-keeping minister no doubt felt annoyed and as Daniells appeared to be gaining followers the ministerial fraternity closed ranks and mounted a counter-attack.

Campaigns conducted by Daniells always attracted a high profile in the community. He used the newspaper columns to advantage. He enlisted canvassers to sell Adventist literature in the neighbourhood. He mingled with groups such as the Orangemen and addressed their societies on Roman Catholicism. The music and everything associated with his meetings bore a masterly touch. Furthermore, he did not suffer from itchy feet, moving on every few months. Instead, he remained to nurture his converts. Both he and his wife were trained school-teachers and brought to their ministry the talent of clarity, logic, and persuasion. Daniells appealed to the stable middle-class churchgoers and raised up lasting churches.

Daniells closed his series after seventeen weeks, organising a Sabbath School of seventy-eight members, many of whom were baptised Seventh-day Adventists. A hall was hired for services while they began building their own church in MacKelvie Street, a short distance from the marquee's site. Another denomination was using the same hall on Sundays and threatened to cancel their contract if the Adventists did not move out. This prejudice only drove their new members to hasten their building programme. By July 4, 1887, the little wooden structure, just nine-by-sixteen metres, was advanced sufficiently to enable them to hold their first services in it. The painting and interior varnishing were not completed until twelve months later. Its total cost was \$800. Except for Federal Hall in the Echo Publishing Company premises, Melbourne, the Auckland church was the first one erected in Australasia, pre-dating the Bismarck church, Tasmania, by a few months.

In the summer of 1887/88 Daniells moved his marquee to a spot near the public hospital and started a second series on Sunday evening, January 15. These meetings continued for twelve weeks

and added more members, bringing the total in Auckland to approximately one hundred baptised members. They routinely held their divine services on Saturday mornings followed by Sabbath School in the afternoons.

Among the early members of the Auckland church were Mrs Brebner and her two daughters, Edith and Eslemont. They lived just across the road from where Daniells preached his first series. Eslemont was baptised when she was just nine years old. Some other members were Captain George Masters and his wife, Margaret, and son, Fairley; Margaret Hardy and her son, Ebenezer; Ann Pallant and her children, Mary, Emma, and Jesse; Annie Edwards; Mary Hill; as well as Charles Clayton and Eli Cleal who, like the Masters family, became colporteurs.

Pastor Robert Hare returned with his wife to New Zealand on July 11, 1888. While doing his Biblical studies he had married an American school-teacher, Henrietta Johnson. Their wedding service had been conducted by none other than Haskell in California. After a short vacation with his relatives at Kaeo, Robert and his wife assisted Arthur and Mary Daniells in their mission endeavours. Together they took the marquee to the centre of Napier, commencing public meetings on Sunday evening, October 28, in Clive Square.

Daniells followed the same procedure as in Auckland, i.e., living alongside the marquee, working in conjunction with a team of colporteurs, using the newspapers to his advantage, addressing the Orangemen, and enlisting the aid of a local reverend. As soon as he touched the Saturday Sabbath topic, just three or four weeks into his series, his erstwhile ministerial friend erupted in the Napier press. Nevertheless, crowds packed the marquee and many decided to be baptised. Generous offerings covered all his expenses and large quantities of Adventist literature were sold. On January 13, 1889, the marquee was dismantled and taken by Hare to Gisborne where he began his own series later in the month.

Daniells stayed on in Napier with a blossoming interest. He continued some of the evening meetings, first in Waterworth's Hall and then in the large Theatre Royal near Clive Square. However, in April Daniells' health began to suffer and Hare took him to Kaeo for a rest. Their wives continued the public meetings in Napier and Gisborne. Pastor Mendel Israel also rushed from Tasmania to help fill the gap for a month. During that time the Napier church was organised with twenty-eight charter members. Approximately seventy-five were baptised before the end of the year.

Former Methodist, Mary Charlton, and her married daughter, Mary Tuxford, were among the earliest of the Napier members. So also was Mary Lyndon and her sons Frank, Sydney, and Cecil. Frank immediately embarked for ministerial studies in America. Some other early members were Susan Evans, Cordelia Dent, Esther Kelly, Martha Burge, John and Margaret Glass, Alexander McCutcheon and his wife, Frederick and Wilhelmina Fischer, and Margaret Caro together with her two sons, Edgar and Eric.

For a few months the Napier members met in Waterworth's Hall for their Sabbath services, but this was only while their own church was being constructed. They had purchased a site in Milton Road just a stone's throw from the rear of the Theatre Royal. There they erected a plain-style church with a Sabbath School room at the back, the building overall being a little more than eight-by-fourteen metres. It was dedicated on Christmas Day 1889, the total cost being a little over \$1500.

Haskell continued monitoring progress from his headquarters in California. By early 1889 there were over 150 baptised members in New Zealand and an estimated two hundred keeping the Saturday Sabbath. The mission was also solvent. Haskell recommended they organise the three churches - Kaeo, Auckland, and Napier - into a Conference. This was effected on May 27, 1889, with Daniells being elected as President, Hare as the Vice-President, and Tuxford as Secretary-Treasurer. Early the following year Daniells set up the

Conference headquarters in Buckle Street, Wellington. Head office was later moved to Banks Terrace, and again to Tory Street.

Robert Hare's solo effort in Gisborne also saw the emergence of another church. He opened his series of meetings on Sunday evening, January 27, 1889, continuing in the tent for nine weeks and then transferring to a hall. Among the earliest converts were Anna Hansen, Elizabeth Dolman, Frances or "Fannie" Moore, Abbe Smith, as well as Mary Wade and some of her older children, Arthur, Emma, and Annie. Mary Wade, as an eighteen-year-old, had married in England and immediately emigrated to New Zealand. On arrival it was discovered that her husband was a bigamist. He was promptly extradited back to England. During the voyage to New Zealand a twenty-two-year-old Englishman, John Wade, had made their acquaintance. On hearing of Mary's dilemma in New Zealand he visited her and a romance developed. They were married two years later. John became a Seventh-day Adventist late in life.

Towards the end of 1889 Hare concluded his work in Gisborne in order to pioneer Palmerston North with a similar series. John Glass came to Gisborne from Napier to continue the meetings and it was reported that nineteen had made their decision to keep the Saturday Sabbath. These members borrowed money to purchase the Presbyterian Church in the town. Over twenty years later they still owed \$300 and repayments continued to be a struggle because of a dwindling membership.

Both Daniells and Hare were transferred to Australia in mid-1890 and replaced by Pastors Mendel Israel and Stephen McCullagh. Their evangelistic thrust continued southwards, spilling over into the South Island and continuing to leave the North Island churches in the care of local elders.

Haskell had arranged "Bible Echo" agencies in Christchurch and Dunedin during his first visit but there was apparently little impact made by this means. William Arnold and William Wainman had canvassed "Thoughts on Daniel and Revelation" in Christchurch in

1888 and then returned to Australia. Two New Zealand colporteurs crossed Cook Strait in the summer of 1889/ 90 to sell "Bible Readings" in Blenheim. In late 1890 the same book was taken to Christchurch. That year Morgan Connell sold books in Kaikoura. Then in mid-1891 "Thoughts on Daniel and Revelation" was introduced into Nelson and Dunedin. These endeavours were followed by various public meetings in an attempt to benefit from the colporteur's seed-sowing.

The first evangelistic series in the South Island commenced early in 1891 when Israel, assisted by Glass, preached the Advent message in Blenheim. There was vigorous opposition from the established churches but a handful began to keep the Saturday Sabbath. (Meanwhile, McCullagh attempted tent-meetings in Wellington but the Roaring Forties forced him indoors and he hired a hall instead).

On December 3, 1891, Israel began another series in Nelson. This one extended to the end of February 1892 with only a few converts being made.

McCullagh had left Wellington in late 1891 with the express purpose of holding meetings in Kaikoura. He was following a tip given by some new converts in Palmerston North, Harry and Georgia (Paap) Harris. Kaikoura was Georgia's home where her parents and younger brothers and sisters farmed. Connell had already sold the Paap family some Adventist literature and the whole district was astir because of his activities. The Harrises pressed McCullagh to capitalise on events. In time this proved to be the first major breakthrough in the South Island.

After McCullagh preached in Kaikoura for a few weeks some decided to keep the Saturday Sabbath. On January 2, 1 892, fifteen signed the following covenant:

We the undersigned, believing the law of God to be binding in the gospel age, covenant together, with the help of our Saviour, to keep the commandments

of God and the faith of Jesus, and to meet for worship on the Sabbath of the fourth commandment.

This New Year resolution was sustained and two months later sixteen were baptised, including McCullagh's own little daughter, Cristabel. In the Paap family the maternal head, Caroline, led the way. She was an English Methodist who had met and married a German, Johann Joseph Christian Paap, in New Zealand. The eldest son, John, resisted baptism right up until the time of the ceremony. It was then his heart melted.

He gave a testimony in front of the assembled people and was baptised with six of his brothers and sisters, Fred, Charles, Leonard, Marion, May, and Carrie. Two more sisters, Dorothea and Amy, were too young for baptism on that occasion.

On the Sabbath following the baptism, March 26, the Kaikoura church was organised with sixteen members. That same year they built a little wooden church - the first Seventh-day Adventist church in the South Island. It remained principally the Paap family church and numbers hovered under the twenty mark throughout its history. The two older boys, Fred and John sailed for America soon after their baptism in order to train for church work. Charles first attended the Australasian Bible School and then followed his brothers to America. John qualified as a school teacher. Fred and Charles trained as ministers.

The Paaps were ardent believers in Christian education and hoped for a church school in Kaikoura, but sufficient pupils and a suitable teacher were not available. Carrie, instead, joined her brother, Charles, at the Australasian Bible School throughout 1893 and 1894 and then worked at the Summer Hill Sanitarium. Leonard left home in 1898 to study at the Avondale School. That left four girls at home and only father to care for the farm. The following year (1899) he sold the farm and moved to Cooranbong so that the rest of the family could have the advantage of an Avondale education.

When Mrs White left Australia in 1900 Leonard Paap departed on the same boat and continued his studies in America, graduating as a school-teacher. All four Paap boys married American young women. May Paap trained as a nurse at the Summer Hill Sanitarium. Marion's and Dorothea's studies were cut short by sickness. Sixteen-year-old Amy, the youngest daughter, sadly died of tuberculosis the year they settled at Cooranbong. The transfer of the Paap family away from Kaikoura took half its membership and its existence faded.

The Harris/Paap relationship, which first formed the Adventist bridge between the North and South Islands, was not the only family link to open a new area. Sara Smart and her husband, of the newly-formed Hastings church, had a married daughter, Maria Amyes, living in the Christchurch district. Maria and her husband, Sidney, had bought literature from an Adventist colporteur. Maria's sister, Esther Smart, later visited from Hastings and persuaded the Amyes family to become Seventh-day Adventists. This occurred three years before Pastor Eugene Farnsworth held his 1897 evangelistic series in Christchurch.

Colporteurs ranged all over the South Island and some who bought their books began keeping the Saturday Sabbath. Handfuls of scattered folk in places such as Blenheim, Westport, Dunedin, Nelson, and Christchurch formed in the 1890's and it later prompted ministers to conduct evangelistic campaigns to multiply these Adventist nuclei. One example of this phenomenon occurred at Tokanui in the Invercargill area where, Anglicans Simon and Caroline Pascoe purchased "Thoughts on Daniel and Revelation" from a colporteur. As a result they and seven of their ten children became Seventh-day Adventists in 1898. One son, William, immediately joined the colporteur brigade, attended the Avondale School during 1899 and later became a minister. His brother, James, graduated from the Teachers Course at Avondale but entered the canvassing work and was also ordained a minister.

By the turn of the century Seventh-day Adventism was firmly established on both islands of New Zealand. Its growth, as in Australia, was characterised by the ground-breaking work of colporteurs and their literature. Campaigns by evangelists, both American and Australasians, followed in the wake of the colporteurs. Camp meetings also fostered publicity and either established Adventist groups already formed or promoted the emergence of new companies. In 1915, with a baptized membership of approximately seven hundred, the New Zealand Conference divided into two so that each island could be administered separately. Growth has always been faster in the North Island.

Major sources for this booklet are the Stephen Haskell letter collection, "The Bible Echo and Signs of the Times", Stephen Haskell's chapter in "Historical Sketches of the Foreign Missions of the Seventh-day Adventists" (1886), Arthur Daniel's article in the 1890 "Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook", and the author's personal collection of pioneer data.

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