Booklet

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SEQUEL TO A MUTINY

EARLY ADVENTISM ON PITCAIRN ISLAND

By Milton Hook

Seventh-day Adventist Heritage Series

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A Heritage Series: Debut - Adventism Down Under before 1885
By Milton Hook

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, 1894to 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.

Local maps of Pitcairn Island are always marked with odd names. For example, on the north coast are found places called "Where Dan Fall", "Johnny Fall", and "Where Freddie Fall". Pitcairners have a story attached to all these places. Their folklore tells of past dramas when their ancestors met with disaster, scrambling after wild goats on the precipitous shore line. Other place names such as "Break 'im Hip", "Down Rope", "Stinking Apple", "John Catch a Cow", "Oh Dear", "Headache", and "Bitey-Bitey" carry reminders of the islanders history. "Down the god", in the north-eastern sector, is another intriguing example, so named because it is the area where primitive hieroglyphics and art suggestive of heathen images can be seen in the rock face. These are token evidence that the island was inhabited at some time before the BOUNTY mutineers chose it as their hideaway.

In 1790 the mutineers, Fletcher Christian, Edward Young, John Mills, Matthew Quintal, William McCoy (or Mickoy), Alexander Smith (alias John Adams), John Williams, the American William Brown, and Isaac Martin, burned the BOUNTY off-shore. This effectively isolated them for eighteen years from the rest of the world, especially British retribution. In the meantime their criminal record was multiplied with murder and debauchery. Quintal and McCoy especially spent a great deal of their time drinking home-brewed alcohol they made from the roots of the ti-plant. Each mutineer had brought a Tahitian wife (more correctly, a mistress) with him. In addition they brought as servants four Tahitian men as well as two from Tubuai Island. One of the Tahitian men had his wife with him. Two single Tahitian women were also carried to Pitcairn and were

shared by the other five Tahitian and Tubuan men. One little Tahitian girl, from a previous marriage of McCoy's wife, made up the total of twenty-eight in their original company.

Trouble began when Williams' wife, Pashotu, slipped to her death from a cliff while gathering bird's eggs. Williams then assumed that it was his right to marry Toofaiti ("Nancy"), already wed to the Tahitian, Talaloo. This was accomplished but "Nancy" was then kidnapped by Talaloo and his friend Oho. Another Tahitian, Menalee, pursued them and killed Oho and Talaloo on behalf of the whites. "Nancy" even turned on her husband and helped to slay him. The remaining native men retaliated a year later by murdering on the same day Williams, Christian, Mills, Martin, and Brown. A week later, in a fit of jealousy, Menalee shot fellow-Tahitian Timoa and fled to the hills where Quintal and McCoy were still in hiding. As soon as they found out that Menalee had shot Timoa, then McCoy, as retribution, shot Menalee. Young then realised they would be safe only if the remaining two native men were killed off also. Young's wife, Teraura ("Susan"), axed one of the natives to death and Young himself shot the other.

This murder spree of 1793 left only four white men on the island together with their wives and children, as well as six widows, some of whom had children also. The men then took these more-than-willing widows as their mistresses. Near death with his excessive drinking, McCoy suicided by jumping off a cliff three years later.

Tragedy replayed itself when Quintal's wife, Tevarua ("Sarah"), either suicided or fell accidentally from a cliff in 1799. Quintal then attempted to take a mistress of a fellow mutineer. In retaliation Adams and Young axed Quintal to death while he lay in a drunken stupor. These two men then reflected seriously about their decade on Pitcairn and experienced a remarkable conversion. Their dramatic change of heart steered their history from its sordid past into an era of Christian commitment and service. They fossicked about and found Christian's Bible and Prayer Book. Young taught Adams to read and write because he knew he had but a short time

to live and Adams would have to take over the spiritual leadership. Young lost weight rapidly and suffered severe asthma. He passed away the next year (1800), leaving Adams with nine Tahitian women and twenty-three children from various unions, all now reformed in their habits. When the British rediscovered the settlement they were so impressed with the obvious change of heart they forgave Adams and let him live in peace.

During the 1820's John Buffett, John Evans, and George Nobbs joined the island community and married daughters of the mutineers. The entire population attempted to relocate on Tahiti in 1831. Soon after arrival they retreated in fright when fourteen of their number died of fevers within a three-month span.

A successful migration was made to Norfolk Island in 1856, when the second penal settlement on that island was abandoned. The population of 194, including 107 children, consisted at that time of the Christian, Young, Quintal, McCoy, Adams, Buffett, Evans, and Nobbs families. The other names of the early settlers were not sustained in the family trees.

Many became unhappy with conditions on Norfolk. They yearned for the yams, coconut milk, and warmer climate of Pitcairn. A few adults were apparently upset at the thought of deceased relatives in untended graves on Pitcairn. Nostalgia overtook some of them and eighteen months after their arrival on Norfolk they chose to break their family ties with the group and return to their beloved Pitcairn. Two married couples, all in their thirties, together with eleven children, were taken by schooner back to their homeland. The relatives who remained on Norfolk joined together to pay the fares.

The male leaders who returned to Pitcairn were cousins. The group was made up of Moses and Albina or "Alice" (McCoy) Young and their four children, together with William Mayhew Young and his wife, Margaret (Christian) (McCoy), and their seven children. Among the latter's children were six from Margaret's first marriage to Matthew McCoy, who had accidentally shot himself in 1853 when

firing the salvaged BOUNTY cannon. Thus, both the Young and McCoy families were represented among those who first returned to Pitcairn.

A second homesick group of twenty-six returned in 1863 including another cousin, Simon Young and his wife Mary (Buffett/Christian). Others were Robert Pitcairn Buffett and his wife Lydia (Young), as well as Thursday October Christian II and his wife Mary or "Polly" (Young). Both women were sisters of William Mayhew Young who had been in the first returning group. The day before the second group sailed from Norfolk Island Agnes Christian, daughter of Thursday October and "Polly" Christian, married Samuel Warren, an American on Norfolk. They made their home on Pitcairn too. Younger children in the Christian family who accompanied the group were Alphonso Downs Christian and Earnest Heywood Christian. These people later became Seventh-day Adventists.

By the time John Tay and other Seventh-day Adventist missionaries arrived aboard the PITCAIRN in late 1890[1] members of the Quintal family had also returned to Pitcairn Island. An entirely new surname was found too i.e., the Coffin family. Philip Coffin had been shipwrecked on nearby Henderson Island in 1881 with Lincoln Clark. After reaching Pitcairn Island Coffin married Mary, a daughter of Samuel and Agnes Warren. Clark returned to America but came back a widower much later with his son, Roy, and both father and son married Pitcairners.

News of John Tay's initial evangelism on Pitcairn in 1886 and the Pitcairners abandoning of the Anglican rituals and Book of Common Prayer in 1887 soon became well known. One Anglican clergyman branded it "a religious debauch". Many wrote to the islanders trying to persuade them to reject Adventism. In letters the Pitcairners themselves wrote to Tay it appeared some had the greatest difficulty accepting Adventist teachings about the state of the dead. However, all eventually fully agreed.

[1] For details of this story see the booklet, “dame of the Deep”.

Among the first to be baptised as Seventh-day Adventists in 1890 were some still alive who had led the exodus back from Norfolk Island. These included Moses and Albina Young, then in their sixties. Another was Margaret (Christian) (McCoy) Young and some of her children from her first marriage i.e., forty-five-year-old James Russell McCoy, Sarah (McCoy) Christian, Harriet Melissa (McCoy) Christian, and their younger spinster sister Mary Ann McCoy.

Thursday October Christian II was the oldest one baptised among the initial group. He was over seventy years of age. The youngest baptised was ten year-old Adelia or "Addle" McCoy. The following day, Sabbath, December 6, 1890, the Pitcairn Island church was organised. Simon Young and his son Alfred, were ordained as elders. Another son of Simon Young, Edward, as well as Daniel Christian were ordained as deacons. Edmund McCoy was chosen as church clerk. Rosalind Amelia Young, daughter of Simon Young, served as librarian.

The Pitcairners' long rustic church in which they had previously met for their Anglican services was built of rough-hewn hardwood planks cut from the miro tree. The roof was a simple thatch one. Typically, no timbers were painted or oiled. At the door were tubs of water in which they washed their feet before entering.

On its return voyage from New Zealand in 1892 Pastor Gates and his wife, Ida, disembarked from the PITCAIRN to stay and minister to the infant church. While the boat was off Bounty Bay, Pastor Will Curtis, who was en route to America, went ashore for the two week stopover and was impressed with their Sabbath-keeping, hospitality, and communal spirit.

Curtis wrote in the "Bible Echo and Signs of the Times" of what happened when a fishing party returned with their catch. Some had caught many, others had just a few. But they all brought their haul to the public square and it was carefully divided up into twenty-four equal piles, representing the number of families on the island. Then one person turned his back on the fish while another pointed to each

pile in turn calling out, "Here". Each time the one with his back to the fish responded by calling out the name of a family who then received that portion of the catch. In this manner food was shared without favouritism.

The Pitcairners' Sabbath School, Curtis described, began at 7.30 am with singing and prayer before separating into various study classes. After this meeting they all went to breakfast and returned again for the 10.30 am main service. Later, the 3 o'clock testimony meeting took place.

Hattie Andre arrived from America on the second voyage of the PITCAIRN primarily to establish a better school. It was in that year (1893) that a typhoid epidemic took the lives of twelve people and all families grieved the tragic loss.

Andre and the Gates' drained their energies during the crisis while nursing the sick and comforting the bereaved. Edward Gates sunk so low in health that he and his wife were impelled to return to America when the PITCAIRN called on its second return voyage in February 1894.

The third voyage of the PITCAIRN (1894) brought a retired couple from America, W.G. Buckner and his wife, Rosa, to assist Andre. The first Week of Prayer on Pitcairn was held in the church over the Christmas period, December 22-30, 1894. Pastor Edwin Butz and his wife, Florence, arrived on the fourth voyage of the PITCAIRN (1895). It meant that during their twelve-month stay there were five Adventist missionaries on the island. This was something unequalled either before or since.

Enthusiasm rose to new heights during the Andre/Buckner/ Butz era. Plans were laid to make Pitcairn a focal point for training missionaries. Many Pitcairners themselves showed promise in this regard and there was talk of bringing Tahitians to train at the school too. Three wooden buildings, each over eighteen metres long, were painstakingly constructed for these purposes at "Shady Nook", some

distance from the main settlement. One was to serve as a classroom, the others as separate dormitories for girls and boys. Students lived at "Shady Nook" and were allowed to visit home for one hour each week, between six and seven on Thursday evenings. These strict measures were aimed at curbing alleged carelessness in eating and working habits among the islanders.

When the PITCAIRN arrived from America in 1896 on its fifth voyage the five missionaries on the island boarded for elsewhere, leaving the new missionaries, Jonathan and Sophia Whatley, to care for both the school and church work. All went well for twelve months and then a dreadful crime dramatically altered the mission momentum. An unmarried young woman, Julia Warren, and her infant, were murdered by the child's father, Harry Christian. The victims bodies were never found but Christian later confessed to cutting the woman's throat and throwing both mother and infant over a cliff into the sea. Christian was taken to Fiji, convicted, and hanged in October 1898. Pastors John Fulton and Calvin Parker were obliged to be present as witnesses and declared later that Christian died repentant and confident in Christ.

The crime sent shock waves reverberating around the world. Critics of Adventism made capital by spreading reports that despicable morals were rife on Pitcairn. The Pitcairn community itself were mortified because murder on the island had not been known since their pre-Christian days. Adventism's face blushed because the Pitcairn people, toted as the paragons of virtue and a model Christian society, had proved to be imperfect after all. The whole tragedy coloured their history for years to come.

The heart wrenching events of 1897/98 had their repercussions. They were a factor in church administration's rethink of the whole Pacific mission enterprise and the operation of the PITCAIRN in particular. The crime also helped to remove the focus of attention to other island groups. The training school at "Shady Nook" became the playground of whistling winds. The Whatleys left early in 1898 and were not replaced. A permanent missionary-teacher for Pitcairn

was not appointed until a decade later. Instead, various Pitcairn elders were ordained to lead the church. To their credit Samuel Young, Alfred Young, Vieder Young, Benjamin Young, and Gerard Christian all took their turn at this responsibility.

During the period 1898to 1907the church members were visited by Adventist ministers on three occasions only. Gates spent three weeks on the island during the sixth and last voyage of the PITCAIRN (1899). By 1902 Pitcairn and the Gambier Islands were considered to be children of the Tahitian Mission. Griffith and Marion Jones worked in the area and stayed on Pitcairn for at least the first half of 1903. Pastor Benjamin Cady, the President of the Tahitian Mission, visited in November/December 1903.

The 1899 visit by Gates was marked by a religious revival in the wake of the Warren murders. Membership had slumped from the 1893 high of eighty-five to a low of sixty-six. The 1893 typhoid epidemic had accounted for some but the remainder had been disfellowshipped for various reasons. Gates reported he baptised thirteen, some being rebaptisms.

This revival was followed by yet another in September when James Russell McCoy organised the first camp meeting on the island. He had attended similar camps in Australia and America and adapted these experiences to suit his homeland.

It does seem strange that people so isolated in the world should consider it necessary to seek further seclusion in the form of a camp meeting on the interior plateau of their island. However, camp-meetings on Pitcairn became a regular feature. Twenty-two sleeping tents and two larger meeting tents were pitched and the revival meetings were followed by the church elder baptising twenty-four, seventeen being rebaptisms of folk who had either been disfellowshipped earlier or had felt guilty in some way for the wrongs in their society. Critics may question such rebaptisms but the context of the situation (a deep seated remorse, the unspeakable shame, and even perhaps some adopted guilt) must be considered a

powerful underlying reason. At the conclusion of the meetings McCoy wrote, "Surely the face of the Lord is turned to us again .... " In 1901 Commander George Knowling visited and reported, "The strong religious feeling which was once so marked a characteristic of the islanders appears after the check it received a few years ago - to have again gathered strength".

When Gates had visited in 1899 he encouraged the church members to pay their tithe in the form of garden produce. This, in turn, had to be converted into cash. Therefore, a regular market was sought. "A small sailing craft is needed here", Gates wrote, "with which they can take their produce to the Islands of the Tuamotos .... Their soil is excellent, and with proper cultivation, would produce ten times as much at present. Plenty of hard work is a great preventive of evil practices". Gates obviously realised revivals and new resolutions may wane. He believed a practical remedy to prevent a repetition of the sorry 1897/98 episode was to keep the islanders busy.

Much of the Pitcairner's missionary zeal was without question. Leading members such as James Russell McCoy and his sister, little Mary Ann McCoy, joined the PITCAIRN as soon as they were baptised and sought to witness wherever they could, especially among their relatives on Norfolk Island. During later voyages of the PITCAIRN others sailed to distant islands as missionaries, including Maud, Sarah, and Maria Young. Special attention was given to the nearby Gambier Islands. One young woman in the first baptism, Adela Schmidt, originated from that group and she later married a Pitcairner. A few had come from her island of Mangareva to attend Andre's school at "Shady Nook". But the boarding school closed, reducing the entrance of young people from abroad. Only the occasional one came for tuition. However, when young Lucas Cipreano of Mangareva, fell to his death in 1900 while hunting goats on a Pitcairn cliff-face, the Gambiens were reluctant to send their children any more. Instead, Pitcairners tried living at Mangareva, a Roman Catholic stronghold, and operating an English-language school. However, these efforts did not generate a satellite mission.

From the time that Gates had suggested the Pitcairners seek markets for their tithe-produce ways and means were explored to buy their own boat. James Russell McCoy found a trader friend on Mangareva who offered to help with a portion of the initial expenses but the Pitcairners themselves found it difficult to raise the rest. Eventually, in 1902, the British Consul in Tahiti was given permission from England to loan the Pitcairners $436 to buy a cutter for trading between Pitcairn and Mangareva. They named it PITCAIRN I1.

Jones, then stationed in the Society Islands, took on the task of sailing the PITCAIRN II from Tahiti to Pitcairn and staying with it until the islanders themselves could learn navigation. The maiden voyage was the worst Jones had ever experienced. The crew consisted of six but there was only accommodation for two. From the start they battled head winds, high seas, and torrential rain. Their clothing was continually wet. They shivered and ached, and painful seawater boils broke out on their bodies. Jones was forced to crawl about on his hands because of a boil on his leg. Their fresh water supplies turned bad and they were reduced to a diet of dry biscuits. The trip, which normally took less than a week, extended to over a month. At one stage they came close to Pitcairn but then were driven away near a dangerous reef and tossed about for another week. This was followed by a dead calm and they drifted even further away. Finally, Jones's navigational skills brought the boat to Pitcairn and the taste of oranges again was like manna from heaven.

For twelve months Jones plied between Mangareva and Pitcairn trying to teach some of the men navigation. He had little success imparting his skills. Nevertheless, the boat was handed over to George Warren, one of the leading men on Pitcairn. Another twelve months later the boat was lost while the crew were riding out a storm off-shore. All had fallen asleep and the waves turned the boat over. Samuel Coffin drowned but the others struggled to shore. The British government graciously waived the loan and in late 1906 a large cutter was purchased which the Pitcairners named the JOHN

ADAMS. It made one frightening return trip the following year, proving to be unseaworthy. It was resold at auction.

Under the leadership of James Russell McCoy the Pitcairners ambitiously began building a new church as early as 1901. The local miro hardwood had to be laboriously pit-sawn and carried down from the hills. By 1907 they had completed the two-storied nine-by-twenty-one metre structure resembling, in some respects, the Avondale School chapel and classroom building. Upstairs was used exclusively for their church services and the downstairs section for Sabbath School purposes. Cady came from Tahiti aboard the British man-o-war, TORCH, to dedicate the new church in June 1907. He stayed only four days while the ship anchored off-shore.

Cady brought with him a resident missionary-teacher, the first they had had for a decade. He was Mark Carey, a single man who originated from Tasmania and had graduated from both the Missionary and Teachers Courses at Avondale. He had served for eighteen months in the Cook Islands. Travelling aboard the TORCH, their cabin was so cramped Carey chose to sleep on the deck beside the gun even though salt spray and rain soaked him. Before Cady left he ordained Carey as an elder to assist Benjamin Young in the new church.

The school was reorganised soon after Carey arrived and he began in earnest with seventy-six pupils aged between six and thirteen. His insistence on punctuality, attendance, and adherence to a timetable proved to be too rigorous for the easy going Pitcairner. In the first twelve months numbers dropped to forty-one in the morning sessions and only seven keen ones in the afternoon.

Another boat was purchased for the Tahitian Mission in April 1908 with the idea that it provide communication between Tahiti and Pitcairn and accept cargo and passengers on a commercial basis to pay its expenses. It was a second-hand schooner of almost twenty-five tonnes registered in Tahiti under the name TIARE, meaning "flower". It cost approximately $700. Most of the price was met from

American and British donations, together with $200 from the Australasian Union Conference under whose control the boat remained. James Russell McCoy travelled on it as the ship's missionary, spreading literature among the Tubuan and Tuamotuan Island groups between Tahiti and Pitcairn.

When Pastor Frank Lyndon took over the leadership of the Tahitian Mission from Cady in 1910 he complained that the commercial interests of the TIARE absorbed too much of his time. Originally it was anticipated that the sale of Pitcairn's tithe-produce carried on the TIARE would reap handsome dividends. Curios and arrowroot were definitely shipped out but the profit-and-loss statement for both the Pitcairn and Tahitian Missions, July 1908 to June 1910, show no evidence of increased tithe receipts. They may scarcely have met Carey's wages. Over all, the two missions were more than $3000 in debt. Therefore, the decision was made to sell the TIARE. Once more the Pitcairners were doomed to extreme isolation and much of the tithe-produce rotted on the island.

Other distressing aspects of the Pitcairn Mission became apparent. The membership figures of 1907-1910 showed a downward plunge. Emigration on the TIARE counted for some loss. Another factor was the absence of McCoy's strong leadership as he toured with the boat. Church administration voted to arrange the removal of the Pitcairners to Queensland but this was never carried out.

Carey was officially transferred to teach in the Society Islands in late 1910 but he failed to get a berth from Pitcairn until September 1912. Twelve months beforehand the island was struck with its worst hurricane in living memory. At midnight flimsy houses began collapsing and others had to be roped down. Next morning, as the winds worsened, a major rescue was mounted to save the longboats relentlessly being swept out to sea. Then the school tumbled, and the court house. However, except for some iron sheeting coming undone on the church that building stood. Later, Carey was obliged to conduct classes in the Sabbath School section downstairs until a new school was built.

As soon as it was certain Carey had secured an exit passage then arrangements were made for a replacement. Richard Adams, a West Australian, was just graduating in the 1 912 class at the Sydney Sanitarium. In December he married a 1 911 graduate, Miriam Currow, and together they embarked for Pitcairn. It took them eight months to reach the island via Tahiti. Miriam wrote back to the homeland describing her terror when, six months pregnant, she had to clamber down the rope ladder at the height of a storm and plummet into the longboat waiting to take them ashore.

The arrival of Adams was preceded by a camp meeting and a revival led by church leaders, James Russell McCoy, Fisher Young, and Vieder Young. Once again many requested rebaptism. However, church records indicate that only new candidates, thirteen in all, were baptised by Adams soon after his arrival. Subsequent camp meetings brought further revivals and by 1915 church membership figures had climbed back to about eighty once more.

Adams and Fisher Young led out as elders in the church and taught school together even though neither were trained teachers. Pupils numbered approximately sixty. The Adams era was marked by rising optimism. No more talk was heard of mass emigration to Queensland. Renewed efforts were made to acquire their own boat and begin trading away their tithe-produce again.

Late in 191 5 the decision was made to build a schooner from Pitcairn Island timber supplies. Some nails were forged from scrap metal. More were obtained as passing ships traded with them. Other supplies such as oil, rope, bolts, pitch, and other necessary equipment were also obtained by trading and donations. The completed boat was launched on January 15, 1917. They named it the MESSENGER. It was smaller than the TIARE, measuring barely five-by-fifteen metres. Ten men, including Adams and the skipper, George Warren, set out for Tahiti immediately.

The MESSENGER reached Mangareva in four days. After doing some minor repairs they set sail for Tahiti. Two days out they ran into head winds and tacked for three weeks. Then the winds increased to hurricane force and for two days they were driven back half-way to Pitcairn. When it abated they decided, nevertheless, to press on for Tahiti and eventually arrived safely.

After the British Consul examined the boat he forbad them to sail to Tahiti in it again. He feared for their safety and advised they venture no further than Mangareva in future. Lyndon, in fact, instructed Adams to transfer to Mangareva and only make periodic visits to Pitcairn. The reasoning was that the Pitcairners themselves could provide sufficient spiritual leadership and able teachers. Furthermore, Lyndon's aim was to establish a foothold in the Catholic bastion of Mangareva,

On its return voyage to Pitcairn in April the MESSENGER set out from Papeete with nineteen on board. After taking a buffeting for three days they were driven back to port with the foresail torn to shreds. A wealthy lady in Papeete saw their plight and bought them a new sail and ropes, throwing in a sack of sugar and another of beans. They set out again on May 4, arriving safely at Pitcairn exactly one month later and finding that their distraught loved ones had virtually given them up as lost at sea. These experiences were typical of the continual battle the Pitcairners waged against the sea, the weather, and their isolation.

Adams never transferred to Mangareva because he and his wife returned to Australia in October 1917. It was another seven years before a replacement missionary came to live on Pitcairn. Several trips to Mangerava were made in the MESSENGER. After its maiden voyage to Tahiti borers began eating away at the timbers and much repair work below the water-line had to be completed. It was also damaged in a storm in 1919, repaired, and relaunched early the following year. In March 1920 they sailed it to Mangareva again where they loaded up with cargo and two horses for the return journey. After setting sail they ran into fierce head winds. Food and

water ran low. The horses died and were tossed overboard, and the boat began to leak badly. Nearing Pitcairn a look-out on the cliff-top sighted them battling stormy seas. The longboats were sent out from Pitcairn to help but returned without locating the hapless seafarers. The following day they were located again but no one could control the boat to bring her in. A passing steamer came by two days later and the islanders rowed out and pied with the captain for help. He went back and tried to tow the MESSENGER but it began to break up. The seventeen on board, including three women, two young girls and a little tot, were hastily transferred to the steamer and their little craft sank soon after. "Good riddance", said Fred Christian, "she was a terrible job, with a heavy nose, and she went just as fast sideways as forwards". It marked the end of mission boats for Pitcairn. From that time onwards missionaries and islanders alike depended on passing steamers.

The opening of the Panama Canal in 1914 caused many more ships to ply Pitcairn's waters, especially after war hostilities subsided in 1918. Between the two World Wars was the golden age for the Pitcairner's trading. It was the time when Pitcairn curios, hymn singing in the long boats, and friendly bartering with tourists all became so familiar to the shipping companies and their passengers. The islander's fame as descendants of the BOUNTY mutineers and the reputation built by their community earned them world-wide admiration.

The hazards of trading with tourists were very realistic during rough weather. There was no safe harbour at Pitcairn. Bounty Bay was nothing more than a tiny inlet in a coast of rocks and cliffs. During bad weather the swell and pounding surf was both awesome and lethal. The Pitcairners had built a number of heavy longboats which they launched from a ramp and rode out to the ships through the breakers. The oarsmen had to be fit and possess more than just a streak of ironman in their sinews.

In the winter of 1921, during atrocious weather on one occasion, three longboats attempted to run the gauntlet of the boiling breakers

and reach two ships off-shore. One ship, the Pitcairners knew, carried the High Commissioner of Fiji who had planned to visit among the islanders. Two longboats speared through the surf safely, but the third was carried back among the boulders. With great effort the men secured the boat with ropes while she was being tossed in and out with the breakers. They manoeuvred her part way up the launching ramp but just then a king wave struck the boat broadside and no hands could hold it. The boat rose and crashed repeatedly with every on-rushing breaker. Men slipped, fell, swam, stumbled, grappled, and gasped for breath in the alarming confusion. Three were badly injured. Sidney Christian lingered for three days between life and death but survived. Fisher Young was crushed underneath the boat and as his uncle, Alphonso Christian, went to his rescue he too was swept into the maelstrom. Alphonso died of severe head injuries soon after. Fisher lingered in agony with a broken back and internal injuries for two hours, his lips straining parting words about his beloved church, school, family, and God.

The tragedy dealt a severe blow to the entire community. Fisher Young had been their church elder and school-teacher, accepting the leadership role when Adams left in 1917. Seventy-six-year-old James Russell McCoy was too old to take command again and a vacuum developed in the spiritual guidance of the church members. This predicament became critical in late 1923 when David Nield, who had married Rosalind Young in 1907, visited Pitcairn.

Nield was known as a pastor of the Church of God and not sympathetic to the Adventist cause. He held such beliefs as a Wednesday crucifixion of Christ, the continuing necessity to celebrate the Passover, and the Edenic date-line theory which made Sunday the Sabbath in the southern hemisphere. He challenged the Pitcairners to give up Adventism and accept his teachings as his wife had done. Instead, the islanders refused and despatched an urgent request to Australia for a resident Adventist missionary.

Their plea brought an immediate reaction. Pastor Robert Hare and his wife, Henrietta, were appointed to Pitcairn and arrived in late

March 1924. Their ship arrived soon after Rosalind (Young) Nield had passed away. Her husband, after the funeral on the island, left on the same ship which brought the Hares.

Hare found the church in disarray. He set about its reconstitution and conducted revival meetings in the form of a Week of Prayer. Seventy-five renewed their covenant and were accepted into the reorganised church on the basis of their previous baptism. For the first time since Adams left they celebrated communion. Early in October Hare held another revival during a camp meeting and sixty-five were baptised on two separate occasions, five of the candidates being rebaptisms. From its low ebb the fervour on Pitcairn soared to a high peak during those eight months of 1924. News then came to hand that Nield had died in New Zealand and the Hares left Pitcairn on October 23.

No ministerial assistance was appointed to replace Hare. Once again the church members had to depend on leadership from within their community. Butz and his wife returned for eight months in 1929. Similarly, Pastor William Douglas Smith and his wife, Louisa, visited for the latter half of 1933. Each appointee had the task of injecting fresh spiritual life into the little community.

The Pitcairners' isolation naturally tended to foster loneliness as well as a monotony in both church and everyday life. This was a recipe for discouragement and diminishing faithfulness in some hearts. For this reason the ebb and flow of church loyalty became a characteristic of many Pitcairn members. Nevertheless, a core of enduring believers continued, ministered to by a succession of Australasian missionaries.

The advances of aviation and the subsequent decline in passenger shipping since the Second World War crippled the Pitcairners' trading practices. Many emigrated, becoming absorbed into the wider world. The relatively small group which continued on the island maintained their traditional identity.

This sequel to the BOUNTY mutiny continues to fascinate Christians and non-believers alike. The initiatives taken by the Spirit in the hearts of Pitcairners such as John Adams, Simon Young, Mary Ann McCoy, and many others remains a remarkable saga.

Major sources for this booklet are the "Bible Echo and Signs of the Times", the "Home Missionary", the "Advent Review and Sabbath Herald", the "Australasian Record", the Pitcairn Island Church Membership Record Book, Rosalind Young's 1894 book "Mutiny of the Bounty and Story of Pitcairn Island, 1790 to 1894", Harry Shapiro's 1929 genealogical research entitled "Descendants of the Mutineers of the Bounty", Robert Nicolson's 1965 book 'The Pitcairners", Richard Hough's 1972 book, "Captain Bligh and Mr. Christian", and the author's personal collection of pioneer data.

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