

Booklet

19

TE MARAMARAMA
EARLY ADVENTISM IN FRENCH POLYNESIA

By Milton Hook



Seventh-day Adventist Heritage Series



Produced by the South Pacific Division Department of Education
148 Fox Valley Road, Wahroonga, NSW 2076
SDA Heritage Series: Entry into the Australian Colonies
By Milton Hook

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Early Adventism in French Polynesia

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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

French Polynesia in the eastern Pacific comprises the Marquesas, Tuamotu, Gambier, Tubuai, and Society Islands. The latter group is made up principally of Tahiti, Moorea, Raiatea, Huahine, Tahaa, and Bora Bora Islands. Many of these dots in the ocean are simply atolls in the midst of vast expanses of water and barely rise above the pounding surf. Others are volcanic by nature and tower sharply from the horizon with lofty peaks, tropical forests and numerous swift-flowing streams. Tahiti is both the largest and most populous of the islands. Raiatea was the centre of heathen worship in the Society Islands prior to the advent of the London Missionary Society in the early nineteenth century.

The PITCAIRN made visits to French Polynesia on each of its six voyages.¹ When it first arrived at Papeete, Christmas 1890, Paul Deane invited the missionaries home for breakfast. Deane's father was American and his mother Tahitian. At the time he was pastor of a Protestant congregation numbering 360 - a group under the auspices of the Paris Evangelical Society who had earlier taken over soon after the London Missionary Society transferred out of Tahiti.

The missionaries attended Deane's Sunday meetings and joined in their communion service. Deane himself bought five books from the Adventists. While the PITCAIRN was plying the Pacific during the following twelve months he read himself into the conviction that Saturday was the Bible Sabbath. He and his wife began to observe Saturdays and at the same time continued to conduct Sunday

¹ For more of this part of the history see the booklet "dame of the Deep"

services for his parishioners. But his deacons noticed his change of habits and questioned him. He reasoned with them and about ten people were persuaded and started to worship in his home on Saturdays.

Pressure was applied by Deane's superiors to stop his Saturday meetings but Deane refused. On August 8, 1892, a week before the PITCAIRN returned, Deane was dismissed from his church duties and letters were sent throughout Tahiti warning his former members not to invite him into their homes. Nevertheless, about thirty folk did continue to meet with the Dearies. Edgar Bambridge, as well as William and Antoinette Stuart, who had also read books they purchased from the missionaries, joined with Deane too.

When the PITCAIRN arrived back Albert and Hattie Read decided to stay in Tahiti to direct mission development. Not being French citizens they were not allowed to hold public meetings, so Dearie continued leading in the services. Strict French colonial laws even forbade Deane from holding gatherings with more than twenty-five people present. He received a letter from the Commissioner of Police ordering him to cease his meetings. This forced him to split the group into three and two deacons assisted him by holding some services.

Read and Deane formed deputations to both the Governor and Mayor, pointing out that Adventists received equal rights in France and were allowed to organise large church groups. This resulted in permission to congregate being granted in mid-October 1892.

Plans were made to build their own church on Deane's property at Arue, east of the capital Papeete. Read asked for American assistance and the Foreign Mission Board sent \$500. The group themselves donated \$200. This was more than enough because the total cost was only \$320. It measured fifteen-by-seven metres and was dedicated by Deane on Wednesday, November 29, 1893. The dedication was followed by a customary feast. In the evening Read held another service. The missionaries were concerned

about the lack of decorum during the services held in Deane's home, so they encouraged the people to adopt some rules of behaviour in their new church. Dogs and unruly children had spoiled earlier services. The new rules prohibited dogs from the building, children were not to play during the service, and parents were not to feed their children, except tiny infants, while worship was in progress. Other rules were: Do not talk vain talk one with another. Kneel down for prayer. Stand to sing hymns. When the minister enters the pulpit pray silently concerning his sermon. Do not spit in the church.

At that time Read baptised Paul Dearie, his wife, and ten others. On Sunday, August 8, 1894, a second baptism of fourteen was conducted. The entire congregation of men, women, and children, including non-baptised folk, numbered over sixty and soon rose to eighty or more. Sadly, Mrs Deane passed away in January 1894, soon after her baptism.

The Reads spent much of their time learning Tahitian and organising translation work. A number of the converts volunteered their spare time to translate French tracts into Tahitian, including the titles, "Which Day, and Why?" and "One Hundred Bible Facts". Stephen Haskell's "Bible Readings" was another translation project.

When Will Curtis had passed through Tahiti on the first return voyage of the PITCAIRN he sold Read his cyclostyle apparatus. It was all Read had for printing sheets for literature distribution. He had tried to get tracts produced commercially in Papeete but the printers purposely placed so many obstacles in his way he gave up the idea. Even his cyclostyle was plagued with problems because the wax stencils softened in the tropical heat and before many copies were made the printing would become quite blurred. There was an urgent need for a proper printing press of their own.

A small school was also run in the Read home. Using their kitchen table and chairs, a makeshift blackboard, and a meagre supply of

pens and exercise books from their own supplies, they offered some elementary instruction to a few.

Read received news of interests on the islands of Raiatea and Huahine to the north-west of Tahiti. "We hardly knew which to visit, knowing that we could not attend to them all", he wrote. But when the PITCAIRN arrived on its second voyage a trip was made to these islands and much coastal visiting was done with the ship's lifeboat.

On Raiatea the missionaries discovered a few people were already observing the Saturday Sabbath, including Deane's brother Henry. The islanders' apparent interest prompted Benjamin and Ida Cady to disembark from the PITCAIRN in June 1893 and answer the need to minister in that area. They lived in a crude hut with flea-infested hay on the floor until their own building of native materials was constructed at Uturoa. Then they began with a small home school as Read did in Papeete. It was illegal to operate a school unless French was taught in it, so Paul Deane, who spoke a little French, moved to Raiatea and assisted in the school for four months until the government closed it down. Officials were not convinced Deane could fulfil the qualifications. Furthermore, the islanders on Raiatea were objecting to French rule and hoping the missionaries would solicit armed forces from America. The French, in turn, began to regard the missionaries as subversive.

Read's need of a qualified printer was satisfied with the arrival of Elliot Chapman who came with his wife, Cora, on the PITCAIRN in 1893. Chapman had learned his trade in the Pacific Press, California. The Foreign Mission Board despatched a printing press from America and Chapman produced tracts and booklets for mass distribution. Some of the first items he printed were a program for the opening of the Arue church in November 1893 and a collection of ten hymns translated into Tahitian from the Adventist song-book "Hymns and Tunes". Other productions were a small primer and a tract on the change of the Sabbath called "Truth Found".

The accuracy of these translations was questioned more than once. At one time Chapman bemoaned, "Those who come the nearest to being scholars in the Tahitian, are, as a rule, better versed in catching fish than in catching the mistakes in our proof sheets". Nevertheless, the printed page was distributed widely. The Chapmans toured to the eastern extremity of Tahiti as far as Tautira village, giving out their literature and talking on health topics by using a manikin of the body parts. Chapman and Barnbridge blanketed the island of Moorea with tracts in September 1894.

The shift to a health emphasis was an attempt to calm mounting opposition to the Adventist mission thrust. Colonial law forbade any major medical work so they could only offer simple remedies. The Reads did some dental work and then tried hydrotherapy as their confidence grew. When the PITCAIRN called during its third voyage in August 1894 bitter feelings against Adventists were still rampant. At first, the PITCAIRN was forbidden to call at Raiatea. Instead, the crew sailed to Huahine then rowed to Raiatea in their lifeboats. Paul and Henry Deane were brought in the boat from Raiatea to Huahine and in one week formed a small company of Sabbath-keepers. However, there was no-one who could remain to nurture this group and they lapsed into Sunday-keeping soon after.

Paul Deane returned to Tahiti and in 1895 raised up a group of Sabbath-keepers at Paea on the west coast. His ministry during the next decade or more took him back to Raiatea on occasions. Much of his time was spent distributing literature and holding meetings in the coastal villages of Tahiti, including Faaa, Atiu, Punaauia, Papara, Vairao, and Mataria. Henry Deane went back to Raiatea where he was later arrested by the local policeman for working in his garden on a Sunday. The French magistrate on the island dismissed the case and threatened to sack the policeman if he didn't stop persecuting the Adventists.

The Reads returned to America but were replaced by George and Ada Wellman, as well as Lillian White. All had previous experience

in school-teaching. The Wellmans had also toiled in evangelism and the Review and Herald printing works. With the closure of the mission school on Raiatea these three missionaries were virtually stranded without a job until the PITCAIRN transferred them to the Cook Islands on its next voyage the following year (1895). While they waited they assisted Cady by selling and giving away religious literature. Liliian also helped in the production of a larger Tahitian song-book containing 150 hymns.

After the Wellmans and White were left in Tahiti in 1894 the PITCAIRN had sailed to Rurutu Island with Rodney and Carrie Stringer and their Pitcairner assistant, Sarah Young. There they were secluded from the prejudices of Tahiti and Raiatea. In 1891 forty-year-old Rodney had married twenty-two-year-old Carrie in Battle Creek, Michigan. Soon after they had decided to sell all their possessions and become self-supporting missionaries in the South Seas. They attended some elementary classes in medical treatments at Battle Creek Sanitarium to fit them for work among isolated races. Their limited medicine chest held fomentation cloths, two syringes, forceps, and an assortment of common potions - little more than a basic first-aid kit.

The Chapmans had returned to America in late 1895 because of Cora's poor health. Rowen and Pauline Prickett arrived on the fourth voyage of the PITCAIRN to replace them in the printing and health-lecturing work. The expanding mission influence forced Cady to divide his time between Raiatea and Tahiti.

When the PITCAIRN arrived on its fifth voyage in July 1896 the Pricketts transferred to the Cook Islands. They were replaced by Joseph and Cleora Green. Herbert and Millie Dexter also arrived to help Cady for a short time.

Except for Cady most of the American missionaries remained in the Society Islands for brief periods only. They all helped to strengthen the mission in various ways but the work of Paul Deane especially persuaded islanders to join the Seventh-day Adventist

Church. In mid-1897 Cady reported there were forty-seven baptised members. The four Sabbath Schools operating had a combined membership of ninety-four. A young Tahitian prince, Tita Salmon, attended the Avondale School and was baptised there that year. There were high hopes that he would generate a major break-through among his people but on his return home he lapsed into his old customs. Two converts at Paea were trained school-teachers and there was some anticipation they may join the mission workforce but this did not materialise.

The Cadys persisted with the idea of training school-age children with the hope that these would grow into church members and future missionaries among their own families. Cady took into his home as many as ten children at a time to train them for this purpose. At the same time he searched for possibilities of starting an Industrial School. By mid-1899 he had leased a plantation at Avora on Raiatea and worked to fulfil his dream of such a school.

The property included an orchard of oranges, mangoes, limes, guavas, and breadfruit, in addition to four thousand mature coconut palms. He bought an old trading store, dismantled it, and rebuilt it as his home on the plantation. He also built a small chapel of thatch and bamboo at the beach-side so that the few Sabbath-keepers could worship together.

The Stringers found conditions too trying on Rurutu and transferred north to help Cady, spending more than three years working on Tahiti and Raiatea. In 1899 Stringer built a simple-style church in Papeete, measuring little more than seven-by-fourteen metres. The Greens hurriedly returned to America because Joseph became seriously ill. Tragically, he died early in 1902 with a brain tumour, only thirty-one years of age. Before they left the mission printing work Green had also served as elder among the Paea group and circled the islands of Tahiti and Moorea scattering Tahitian literature and visiting the people. With the departure of the Greens the responsibility of printing Tahitian literature later fell on the Avondale Press at Cooranbong, New South Wales.

The government kept on insisting that Cady's Industrial School on Raiatea be staffed by French teachers. Church leaders in Europe promised to send one but Cady worked on another plan. In 1901, while on a ten-month holiday in America, he himself financed the tuition of four Tahitian students at Healdsburg College so that they might return later as mission workers. These hopes were not realised. He also handpicked a team of eight youthful American missionaries to return with him to the South Seas in September. Some of these could speak French.

Cady appointed newly-weds George and Mary Beckner to take charge of the Industrial School on Raiatea. As students the Beckners had attended Keene Industrial Academy, Texas, and therefore had first-hand experience with this type of school. Beckner managed the school plantation. Mary had done some church-school teaching, but it was Anna Nelson who was given the care of this department. Luke and Mabel Roth operated a bakery and health food store in Papeete, using some of the raw materials grown at the Industrial School. Nurses George and Bertha Close provided their services to the missionaries, students, and nearby community alike. A few Pitcairners later came as labourers on the plantation too.

Beckner concentrated on cash crops of sugar-cane, cassava, and vanilla, as well as selling large quantities of copra. A small sugar mill was installed and a herd of cattle developed also. As the project grew there were up to twenty youths at the school at one time. These were drawn from the surrounding islands of Pitcairn, Rurutu, Rarotonga, and Aitutaki, as well as the Society Islands. In effect, it usurped the position of the short-lived industrial school on Pitcairn Island as the youth training centre for the eastern Polynesian mission field. Each day students spent five hours in classes and worked four hours each day on the plantation to pay their board and tuition. Cash was paid for any extra hours they worked.

In 1902 Griffith and Marion Jones worked briefly in the area aboard the PITCAIRN II, plying between Tahiti and Pitcairn via the Gambier Islands.² Before he left in 1903 he reported he had baptised a Roman Catholic merchant on Mangareva in the Gambier group. The boat provided the Pitcairners with access to Tahiti and some came to live and work in Papeete. This led to the formation of a small Pitcairner company of worshippers in the capital who built a little weather-board church for themselves.

The earlier work of Deane and Green at Paea led to the dedication of a tiny church building there, measuring little more than five by nine metres, in May 1903. On the same occasion Jones was ordained as a minister.

Cady's team of young missionaries continued to operate the Industrial School on Raiatea in addition to the bakery and store on Tahiti. This enabled him to visit nearby islands and generate some gospel work. He first tried Huahine Island where some temporary success had been achieved earlier. He rented a house on the island and revived some interest. The following year (1906). Beckners transferred from the Industrial School to nurture the growth on Huahine.

They were joined later by a married national couple from the same school. Mary Beckner conducted an elementary class on Huahine and reported one Chinese baker, Ah Tan, showed promise. Cady wrote of him,

He says he enjoys reading the Bible very much, that it is very nice to read about Jesus, that he will never worship idols again, and that his brother has stopped worshipping idols too. He says he prays everyday to Jesus now.

² For more of this part of the history see the booklet "Sequel to a Mutiny".

Cady's initial work on Huahine in 1905 was followed at the same time by a protracted stay on Tahaa Island. "Most of our work," he said, "is in the form of Bible studies, held wherever and whenever we can reach the people". One family began keeping the Sabbath but had not given up tobacco before Cady moved on.

Cady spoke of planning to take the Advent message to Bora Bora Island, and south to the Tubuai Islands, and then onto the eastern chain of atolls called the Tuamotos, and eventually north to the Marquesas Islands. This restless urge was prompted by the conviction that at least a few from each island would respond to his message. The missionary always faced the dilemma of deciding whether to remain at one station and establish a large community of believers or itinerate over a large area and gain a smattering of souls.

The book "Christ Our Saviour" was translated into Tahitian and the first issue of five hundred copies, printed at the Avondale Press, was shipped to Papeete. While they awaited clearance in the customs house a hurricane on February 6, 1906, lashed the capital for several hours and blew the books away. Another printing was dispatched later. The temporary set-back was remedied somewhat by the issuing of a missionary magazine in Tahitian called Te Maramarama, meaning "The Light" or "Lightbearer". In December 1906 the first issue of these papers was prepared for publication at the Avondale Press. The project began with one thousand eight-page copies issued monthly.

Paul Deane succeeded in gaining eighty subscriptions to "Te Maramarama" within the first month of 1907. Not everyone had cash to pay so shells, food, and fan-making materials were accepted. Church ladies made hundreds of fans and these were sold, together with the shells, in Cady's Papeete store. Proceeds were used to support the magazine. In mid-1908 Cady reported they had four hundred subscriptions. Each subscriber received an annual visit from one of the mission staff to stimulate some interest in religious topics and also acquire a subscription renewal.

Despite the fact that first the Beckners and then Anna Nelson had returned to America for health reasons in 1907/08, Cady's self-supporting enterprises flourished. Other missionaries quickly replaced the ailing members. Among them were newlyweds George and Maybelle Sterling, who were both trained school-teachers from America. They arrived about August 1908 and the following year pioneered Bora Bora Island with the help of George Dearie, Henry's son. Halbert or "Henry" Fowler and his wife came to serve on Huahine and erected a small church for the company. They lived in the back portion of this meeting house until they transferred-to build a church on Raiatea the next year.

The purchase of the mission boat TIARE in April 1908 was a boon for communication between the islands of eastern Polynesia, but its use was short lived.³ It was at this time that Pitcairners James Russell McCoy and his daughter, Winnie, sold books and subscriptions in Papeete and on Moorea Island. The Johnson family, who were New Zealand Adventists employed by a phosphate company on Makatea Island to the north among the Tuamotu group, also canvassed literature in their community. They had previously served temporarily at Cady's Industrial School about 1907.

Late in 1908, Henry and Louisa Thomas arrived in Papeete under appointment to Pitcairn Island. But rather than sail on the next trip of the TIARE they stayed there to assist while Cady was on holidays. The immediate success which Louisa experienced, especially in the literature work, prompted the mission to vote they remain in Tahiti. That first year Louisa gained over one hundred subscriptions for the French language "Signs of the Times". Paul Deane loaned them a cart and they hired a horse to pull their load of books and tracts around Tahiti. In this way they also sold French editions of "Great Controversy", Tahitian copies of "Christ Our Saviour", the magazine "Te Maramarama", Chinese language "Signs of the Times" and Chinese calendars. A good supply of tracts was also on board.

³ For more details see the booklet "Sequel to a Mutiny".

It was the employment of the Johnsons and Thomases which heralded the phasing out of American missionaries in French Polynesia and the onset of an Australasian chain of workers. In late 1909 the Cadys were asked to transfer to Fiji. and the church purchased his house on Raiatea. Soon after, the Industrial School and plantation ceased operation as a self-supporting enterprise and the remaining Americans, except the Sterlings, returned home. By February 1910 the Cadys had left, just after the January 22 dedication of the church on Raiatea. The Sterlings transferred to the Cook Islands at the same time, and a New Zealander, Frank Lyndon, transferred from the Cook Islands with his American wife, Almeda, to superintend the mission in French Polynesia.

The departure of Cady marked the end of an era - two decades of a predominantly American thrust. Up to that time no other Pacific Island group had received so many Adventist missionaries. Approximately thirty men and women had come and gone, Cady being the most enduring of them all.

At one time Cady shared his health secrets regarding living in the tropics. Eat less food, he said, and use what is grown locally. Have a cold bath at least once a day, engage in moderate exercise, and vary the tasks throughout the day, he advised. He recommended loose fitting and light clothing and homes built in a high and dry location where the sun and wind had free access. He always slept with his bedroom door and windows open in order to get plenty of fresh air. If he ever felt a cold or fever coming on he would simply eat less and drink lots of boiled water. His wife insisted on doing their own cooking, and they always washed their hands with the regular yellow laundry soap before meals. These were simple but vital rules for the early missionaries who did not have the antibiotics and anti-malarials of recent times.

The years 1890 to 1910 proved to be seed sowing times. The translation work and the publishing of "Te Maramarama" were praiseworthy ventures. Most of the missionaries worked in some aspect of this avenue of witness. Health lectures and home schools

made no obvious inroads into the islanders' customs although there were, no doubt, some contributing benefits. The reasons for this poor productivity was that most of the youngsters succumbed during their late teenage years to the lure of their indulgent society. The Industrial School kept the mission solvent but in ten years only one married couple was reported as progressing onto active soul winning for the mission.

Industrial schools were successful in America and Australia. They prospered and produced mission workers because the students, although not necessarily baptised, were often committed Adventists before they attended. They had some motivation and a sense, sometimes vague, of the direction in which they wanted to serve. On the other hand, students at Cady's Industrial School had little or no Adventist background, were generally uncommitted, and certainly not wanting someone to train them in the direction of mission service. This basic difference contributed to its failure to produce Polynesian missionaries. Furthermore, so many American missionaries were caught up in physical labour to make the enterprise financially viable that the teaching of the gospel gravitated to second place. For the years 1900 and 1901, just as the Industrial School was gathering momentum, the baptised memberships were reported to be eighty and 107 respectively. But during the next ten years, when the Industrial School functioned, the membership total sunk steadily to forty-five. Worse was to follow.

Lyndon held a council meeting at Raiatea about October 1911 to review the mission activities and make future plans. The Vice-president of the Australasian Union Conference, Pastor Edward Gates, attended the meetings too. One prominent item of discussion was the disregard of church standards on tobacco, pork, and coffee by some of the remaining members. Paul Deane and the Arue members especially took offence. Sadly, they disassociated themselves from the Adventist Church and returned to Sunday-keeping. After twenty-one years of mission work the

remaining membership was at an all-time low of twenty-one. Lyndon's task was virtually a gradual rebuilding project.

At the time (1911) nine missionaries were stationed in • French Polynesia. Apart from Lyndon and his wife the Thomases were still there doing their literature work right around Tahiti, and Isabella Simpson was assisting in the Lyndon home. Pitcairners Winnie McCoy and Daisy Young were also canvassing in Papeete. Fred and Etta Sharp had arrived to care for the strongest church at Raiatea. A church for the Pitcairn islanders was still operating in Papeete. The European church there continued to decrease in membership. There were only seven members at the Paea church. The Arue church building, left standing on Deane's property, was removed a little distance to another property donated by a church member the following year. Three families continued to meet on Huahine Island. Some scattered interest was still present on Tahaa and Bora Bora but Sharp and Lyndon found when they visited that no-one was prepared to make a stand against family pressure. The Thomases returned to Australia in mid-1912. Twelve months later the Sharps transferred from Raiatea to the Avondale School. They were replaced by newly-weds William and Mabel Howse, graduates of the Missionary Course. Lyndon's only help during the changeover was that given by Richard and Miriam Adams as they waited for a few months in Papeete for a boat to take them to Pitcairn.

Lyndon sold the headquarters mission house in downtown Papeete because of unsavoury city influences. He rented various homes for the next eight years in better neighbourhoods. The monthly Tahitian magazine was given a revised name- "Tiarama" - but still retained its meaning, i.e., "The Light". A new Tahitian book arrived from the Avondale Press too. Iva Cady had translated Uriah Smith's "Thoughts on Daniel" and the first edition arrived in Tahiti in 1913, An eighteen-year-old convert from Arue, named Urarii, canvassed this book and the "Tiarama" throughout Tahiti. He then accompanied Lyndon and Howse to Huahine, distributing literature around the island. When they arrived at the Huahine church they

found some locals were living in it and had their pigs tethered alongside. The squatters were cleared out and Lyndon revived services for the small group of adherents. But no resident missionary could be appointed to stay. The three men returned home.

Early in 1914 Howse was called away from Raiatea again. He united with Lyndon for public meetings south of the Paea church at Papara. This initiative aroused strong opposition from the Roman Catholic mission in the area as the men applied the papacy to Revelation 13. Despite the seed-sowing which had occurred with magazine subscriptions over the years, locals continued to mock anyone who showed the slightest interest, dubbing them "Petania" - a derisive term meaning "a disciple of the Pitcairn missionaries". Once again, Lyndon and Howse returned to their homes apparently having accomplished little.

Lyndon attended the 1914 session of the Australasian Union Conference and made a plea for more missionaries. "The present working force", he reported, "is inadequate to attend to all branches of the work, and to push the message into new fields". Church leaders responded by appointing two couples. Henry and Mary Hill located on Moorea to capitalise on the literature distribution which had occurred over the years. Stowell Cozens, a fresh graduate from the Missionary Course at Avondale, married school-teacher Myra Ford and together tried to strengthen the failing company on Huahine.

Moorea was a French Protestant bastion. The Hills settled into a cottage on the east coast at Afareaitu and began holding Bible studies both there and further north at Vaiere. A mission tent was sent from Australia and by mid-1915 Lyndon arrived to lead out in a public crusade. However, they were disappointed when refused permission to pitch the tent. Hill had to revert to cottage meetings instead. These developed amid great interest but then an edict was issued from the established church threatening to disfellowship any who invited Hill into their home. Once again, peer pressure proved

too great for the Tahitians and all closed their doors on Hill except a handful at Vaiere.

The added strength which extra missionaries gave to the field in 1915 was weakened in 1916 when three missions -Pitcairn Island, the Society Islands, and the Cook Islands - were combined to form the Eastern Polynesian Mission. Lyndon's task as superintendent of the entire area was therefore made more difficult. His efforts to build up the mission in the Society Islands were fragmented by the necessity to visit and administer an area greater than the impossible requirement prior to 1916. This situation lasted until 1923.

The problem communicating with such a vast area was highlighted almost immediately. Lyndon organised a general meeting at Tahiti, calling delegates from all over the field. However, no-one came from the Cook Islands because no ships plied between the two island groups during the hurricane season from December to March. In addition, the printing press remained in the Cook Islands, far removed from Lyndon's headquarters in Papeete. Communication with Pitcairn continued to be just as difficult during the ensuing years despite the Pitcairners launching of a lumbering tub called THE MESSENGER.⁴

The 1916 reorganisation triggered a shuffling of appointments within French Polynesia itself. The Hills transferred to Raiatea and with the help of a new recruit, Philip Poroi, cared for Huahine, Bora Bora, and Tahaa Islands. Poroi was a French-Tahitian carpenter who was baptised as a young man but had apostatised. He had recently returned and was rebaptised with his wife and sister-in-law. The Howses and Cozens transferred to Moorea where they built a little mission house and church combined.

Soon after their arrival Lyndon baptised the first on that island - a Tahitian man called Monu. A little later another young man, Omea, and his wife Teumere, were baptised too. Howse extended his

⁴ For more details of this saga see the booklet, "Sequel to the Mutiny".

activities further north to the village of Teavaro. Cozens stayed only one year on Moorea, transferring to Raiatea. The Howses remained two years, then went to operate the printing press in the Cook Islands. An eighteen-year-old Tahitian girl, Olive, who had spent two years in the Lyndon home, accompanied them to set type and proof-read any Tahitian publications.

Roy Gooding, with his wife, Rhoda, arrived in Papeete in 1918 where he served as Secretary/Treasurer of the Eastern Polynesian Mission. This relieved Lyndon of book-keeping and Hill of the secretarial work. He also provided a more constant presence at the mission headquarters. Gooding remained in Papeete when Lyndon had to tour throughout the other islands.

During the 1918 session of the Australasian Union Conference Lyndon said,

How is it that such a small increase is seen in the membership of Eastern Polynesia from year to year? The answer is found in the many apostasies that occur continually in the work of the South Sea Islands. We meet with many disappointments in this line. Suddenly and unlooked for, the men and women plunge into all kinds of revelry and dissipation. It pains our hearts, but our only hope is to look upward and press forward.

Lyndon began to report cases of young Tahitian men who were showing an interest in becoming missionaries to their own people. A few were sent to the school at Rarotonga to make preparation. He also reported that the company on Huahine had, after twelve years of meetings, finally determined to give up tobacco, alcohol, and pork. He further stated that a Swiss merchant in the Marquesas Islands, Alfred Tissot, had read himself into the Adventist message and was distributing literature in his locality.

Lyndon requested a European missionary for the Marquesas Islands.

When the Howses transferred to the Cook Islands from Moorea then the Hills left Raiatea and replaced them during 1918 and 1919. Rather than consolidate the core of believers already baptised on the east coast of Moorea, they leased a cottage on the opposite side of the island to pioneer two other villages. This venture was not very fruitful.

Tragedy struck the Society Islands in December 1918. Despite quarantine precautions the influenza epidemic sweeping the world infiltrated Papeete from a cargo boat and it rapidly spread throughout the population. None of the Adventist missionaries lost their lives, but Mary Hill and her three children on Moorea contracted the disease. Thousands of Tahitians perished.

Tuu Deane, the church elder at Papeete and nephew of Paul Deane, lost his wife, Teharetua, and an infant. Philip Poroi lost his wife and some of his children became very ill. Other Sabbath-keepers died in the plague, including some who were awaiting baptism. Gooding wrote, "It makes one feel sad to attend church now at Papeete, so many bright faces are missing - almost one half."

Two notable initiatives were taken in 1919. One was the first mission thrust into the Tuamotu Islands and the other was the sending of the first resident missionary to the Marquesas Islands. A cousin of Poroi, Tetaraa Mauri, read the Tahitian book "Imiraa Bibilia" ("Bible Readings") and he and his wife became Seventh-day Adventists. After a little training he sailed to the remote island of Niau, north-east of Tahiti. He also visited Takume Island during the season when pearl divers congregated there. Cozens left his family behind and accompanied Tetaraa. They preached and distributed literature for about six months before returning thin and worn out. Their efforts, however, did not achieve any dramatic breakthrough.

The Sterlings returned to pioneer the Marquesas Islands in mid-1919. Locals could remember an Australian named Mrs Taunton who came to live with her sister in Tai-O-Hae on Nukuhiva Island. She had kept the Saturday Sabbath until she died in 1893. When Sterlings arrived, Tissot, the trader and an unbaptised Adventist, was living on Uapou Island thirty-two kilometres to the south. Strangely, the Sterlings original plan was to pioneer the more distant Hivaoa Island rather than Uapou, but the schooner travelled only as far as Nukuhiva so there they were left to make a start.

Tai-O-Hae was the former seat of French government on the Marquesas Islands. A smallpox epidemic had wiped out four-fifths of the population. Leprosy, tuberculosis, and elephantiasis had made further inroads. The Sterlings rented one of the many homes left vacant by French officials who had long since gone. This became their base for the next three years. Limited space on the schooner had allowed them to carry only hand luggage. Their largest items were a folding organ and a little primus stove. For the first month their bed was the floor until they were able to borrow a mattress. Provisions were scarce. "We are living on breadfruit, pumpkins, mangoes, bananas, a few tins of Nestle's condensed milk, and a few pounds of ships' biscuits", he wrote soon after arrival.

The precipitous nature of Nukuhiva forced Sterling to travel by foot and on horseback or visit the bays by boat. He would load his Bible, books, and tracts into one canvas bag, and a rug, towel, and biscuits into another, strap them over his shoulders and travel all over the island. He had only two different tracts in the Marquesan dialect to distribute, one of them being a simple explanation of the Saturday Sabbath. One trip on horse back took him through a valley with mud up to the horse's knees. Swarms of pestiferous little sand-flies by day and mosquitos by night were also common hazards on Nukuhiva.

Sterling's work soon aroused the ire of the priests and they mounted a campaign by word and pen against him but he found a

sympathetic ear with one, Matahae, who had become a Protestant and led a small following.

In January 1920 the Sterlings visited Tissot on Uapou and spent a little time establishing him in Adventist teachings. Several meetings were also held for the local people. They found difficulty in getting a return boat to Nukuhiva so a rowing boat was hired. Leaving Hakahetau Bay in the morning with a crew of six rowers they covered the thirty-two kilometres of open sea without mishap, arriving somewhat seasick and sunburned in late afternoon. Tissot was baptised on a subsequent visit in January 1921. His wife, Kekela, waited another seven years.

Tihoni, or "Johnny", and his wife left Tahiti to assist the Sterlings in 1920. He, too, walked all over the mountains of Nukuhiva distributing literature, the sand-flies causing havoc on his legs, wrists, and neck. A small group of about ten adults began meeting with the missionaries at Tai-O-Hae and early in 1921 Sterling reported half of these were keeping the Sabbath.

By the end of 1921 declining health forced the Sterlings to recuperate in America for two years. During that time Tihoni remained in the Marquesas without any further results. The small band of Sabbath-keepers, as Lyndon expressed it, did not fully renounce "the unclean things" and therefore were not baptised. Tihoni returned to headquarters in Tahiti. Four years later (1927), Sterling made a two-month visit to Nukuhiva and baptised a couple.

The Hill family had transferred to the Cook Islands in 1920. The Gooding family had left Tahiti for health reasons about the same time as the Sterlings sailed for America, leaving the Lyndon and Cozens families to continue on. They had been joined in mid-1920 by Albert and Greta Liston, newly-weds who had both graduated from the Missionary and Bible Workers Course at Avondale the previous year. They spent a few months on Raiatea and then moved to Huahine. Greta, especially, was pleased with the change.

It meant she had an oil stove in their one-roomed hut on Huahine. She no longer had to cook in a kerosene tin over a smoky fire in the backyard at Raiatea. This so-called luxury was brief because in November 1928 they moved to Rurutu Island to try to reactivate interest. The boat landed them on the beach with their two-month-old baby but no-one greeted them. The resident minister, a national, had set the people against the new arrivals.

The Cozens family went to assist Liston soon after but made no headway in the face of the local boycott. No-one would supply food to them or talk to them, except to ask, "When are you leaving?" The Listons did return to Papeete but Cozens remained and tried to endure the prejudice. On one occasion he attempted to get a hearing during a general assembly on the island but the minister told the people to start singing. Cozens' voice was drowned in the din. The degree of opposition and the continuing shortage of food forced their departure in 1923. The islanders did not want missionaries who advocated a diet without pork.

In the wake of the Rurutu snub Lyndon deployed his men to work in centres of early activity where membership was fading -Arue and Paea on Tahiti, and Raiatea Island. Visits were made to Huahine, Bora Bora, and Maupiti Islands. Tihoni also toured through the Tuamotu Islands, preaching and distributing literature.

Lyndon took the opportunity in 1921 to lease four hectares on the edge of Papeete for two dollars per month. On this property he established his headquarters with a cottage for himself, another for the mission secretary, and a third to house the printing press. All printing for the Eastern Polynesian Mission was then transferred from Rarotonga to Papeete. This centralisation was much more judicious for Lyndon's administration.

From 1924 onwards, after the Cook Islands reverted to a separate administration, reports of baptisms in the Society Islands became more frequent. It would appear Lyndon was able to concentrate his efforts after the separation and achieve better results.

Nevertheless, indifference and prejudice among the islanders persisted. It was not an easy field to work.

In retrospect it may have been better if Cady had obtained French missionaries at the turn of the century, operated a strong school programme with them, and trained a core of national missionaries to scatter over the vast area. Instead, a disproportionate number of English-speaking missionaries came and went with great rapidity. Only the Cadys, Lyndons, and Sterlings endured for lengthy periods. The Lyndons continued on until 1930 and the Sterlings for a further seven years. Some of the time, when either of these men took furlough between 1924 and 1937, they laboured alone, except for the assistance of one or two national workers.

As Lyndon pondered the second coming of Christ he wrote in 1923, "Every little island should be visited with the news of His soon return to the earth." The enormity of this task, too few missionaries to accomplish it, and persistent opposition from other mission groups, all combined to precipitate a scenario of missionaries flitting from one island to another. Cozens was a prime example. In the nine-year period (1915-1923) he worked in seven widely separated localities within the Eastern Polynesian Mission. Apparently, if there was no breakthrough or no baptisms forthcoming then the missionary moved on, believing that somewhere else others would respond more quickly. But the Tahitian was not prepared to make such a dramatic change in so short a time, especially in the face of significant pressure from relatives encouraging them to remain adherents of their already established churches.

During the American/Australasian period (1890 to 1950) the baptised membership in French Polynesia rose to two hundred. Then there followed a twenty-five-year period characterised by French missionaries working in the area. The immediate meteoric rise in membership is illustrated by the fact that in the first five years of this period the membership reached four hundred and it rose by an average of more than 250 every five years until 1975.

An even faster growth rate has occurred more recently with a prevailing French Polynesian workforce.

Major sources for this booklet are the "Bible Echo and Signs of the Times", the "Home Missionary", the "Australasian Record", the "Missionary Leader", and the author's personal collection of pioneer data.

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