Booklet

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LOTU BILONG SEVENDAY

EARLY ADVENTISM IN PAPUA NEW GUINEA

By Milton Hook

Seventh-day Adventist Heritage Series

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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, 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.

Among the Melanesian countries Papua New Guinea commands a unique fascination. The inhabitants can be sub-divided into many diverse groups, each with their distinctive appearances and customs, e.g., the Papuans of old were easily recognized by their tattooed bodies. Most tribes, both in New Guinea and Papua, practise their own special dances, wear characteristic head-dress and other colourful paraphernalia, speak a different dialect to their neighbours in the next valley, and build their huts in distinctive styles.

The geographical nature of the country, with its high-altitude mountains, grassy plateaus, numerous valleys and rivers, coastal islands, and swamps and mangrove edges all produce a wide diversity of flora and fauna. Climates range from tropical to temperate according to the altitude. The inhospitable landscape has served to fragment society. Up until the twentieth century the people remained locked into their tribal enclaves as subsistence farmers or fishermen. Their only available tools were primitive. Tribal warfare, cannibalism, and spirit worship were common features of their lifestyle. Malaria, skin diseases, dysentery, and leprosy were rampant.

The north coast of New Guinea was discovered by a Portuguese navigator, Antonio'd Abreu, early in the sixteenth century. A fellow explorer, Jorge de Meneses, later discovered the west coast and is reported to have called the island "Os Papuas", meaning "frizzy-head" in the Moluccan language.

From 1884 until the First World War Germany controlled the north-eastern section. After the War the League of Nations asked Australia to administer that portion, which included the off-shore islands. The south-east section was annexed by Britain in 1888 and administered by Queensland until 1906. The Commonwealth of Australia then assumed control and renamed it Papua. This situation existed until the Japanese invasion in January 1942. With the defeat of Japan both New Guinea and Papua were again controlled by Australia. Papua New Guinea became an independent nation in 1975.

Prior to the entrance of German and British governments there were three separate mission groups which had established themselves in various coastal pockets. The Roman Catholics attempted to base a mission on Woodlark Island in 1847 but abandoned it eight years later. They began at Rabaul in 1882 and at Yule Island on the Papuan coast in 1885. The London Missionary Society came to south Papua in 1871. The Methodists began at Rabaul in 1875. In the wake of government control German Lutheran missionaries came to the north New Guinea coast in 1891, after the famous Comity Agreement (1890) was forged. In this pact the London Missionary Society, Anglicans, and Methodists agreed not to encroach on each other's territory. Decades later the mountainous hinterland was explored and entered by government and missionary alike.
Ellen White he described, in these words, how be aborted the plan,

> *I have been pained and distressed not a little at the flippant way in which I have seen the lives, and health, and interests of individuals dealt with by some of our Boards. It was this feeling that led me to lay hold of Brother and Sister A. J. Read at the last Conference. They have been designated to go to New Guinea to work among the cannibals, and in a field where no missionary thus far has been able to get a foothold. I was distressed enough when I heard of it. I did not learn of it until I found they were just on*

the eve of starting. I then laid hold of the matter in good earnest, and after several days hard work succeeded in getting the matter reconsidered.

Kellogg's worst fears were confirmed when, in 1901, James Chalmers, Oliver Tomkins, as well as a Rarotongan teacher and ten ship's crew were all murdered and eaten by cannibals. They had landed their little craft at Dopima near the mouth of the Kikori River while extending the work of the London Missionary Society. Others had suffered martyrdom earlier.

From 1902 to 1905 a few Adventist church executives such as Edward Gates, Griffith Jones, and George Irwin sailed into New Guinean and Papuan parts en route to other parts of the world. They made fleeting visits to safe native villages on the outskirts of various ports, commenting on the squalor, betel-nut chewing, tobacco-smoking, and disease so evident everywhere. Visits such as these heightened their desire to place Adventist missionaries among the villagers.

In 1906 church officials in Australia earmarked the Sabbath School offerings for the third quarter of the year to begin a Papuan Mission fund. John Fulton, under transfer from Fiji, recommended that Fijian missionary trainees be appointed to pioneer Papua because, he said, not only were they dependable but they would adapt more easily to the steamy climate, local food, and leafy houses.

Fulton, serving as Vice-president of the Australasian Union Conference in 1907, no doubt furthered his advice when the choosing of missionaries took place. At the annual Conference Session three of Fulton's former associates in Fiji were appointed to transfer to Papua. These folk, Septimus and Edith Carr, with Benisimani (Benjamin or"Beni") Tavondi as their Fijian assistant, eventually arrived at Port Moresby on June 25, 1908, after sailing via Sydney, Brisbane, Solomon Island ports, Woodlark Island, and Samarai. Adventist youth missionary societies donated offerings to pay Beni's meagre wages.

The three missionaries first rented a little two-roomed cottage on the outskirts of Port Moresby and began making friends in the small community. At that time there were seventy-five other European missionaries scattered along the Papuan coast, representing approximately on e-tenth of the total European population.

Carr made friendly contact with government officials, European and national missionaries, and planters. One planter showed him the coastal area west of Port Moresby at Hisiu. Another, a Mr Green, took the Carrs on tours inland to Warirata, Sogeri, and Sigorotana.

From October 1908 until the following January the Carrs and Beni were hosted by the Greens at Sogeri. Carr favoured the inland region because of its cooler climate and the fact that no other mission group was working in the area. The soil, too, was productive and it therefore suited Carr's plan to establish an industrial school to train national missionaries.

The time spent at Green's plantation was an orientation period. They became familiar with the local area, visited native feasts and gave out salt to befriend the people. They also treated some medical cases.

Carr learned from local plantation owners that the best way to gain co-operation from the Papuans was to place confidence in them, treat them kindly, and conduct an occasional feast for their benefit. He noted that most of the plantation labourers signed on for one year before returning to their mountain homes further inland. If he could start a similar plantation and offer a little schooling, he thought, then he may win some converts who would, in turn, missionize the mountain villages. The immediate vicinity, Carr also observed, was sparsely populated with a semi-nomadic people who built primitive shelters in tall trees. This habit was designed to protect themselves against murderous raiding parties from the mountain tribes. The menfolk, he said, were virtually naked, but the women wore a grass skirt called a rami. Like some other

Melanesians they also buried alive their old and feeble members in addition to infants left when their mothers died in childbirth. Carr noted that the local chief was proudly wearing a trendy ear-ring set, one being a large safety-pin and the other a brass clock wheel.

The only way Carr could procure a property was to request that the government buy land from the local people and, in turn, lease it to him. In 1909 Cart lodged a request for sixty hectares north-west of Sogeri. This was located on the plateau forty-two kilometres east of Port Moresby. The villagers at Eikiri were happy to sell the portion of land and have the Adventist Mission work in their area. The exact site was called Bisiatabu, meaning "holy" or "sacred" because the locals thought the devil lived there. During the months in which Carr waited for the government to act Green allowed him to temporarily plant tapioca, taro, sweet potatoes, bananas, and citrus fruits on the Sogeri property in anticipation of moving to Bisiatabu. The young citrus trees were shipped in from the Avondale School orchard, together with two hives of Avondale bees. A labourer was hired to care for these gardens.

Carr and Beni also sailed along the Papuan coast as far as the Fly River trying to sell Adventist literature to London Missionary Society teachers. They met with little success. A trip along the coast east of Port Moresby brought them to Mr Mola, a young plantation manager at Dedele who eagerly bought a copy of everything Carr offered. Correspondence was kept up between the two men and Carr reported Mola had decided to keep the Saturday Sabbath. However, little more was heard of Mola, except that a daughter, Sacheverel, graduated from the Avondale Business Course in 1917.
By mid-1909 the leasehold on the Bisiatabu property was finalized in Carr's name. This was despite London Missionary Society objections that Seventh-day Adventist beliefs were "disruptive". The fruit and vegetables growing at Sogeri were then transferred to the new site. Beni lived there alone as caretaker. A local villager with his two wives would come and stay nearby to make sure no harm came to him at night. More missionaries were appointed to help. Nurse Gordon Smith, who had worked with Carr in Fiji, had recently

married Maud Cammell. They came to Papua in November 1909, together with Tuaine Solomona, a Rarotongan who had just completed a few years at the Avondale School. The Smiths remained for only about eighteen months. Tuaine stayed a little longer and then chose to work on a nearby plantation.

Access to the plateau meant hard climbing. The first leg of the journey from Port Moresby followed the Laloki River to a government grass shelter. A dangerous river crossing then had to be negotiated, followed by a steep climb up Hombrom Bluff and a trek over hills to Bisiatabu. The government soon after re-routed and improved the road and built a bridge across the river. However, the forty-two kilometre trip remained a two-day ordeal. Amelia Geiss, an Adventist widow on her way from Sydney to England, saw the need and donated money to buy four mules and pack-saddles so that the mission link with Port Moresby could be made easier. In addition, an old cart was overhauled by blacksmiths at the Avondale School and shipped as a gift to the Papuan Mission in 1911. Nevertheless, it was still impossible to transport large quantities of building materials so these had to be found on the plateau.

Before the end of 1909 Beni had already made a few trips further inland to become acquainted with the local Koiari people. He and Tuaine also cleared land and later planted rubber trees as a long-term cash resource for the mission. All the menfolk built a crude thatch-roofed home high off the ground with a ladder entrance much like the locals usually constructed. It had no windows and only one door. A little kitchen was also built a short distance from the sleeping quarters. The ladies then transferred from Port Moresby to Bisiatabu.

On Monday, July 11,1910, Fulton organized the missionaries into a church during a one day stopover en route to the East Indies. Of course, there were only six charter members - the Carrs, Smiths, Beni and Tuaine - and it did seem premature because there were no converts and not even the promise of any in the immediate future. Time proved that church growth was painfully slow.

Frank Chaney spent 1911 in Papua building two mission homes. He first constructed one at Ela Beach, Port Moresby. Then his wife, Bertha, and family, arrived to live in it, He then travelled to and from Bisiatabu to supervise the construction of a European - style mission home at the inland station. Beni and Tuaine, with help from the Koiari boys who signed on for a year, laboriously cut bush logs with pit saws. The process was prolonged because time had to be given for this framework timber to season. Rolls of rubberoid for the walls, and sheets of iron for the roof and water tanks, were carried up from Port Moresby.

Late in 1911 Arthur Lawson came to Bisiatabu to replace the Smiths. Lawson was a 1910 Teachers Course graduate from the Avondale School. He had also completed a few months of basic nursing at the Sydney Sanitarium prior to embarkation. Six months after his arrival Enid Gordon also came to Papua and they were married at Bisiatabu in December 1912. Earlier that year Beni had taken a furlough in Fiji and returned with his new wife, Aliti. They first lived in a tent under the original lofty mission home. Later, a native materials home was built for them. The novel practice of building a thatch roof topped with an iron one was adopted to give both insulation from the heat as well as an efficient rainwater catchment.

By 1913 the Bisiatabu station had settled into the routine of a typical mission outpost. A small group of Koiari boys spent much of their time in the gardens and plantation. Each day they were given a little schooling in Bible, reading, writing, and singing. The missionaries first attempted to learn the coastal Motuan language and made themselves understood with this among the Koiari people. The boys were taught hymns in the Motuan language. Later, as the mission influence extended further inland, Cart and other missionaries tried to learn the Koiari language too.

The mission boys lived in grass thatch huts on the mission property and were fed from the extensive mission gardens, supplemented by wallabies from the nearby forest as well as rice and salt carried up

from Port Moresby. Carr found the Koiari people were honest and did not steal mission property. They were paid the customary $12 for their year's work. This amount they immediately exchanged for axes, knives, lanterns, blankets, belts, singlets, loin cloths, towels, and cooking utensils. During their stay they learned Bible stories from the picture rolls. A few of the older youth even helped to conduct branch Sabbath Schools in nearby villages. One named Faole was given a picture roll to take to his mountain home near Efogi so that he could conduct services. Faole, like some other young men on the station, were former multiple murderers who had served token gaol sentences in Port Moresby.

It was Beni who first tried to generate an interest in Christianity among the tribes in the Owen Stanley Ranges. At times he would leave Bisiatabu and be absent for weeks, walking from village to village conducting services with his picture roll. Initially the people found it strange to gather around him so they would sit with their backs to him. Part-way through his prayer he had to instruct them by saying, "Do not speak, you must keep quiet". They parroted, "Do not speak, you must keep quiet".

Beni's first trip to the mountain tribesmen had occurred in 1910. On one trip he met with an unfriendly group who prepared to murder him. As they surrounded him, brandishing their spears, he took out his pocket watch and held it up for all to see. This captured their attention. They lowered their weapons, drew closer, and peered at the second-hand moving around. He held it to their ears to let them hear the ticking. They thought the watch held some strange spirit. This confounded their murderous plans because they were unsure how this new imaginary spirit would react. They forgot their attack and instead treated Beni kindly.

Carr and Lawson themselves, together with a string of carriers, walked over the range to the government patrol post at Kokoda in June 1913. Half of the fourteen tribes visited had never before seen a European missionary. Different carriers were hired at each new village and the previous group were paid off, each with two strings of

beads and a dessertspoonful of salt. Their reward was highly prized. In reality its cost was less than ten cents. Carr reported, "We found quite a number of the Efogi and Kagi tribes who were keeping the Sabbath as far as they knew how .... " This was apparently due to the work of Beni and Faole. However, Sabbath-keeping proved confusing because the villagers kept losing count of the days.

Late in 1913 Beni visited Efogi and Kagi, then made an exploratory trip to the foothills of towering Mount Victoria, preaching at Seragina, Hagari, Bapari, Kotoi, Naori, and Ilibane. Some of these villages had been almost wiped out by disease.

Lawson undertook two separate exploratory trips from Bisiatabu- one in a south-easterly direction via rubber plantations at Koitaki, Sogeri, and Yawarari. The other trip followed an arc to the north-west in the vicinity of the Goldie River. The missionaries concluded that Bisiatabu was in the midst of a sparsely populated region, the largest pockets being on the trail to Kokoda.

Expansion therefore gravitated in that direction. At that stage the Adventists were still trying to centre their work in areas where other missions were not operating, even though they didn't accept the 1890 Comity Agreement. The government, while they had not formally endorsed the Agreement, had asked the Adventists to respect it.

Two more Fijian missionaries arrived in Papua in late 1913. They were Mitieli (Mitchell) Nakasamai and his wife, Fika. (Mitieli was the one who had eaten Agnes Fulton's kittens)[1] The following year the Carrs had to return to Australia because Edith was ill. They had pioneered for six years in gruelling conditions.

The Koiari people regarded the Bisiatabu station as just another plantation with work opportunities. With one or two exceptions they showed little desire for schooling and training as missionaries. As if in desperation Carr baptised one young lad just before he returned

[1] For the full story see the booklet, “Lotu Savasava”.

to Australia. However, this ten-year-old, named Taito, under pressure from his parents soon returned to his village and former ways. He did not show any further interest for a decade.

Carr was not replaced. The Lawsons remained at the Bisiatabu station assisted by the two Fijian couples. This situation remained throughout the First World War years.

On one occasion in 1915 Mitieli toured among the mountain people alone. Illness overtook him at a remote village. The local people dealt with the crisis in their usual way, leaving him to recover or die in a grimy little grass hut. Believing sickness was caused by evil spirits they feared to venture near.

When Mitieli didn't return to Bisiatabu on schedule then his friends became anxious. Beni set out to find him. After days of walking over the mountain trails he finally located him, emaciated and unable to move. The local people distanced themselves from the dilema and wouldn't give any assistance. Beni was left with no alternative but to carry Mitieli's near lifeless body over his shoulders. For days he agonized up and down the mountain trails back to Bisiatabu. The Lawsons did all they could for Mitieli and then hurried with him to Port Moresby for better medical treatment. He was then transferred to the Sydney Sanitarium. It took months for him to fully recover and then he returned to continue at Bisiatabu.

The years 1914 to 1920 were ones of stagnation in the Papuan Mission. Young men continued to work and attend school on the plantation but none made a commitment to Christ. Garden produce continued to be marketed in Port Moresby and the rubber trees gave an annual yield of approximately $500.

Towards the end of 1916 Griffiths Jones was appointed Director of the Melanesian Mission which incorporated Papua, the Solomon Islands, and Vanuatu. Jones became preoccupied with the new mission boat, the MELANESIA, spending most of his time in the Solomons. He made an occasional visit to Port Moresby but was

reluctant to spend a lot of time on the high seas lest he meet a prowling German warship.

Late in 1918 a tragedy occurred at the Bisiatabu station which was virtually unpublished in the church press for eight years. While working in the mission gardens Beni was bitten on the leg by a venomous snake. The Lawsons were in Port Moresby on business at the time. Beni applied treatment to himself as best he knew but said nothing to others. The treatment was inadequate and he finally broke the news as he realized he was doomed. His wife and fellow Fijians were devastated but could do little but helplessly watch him slip away.

Beni bravely called the plantation workers around him as the poison slowly spread its fatal shroud. "For ten years I have taught you about Jesus but no-one has ever given their lives to Him," he appealed. "Won't some of you become mission boys and say you will work for Jesus before I go?" he plead further. Two lads responded with tears in their eyes. One of these lads, Baigani, from a village near Efogi, remained true to his word and was baptised by Lawson in 1920. He became proficient in five languages and acted as interpreter for the mission. The other boy, Orira, proved to be troublesome but later mellowed, was baptised, and became a mission worker.

Baigani adopted the name Timothy upon his baptism, signifying he had broken completely with his heathen past and wished to be known as a wholehearted Christian. His baptism was only the second in twelve years of dogged mission effort. There was still no major breakthrough among the Koiari people themselves. Church administrators were beginning to lose faith in the Papuan venture.

When Beni passed away his wife gallantly remained at Bisiatabu with Mitieli and Fika for another year before returning to Fiji. The tragedy plunged the Papuan Mission further into the doldrums. For the next two years it survived merely as a lame duck addition to the North Queensland region.

The Lawsons returned to Australia in the summer of 1920/ 21. Griffiths and Marion Jones were asked to go to Bisiatabu, unite with Mitieli and Fika, and make an aggressive effort to convert the Koiari people. For this reason the Joneses began at Bisiatabu early in 1921. Jones never really remained at one location for a long time. He lacked administrative skills but compensated with his sea-faring abilities and maverick-style pioneering on his own.

Jones, together with his Fijian helpers doubled their efforts to influence the local people. They made frequent visits to neighbouring villages, taught about twenty-five pupils, and occasionally hosted a feast in an endeavour to forge friendly links with the village people. Feasting together was the accepted manner of showing friendship so Jones adopted this custom.

Initially, Jones was amazed at the lack of discipline in the station school. The Koiari young men were a wild unruly lot, he said, who preferred their independence in the bush. Jones reported that one married man at the school was continually taunted by his heathen wife because he hadn't killed anyone to prove his masculinity.

During one walkabout Jones, Mitieli, and Fika came upon a village agitated over a recent death in the tribe. Some of the menfolk appeared to be crazed and rushed at Fika intent on killing her. She wrenched the spear from her attacker's hand. She also disarmed an axe-wielding warrior who was full-tilt on destroying anything in sight.

In order to enlist fresh students for the school Jones, Mitieli and a few school boys eventually made a major sweep of the mountain villages further inland. Before starting on the trek Jones hammered hob nails into his boots to make the precipitous mountain trails easier for himself. Rain made the paths slippery and at times they had to negotiate narrow wet logs spanning deep gorges. About thirty villages were found, some hidden away on almost inaccessible ridges. The missionaries clambered up to these and tried to persuade the people to send their youth to the Bisiatabu school.

Jones preached to the mountain people about the Second Coming. "Not a mountain will stand in that day," he warned them. "You must gather in mission schools and get ready. Many devils are coming and will work miracles to gather all your young men to a far-away white-man's land to fight and they will never see New Guinea again," he continued, apparently alluding to Armageddon.

"We will hide," was the Koiari's typical answer.

"Can you hide from devils?" Jones retorted. He would then show them the picture of Satan cowering at the feet of Jesus. Jesus is more powerful than Satan, Jones pointed out, and would soon tie him up.

Jones used fear tactics in his desperation to move the unresponsive Koiari people. Some responded and these returned to Bisiatabu with Mitieli and the school boys. Jones ventured on alone, penetrating further into the highlands. There he found even the menfolk wore some covering because of the chilly air. He observed that they were a happier people and experienced less sickness. During feasts of rats, yams, taro, and pumpkins, members of each family unit would flit from one group to another exchanging morsels of food as a sign of friendship. Parents and children were closely bonded and family love was apparent.

Jones did persuade some of the mountain youths to attend the school but he found it heart-wrenching to see them so reluctant to leave their familiar villages. Adult warriors wept without shame as they gave permission for their children to attend. Jones became acutely aware of the trauma these people experienced and empathised with them. He concluded that another mission station closer to these mountain villages was the best alternative. In the meantime Jones allowed the students to visit home once a month to ease their homesickness.

Jones did not require the students to spend long hours working on the plantation. This created food shortages. He concentrated more

on teaching simple arithmetic, reading and writing in the Koiari language, and Bible storytelling. Mitieli and Fika translated some hymns and Scripture portions into the Koiari language. Greater importance was placed on the change of behaviour rather than academic achievement.

By the time the Joneses left at the end of 1923 there remained a promising group of about twenty students. The boys had grown accustomed to wearing their white loincloths and the young girls looked smart in their blue dresses. Timothy, who had been baptised by Lawson, continued to assist at the station. Among those at school were Taito, the boy baptised earlier by Carr, as well as Meia, Titus, Varire, Guba, Orira, and Watafeni. These lads later featured in mission expansion. Some of the young girls at the Bisiatabu school were Wakamai, Inoa, and Emeli.

There were times when some parents tried to persuade their children to leave school. On one occasion some older men used spiritism as a means of forcing lads to return to their villages. Demon possession broke out among the boys and the missionaries went through dramatic times exorcising spirits.

Newly-weds Gerald and Winifred Peacock were appointed to Bisiatabu late in 1922. They had both graduated from the Missionary Course at Avondale and received some nursing training at the Sydney Sanitarium.

Before Jones returned to Australia a few villages, including Nauro, had agreed to give land for another school. Jones considered Efogi to be a better spot, where the mountain people could send their children and visit them more frequently. Some Efogi youths, including Faole, had already benefitted from schooling at Bisiatabu. The village policeman, Gobeli, also agreed to have the Adventists move in. Jones left a supply of slates and pencils with him to be held in store until the mission school opened.

During the Jones era (1921-1923) he accomplished the task set for him. There followed a revitalized interest in the Papuan venture. In the following year there were eight Adventist missionaries working in the area. Will and Mollie Lock were appointed to specifically pioneer the Efogi station while the Peacocks remained at Bisiatabu. Lock had thirteen years of colporteur experience behind him. The foreign mission field was an entirely new venture for both he and his wife.

Emily Heise, a nurse with many years of experience at the Sydney Sanitarium, arrived in Papua with the Locks in July 1924. Albert Bateman, a 1920 Ministerial graduate from the Avondale School with a little nursing experience at the Sydney Sanitarium, arrived in September to assist also. Another Fijian couple, Nafitali (Naphtali) Navara, and his wife Vasiti (Vashti) came to replace Mitieli and Fika.

Concurrent with this renewed thrust in Papua and the influx of new missionaries a mission offensive was being made from the Solomon Islands. A mission station was started on Bougainville Island.[2] From there the Adventist mission later spread to New Britain and mainland New Guinea.

Lock wasted no time in getting started at Efogi. With a few carriers he walked from Bisiatabu for three days over the steep mountains, arriving on August 20. The local people cleared the site, dug foundation holes, and cut logs from the forest. In ten days a large foundation, over twelve-by-six metres, was constructed. He left the Efogi people to prepare wall plaiting and grass thatching for the roof. In September he returned for five days with Bateman to complete the structure with hessian partitions. They also made some simple furniture.

Sabbath, October 25, 1924, was a memorable day at Bisiatabu. Plans had been made for all except the Peacocks to make the arduous trek to Efogi on the following day. Over forty carriers had walked down from Efogito lug supplies and equipment up to the new station. These people, together with those in the vicinity of Bisiatabu,

[2] For more details see the booklet, “Vina Juapa Rane”.

witnessed Lock baptise eleven youths - the product of Jones' school initiative and the Peacocks' faithful instruction. This group comprised eight young men and three young women.

Early on Sunday morning Peacock and a team of school boys went ahead to build two crude bridges a little distance along the track to Efogi. Lock and his family, together with Bateman, Heise, and the long retinue of carriers began the exodus soon after. Papuans were appointed to care for Emily Heise, Mollie Lock and her two youngest children. The older children, Jean and Lester, managed the journey with little assistance.

It was a major undertaking to transport food and fuel supplies, wire mattresses, cooking utensils, clothing and personal effects, tents, tools, eleven goats, and numerous pieces of equipment to establish the isolated station. Steps were cut into some of the slippery mountain trails. The steep grades could only be negotiated by zig-zagging up and down the mountains. Lock gave names to some of the peaks, such as Mount Painful and Mount Desperation, in memory of aching legs and burning lungs as they crossed one range after another. Rain and leaking tents only made their evenings more unpleasant.

As they neared Efogi after their five-day ordeal the carriers decorated themselves in festive style and started to chant, alerting the village to prepare a welcome and have a feast ready. Many had never seen white women before. They stared in amazement and little children fearfully clung to their mothers.

In November Lock made a fourth trip with thirty-five carriers to bring in fowls and more supplies. Nafitalai and Vasiti also transferred to Efogi. Before long they were beginning to learn the local language, teaching the people to sing "Jesus Loves Me" in the Efogi language and to recite a translation of the Lord's Prayer.

School was first conducted on the verandah of Lock's home. Better facilities were built later. A native materials church with a high-

pitched roof was dedicated on January 2, 1926. Lock was not content to rest at Efogi. He made two major excursions during his two-and-a-half years' stay.

Lock's first excursion, in April 1925, was in a north-westerly direction to Bola, Fabila, and Seragina, trying to enlist students for his school. It was a miserable journey in pouring rain much of the time. Cold winds blew off Mount Victoria in the evenings. He and seven carriers had to build temporary bridges to span raging rivers, cross deep gorges by straddling slippery logs, and scale cliffs where one false step meant a fatal plunge.

The second excursion, in May 1926, was equally rugged but followed a better track to Kokoda, Oivi, Ilimo, and the Kumusi River. By that stage he was well within the Anglican Mission's territory on the North Papuan coast. Nevertheless, the local people offered him a site for an outpost near Ilimo. Lock lodged an application to begin a mission station there but the Anglicans filed objections and counter-claims. It had always been Lock's aim to have a chain of stations along the Kokoda trail from Port Moresby to Buna, but this was thwarted.

Back at Bisiatabu two new Fijian missionaries had arrived early in 1925 to assist the Peacocks. They were Tevita (David) Daivalu and his wife, Livinia. Ella Knowles, when she graduated from the Sydney Sanitarium, arrived later in the year to wed Bateman. Together they served for little more than a year before returning to the Sydney Sanitarium.

The highlight of 1926 at Bisiatabu was the conversion of Meanou and his wife, Iamo. Meanou had previous contact with Carr and also the Methodist Mission. He brought his family from Tupuselei near Bootless Inlet to attend the school and showed a scholarly interest himself. He and his wife were baptised and they subsequently worked in various locations as missionaries. Other students also came to Bisiatabu from Tupuselei.

Lock's frustrated plans to expand east of the Owen Stanley Ranges sent him searching elsewhere. Early in 1927 the Locks and Heise transferred back to Bisiatabu. Charles and Evelyn Mitchell came from the Sydney Sanitarium to replace the Europeans at Efogi. Heise, soon after, returned to Australia. Lock became aware that loopholes were beginning to show in the Comity Agreement. The League of Nations was to declare it invalid. The Roman Catholic Mission had already begun to ignore it by leasing or buying freehold sites from European planters. However, despite the official demise of the Agreement there continued numerous local campaigns to obstruct Adventist expansion.

Meanou had offered land on the coast at Tupuselei in 1926. That offer remained open but it meant applying for the site through the normal government channels. Lock shelved the offer. In December 1926 Lock and Peacock explored reports of villages along the Vailala River which had not been entered by any mission group although it was in the London Missionary Society domain.

The locals along the Vailala River said they wanted the Adventists to settle in their area. Some of their boys attended the Bisiatabu school. Lock planned for Peacock to pioneer at Vailala but on the eve of this move the Peacocks were transferred to the Solomon Islands.

Newly-weds George and Chris Engelbrecht came to replace the Peacocks in mid-1927. George had been a colporteur in New Zealand. Another recently married couple who were both 1927 graduates of the Sydney Sanitarium, Cecil and Myrtle Howell, arrived in mid-1928 to care for the Bisiatabu station. Engelbrecht did not go to Vailala immediately. He first enjoyed twelve months orientation at Bisiatabu. It was at this time that serious efforts began on translation work. Lock, Engelbrecht, and Meanou united to translate the Sabbath School lessons into Motuan on a regular basis. Motuan began to take precedence over the Koiari language in the school classes too. Lock was well aware that the mission focus would swing to the Papuan coast where Motuan was used.

Tragedy struck yet again when Tevita died of blackwater fever on May23, 1928. He had taken ill over a week beforehand at Bisiatabu and was admitted to Port Moresby hospital. He rallied but then appeared to suffer a relapse. Livinia, in poor health, returned to Fiji with her family where she passed away late in the year with fever and tuberculosis. Another Fijian couple Maika (Micah) Daunika and his wife, Tokasa, (Dorcas) arrived the following year to assist Nafitalai and Vasiti at Efogi.

At Vailala Mr Puxley leased two hectares of his plantation for three years to the Adventists so that a beginning could be made in that area. The Engelbrechts, together with a Koiari convert, Watafeni, and his wife, Luci, all transferred from Bisiatabu in 1928 to pioneer among the waiting villages. Using the leasehold as a home-base they began conducting a school in the nearby settlement of Hiloi.

Another station was pioneered concurrent with the Vailala venture. Lock procured thirty-two hectares at Korela on the Marshall Lagoon, together with less than a hectare at nearby Aroma. These were obtained freehold from the Burns Philp Trading Company. The Mitchells transferred to Korela, leaving the Fijian couples in charge at Efogi.

Mitchell chose Faole to help him establish the new station. Together they conducted a school for the people of Wanigela village, a large population who had built their homes on stilts at the edge of the lagoon. Faole's wife, Someli, joined them when the mission station facilities were better established.

The Mitchells were settled at Korela for twelve months before they took furlough. In their absence Ross and Mabel James arrived late in 1929 to continue the infant station. It was James who pioneered the nearby settlement at Aroma.

Using Korela as his base, James would sometimes walk to Aroma, crossing the river by canoe. On one occasion, with Maika, Faole, and a few local boys, he was crossing the river at dusk when they

capsized. Everyone grabbed whatever equipment was near them and struck out for the shore, frantically propelled by the knowledge that the waters were infested with crocodiles. Only Faole was left drifting in the dark on the upturned canoe and wailing in terror. He was not a strong swimmer. Some rushed to find another canoe and eventually he was rescued. When they gathered up their picture rolls, lanterns and other equipment they found not one piece was missing, not even James' suitcase.

Vailala, Korela, and Aroma were only the beginning of a vast network of mission stations which began to multiply rapidly in the late 1920's. As soon as a station was started then more requests came flooding in from surrounding areas. Repeatedly the missionaries had to apologise because they had insufficient staff to cover the villages asking for teachers. The collapse of the Comity Agreement opened vast opportunities. It meant that the Adventist Mission could work in more densely populated areas in contrast to the sparse Koiari territory. Some stations were supervised by Fijians or locals. Faole and his wife, for example, later returned to Efogi and ministered to their own people.

In the east the Adventist Mission had already moved into Bougainville Island from the Solomons. This was extended to Rabaul by Jones in mid-1929. He spent six months with two Solomon Island missionaries, Oti and Salau, establishing a station on Matupi Island near Rabaul.

The Matupi property was obtained freehold from a Sydney woman who had boarded with Adventist spinsters Annie and Harriet Pearce. Others, including the Anglican bishop, had wanted to buy the prime piece of real estate but she preferred to sell to the Adventists. The estate included a large home big enough for two families, and an excellent anchorage for the MELANESIA in a relatively malaria-free zone.

Arthur and Nancy Atkins, who both had some nursing training, came to Rabaul early in 1930 when the Joneses had to leave because of

illness. They conducted a school in the mission house. The domino pattern of mission station expansion continued into the 1930's, extending north to Emirau and Mussau Islands. Later, in mid-1934, a start was made in the populous highlands of mainland New Guinea, first at Kainantu (then named Ramu), followed by Omaura and Bena Bena.

Up to 1934 there were still less than fifty baptised members in the Papuan and New Guinean regions. Six years later the membership total had jumped to well over a thousand, due largely to the increased opportunities for expansion which had begun in the late 1920's. Growth has sky-rocketed since the Second World War.
The unsung heroes of the early days were the Fijians, as well as the European women who struggled up and down the mountain trails to Bisiatabu and Efogi. Their hearts pounded, their lungs gasped for air, and their whole bodies ached as day after day they camped and trekked th rough inhospitable rainforests. On arrival at their destination they began the ceaseless round of housekeeping under primitive conditions, often tending the sick and teaching the school children.

Many of the Fijian missionaries paid dearly for their experience. Beni and Tevita lost their lives. Livinia succumbed to tuberculosis and died prematurely soon after arriving back in Fiji. One of Beni's sons was crippled for life due to a disease contracted in Papua. The health of Mitieli, Fika, and Vasiti was also seriously impaired as a result of their service.

All persevered for Christ year after year without obvious results. In the short term there were no explosive breakthroughs similar to the Marovo Lagoon experience in the Solomon Islands. Whole families of intelligent and able young men like Tetangu's children at Marovo were not to be found among the Koiari converts. They appeared, like Baigani and Faole, only in ones and twos over a decade or more. Therefore, when the opportunity came to expand in the late 1920's there was a desperate dearth of qualified nationals with experience to lead out in the multiplying village stations. Right up until the

Second World War and beyond there existed a continuing need for European, Fijian, and Solomon Islander leadership.

Prior to the Second World War most of the areas entered by Adventists were untouched by other mission groups. Some of the inhabitants were practising cannibals. Spirit worship was the norm. The web of society was bound by the fear of evil spirits as well as a long list of associated taboos. The challenge of the missionaries was to demonstrate a life of Christian love and freedom from guilt and fear rather than imposing a sophisticated set of taboos based on European tradition.

Major sources for this booklet are the "Bible Echo and Signs of the Times"; the "Australasian Record"; the "Missionary Leader"; Alfred Chapman's 1975 unpublished Master's thesis, "Seventh-day Adventist Education in Papua New Guinea: 1908-1941"; Lester Lock's 1985 booklet entitled "Beginning and Growth in Papua"; and the authors personal collection of pioneer data.

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