

Booklet

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VINA JUAPA RANE
EARLY ADVENTISM IN THE SOLOMON ISLANDS

By Milton Hook



Seventh-day Adventist Heritage Series

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

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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.

A Spanish explorer, Alvaro de Neyra, sailed west from Peru in 1567 searching for a large southern continent. He arrived off the coast of a long and mountainous tropical island the following year, named it Santa Isabel after his wife, and believed it was simply an outpost of the anticipated continent. Returning to Peru he described the island in glowing words to his countrymen, trying to convince them they should colonise this utopia.

The Spaniards were probably not told about the crocodiles, large toads, and poisonous snakes living on the island. However, they no doubt were told of the lush vegetation, ready timber, rich volcanic soil, and dark-skinned inhabitants similar to the Ethiopians. The explorers painted a mental picture to suggest they had perhaps rediscovered the land of King Solomon's most famous visitor, the Queen of Sheba. They suggested the island could be a mine of gold and all things precious. Further explorations revealed Santa Isabel was part of a chain of islands which came to be called the Solomon Islands.

French and British explorers sailed into the same island group in the nineteenth century. Missionaries arrived in their wake. In the 1840's four Roman Catholic priests were murdered by the locals on Santa Isabel and San Cristoval Islands. This prompted them to abandon their mission. They returned in the 1890's. The Anglican Mission first entered the group in 1850. The South Seas Evangelical Mission and the Methodist Mission came later.

In the 1890's Germany controlled the islands of Bougainville, Choiseul, and Santa Isabel, with the remainder of the group in British hands. By 1900 Germany retained only Bougainville, but they lost control of this outpost when the Australians took over during the First World War. Tulagi became the capital until the Second World War years.

Early in the twentieth century parts of the Solomon Islands remained dangerous for white intruders. The blackbirders (slave recruiters) had operated under closer government supervision than those in Vanuatu but their activities had nevertheless generated some local hostility. Any European trader who settled in the Solomons took precautions by living in a log-cabin style home which was loop-holed inside so that the timbers couldn't be ripped apart in a raid.

Prior to the First World War the Seventh-day Adventist press rarely mentioned the Solomon Islands. Mission thrusts had begun on its flanks in Papua and Vanuatu but the stretching of resources had not extended to the Solomons.

In 1906 Elsie Adams, at that time unbaptised but attending the Norfolk Island church, went with her husband to live temporarily in the Solomons. Three years later a Solomon Islander visited the resident Adventist minister on Norfolk Island, Henry Mitchell. Some Bible studies were given and Mitchell was extended a welcome to the Solomons should he ever be passing those shores. Septimus Carr gave away church magazines to English readers at ports of call en route to Papua in 1908. While Vic Stratford was a clerk at the Australasian church headquarters in 1911 he posted health magazines to Europeans in the Solomons. Apart from these minor activities there was no contact with the Solomons before 1914.

Griffiths and Marion Jones returned to Australia in 1913 after an extended furlough in America. He worked as chaplain at the Sydney Sanitarium. It is said that a Roman Catholic trader and planter from the Solomons, Norman Wheatley, was a patient at the

Sanitarium during that time and he grew to respect Jones. The account is dubious but the fact remains that Wheatley certainly promoted the coming of the Adventists in preference to the Methodist Mission already established in his neighbourhood. Perhaps he resented the trade-store competition which the Methodists presented. His positive recommendations paved the way for the islanders to wait expectantly for the coming of the Adventists to their shores.

At the Australasian Union Conference Session, September 23 to October 3, 1913, two of the actions voted were: "That we open up work in the Solomon Islands as soon as practicable", and, "That G.F. Jones and his wife be invited to take up work in the Solomon Islands."

The experience of Calvin Parker and Harold Carr when pioneering Vanuatu highlighted the need for a boat to discover, establish, and maintain mission stations in a country where roads were non-existent. It was therefore arranged for an auxiliary ketch to be built at the Ford boat-building yards, North Sydney, for Jones to use in the Solomons. It was almost ten metres long, with a Kelvin 12 horse-power oil-engine and accommodation for four passengers and two crew.

The ketch, named ADVENT HERALD, was completed and loaded onto the island steamer MININDI. It travelled to the Solomons with the Joneses. On arrival at Tulagi Jones met with the government commissioner to talk with him about the Adventists' plans. The commissioner wrote to his scattered district officers asking them to assist Jones if needed. The MININDI then travelled to Gizo where the Joneses disembarked on Friday, May 29, 1914. Gizo was near Wheatley's home.

The ADVENT HERALD was lowered into the water and loaded with supplies and a pre-fabricated two-roomed cottage to be built on the first mission site. The crew of the MININDI kindly helped Jones to quickly secure the two masts in position before leaving. This ketch

was to be home for the Joneses until they were invited by local islanders to establish a mission station ashore.

Jones received assistance wherever he turned. A young planter voluntarily helped him rig the ketch on Sunday and then piloted the boat through the treacherous reefs and shallows. This maiden voyage took a south-easterly route. Before long the house flag of the boat- a white flag depicting a green olive branch and the red letters "AUC", signifying Australasian Union Conference - became well known in the island group.

The first port of call was at Labete on New Georgia Island. This was Wheatley's headquarters. He advised Jones which islanders were waiting in anticipation of the new missionary. They steered through the Roviana Lagoon to the Ughele district on the northern end of Rendova Island. There the villagers were eager to have a school but they could not agree among themselves on the exact location.

Pressing onwards Jones explored the Viru River region on New Georgia and there found a group willing to lease some land and build a school. Without making any final decision Jones continued into the Marovo Lagoon located between New Georgia and Vagunu Islands. A reef stretching along their eastern boundaries enclosed this vast stretch of water dotted with little islands. Even the inhabitants as far south as Gatukai Island beyond Kola Lagoon were expecting Jones as a result of Wheatley's encouragement.

A trader, Oliver Burns, and all except one of his crew, were axed to death on their boat in the Marovo Lagoon a decade before Jones arrived. A government officer accompanied the Joneses when they first sailed into the Marovo. It was only token protection. After weighing the pros and cons of all offers Jones decided to return to the Viru River and make it his mission base.

At Viru a trader, planter, and friend of Wheatley, Mr Stratham, allowed Jones to moor the ADVENT HERALD at his wharf. Rather

than sleep in the hot cabin of the boat the Joneses were also permitted to use the floor of Stratham's store. Within a few months Jones had his two-roomed pre-fabricated hut built high off the ground on the mission site. A native materials school was also completed by the local people. Everyone worked enthusiastically. They also made a wharf, nearly fifty metres long, for the boat. Approximately 100 tonnes of rock was used in its construction. Every individual piece was dived for and carried some distance.

The exact site of the mission was called Ilemi, at the mouth of the river. In a short time the Joneses had constructed an alphabet for the Ulusagi language used throughout southern New Georgia. On this basis they taught and preached in a halting fashion to between thirty and fifty people. English was gradually introduced as the students became literate. A few of the pupils came from the opposite side of the island at Ramata, the home of Wheatley's wife.

Before the year was out Jones had visited the Marovo Lagoon on two further occasions and talked to the paramount chief, Nipala, and some lesser chiefs such as Nipala's brother-in-law, Kanijama. He obtained their consent to open a station in their area too.

Earlier in his life Kanijama had led many head-hunting groups in their long war canoes to Santa Isabel. These activities had come to an abrupt end when his raiding party was captured by a tribe recently converted to the Anglican Mission. Prior to the advent of Christianity the captives would have been slain. Instead, Kanijama and his men were fed and released and told that Christians practise peace. The incident made a lasting impression, softening Kanijama's attitude to missions.

The whole population in which Jones found himself was steeped in two main vices, i.e., betel-nut chewing and spirit or ponda worship. To keep favour with the spirits the bones of departed loved ones were kept in a skull house, or oru, and food was frequently offered there. Effigies of the dead were sometimes made to further ancestral worship. The living would have their own ear lobes

pierced and hang weights in them to create large holes. This, they believed, ensured happy hunting grounds for them after death. Human sacrifices and prostitution were common features of their heathen worship. Heads were taken in murderous raids among other tribes to appease evil spirits.

Those engaged in spirit worship could call up sharks in emergencies, then take hold and steer them in the direction they wished to travel. A witchdoctor or matimatiana would cast spells on people. The victim, seized with fright, would virtually lie down and die of hunger and thirst in a few days. Before a pagan gave up these practices he would make an appeasement service and then cast in his lot with the Christian mission. However, evil spirits sometimes returned to harass a new Christian.

In this southern region of New Georgia one intriguing festival involved the offering of the first-fruits from the maria-nut crop to Langiti, their principal god. Legend claimed he had knocked the original seeding nuts out of the grasp of Vekoveko the bat by tossing lumps of wood into the sky which, in turn, fell and turned to slabs of stone throughout the jungle.

As soon as Viru station was firmly established then "Jonesie", as he was better known by the islanders, restlessly moved to pioneer the Marovo Lagoon region. War had erupted in Europe. Jones, in common with all Adventists, believed the end of the world was near. "Our last opportunity for service has come", he wrote, "and we should hasten everywhere".

Oscar and Ella Hellestrand were hurriedly called at the end of 1914 to replace Jones at Viru. Hellestrand was a nursing graduate of the Sydney Sanitarium and did a great deal of medical work in the area in addition to conducting the little school. In 1915 he pioneered an outpost at Nono, southern New Georgia, almost three hours by canoe from his headquarters.

Jones shifted his focus to the centre of the Marovo Lagoon where there were a number of villages wanting Adventist schools. Each month he would visit places such as Repi and Telina. He, with some of the Viru people he brought with him, would sing to the people, and he would tell Bible stories in halting Ulusagi to the former headhunters. The main chief, Nipala, lived at Repi. He was a wise old gent with a grey goatee beard. His stocky brother-in-law, Chief Kanijama, lived nearby with his wife, Uso, at Telina. A few kilometres north of them, in Bambata village on Marovo Island, lived the old and lanky Chief Tatangu and his wife Sambinaru. Tatangu was a firm friend of Wheatley.

It was on a narrow piece of land on Marovo Island that Jones established his second mission station. The spot was called Sasaghana. A little distance from the waters edge, on a mound where he felt safe from the prowling crocodiles, he built a small hut of native materials with the bare earth for a floor. His only luxury was a few sheets of iron on the roof to catch rainwater for drinking purposes.

On April 15, 1915, Don and Lilian Nicholson arrived at Sasaghana to develop the station into a school centre. Jones pushed further south to Repi, Telina, and Gatukai Island, securing sites for more stations and urging the villagers to gather materials to build churches and schools. From July to December the Joneses had to rest in Australia for health reasons. During that time he found David Gray, a Missionary Course graduate of the Avondale School, who was willing to pioneer Gatukai on his own.

While Jones was in Australia the Nicholsons had an eventful time. The little native materials school at Sasaghana was opened on September 13 under spartan conditions. School seats were made from bush timber and kerosene boxes. The only cupboard was another kerosene box nailed to the wall. Lilian started with twenty-three pupils ranging from youngsters to married adults. Among the younger ones were Ghusa Peo and Kata Rangoso, sons of Tatangu. Their cousin, Pana, also attended, in addition to Jugha.

Jugha was a youth from the south of Vangunu Island who had been captured earlier by the Tatangu tribe on a head-hunting raid and kept as a slave. Panda, the nineteen-year-old lad who had donated the site, was also one of the original students.

Typically, the evil spirits attempted to frighten the school boys into leaving the mission. One night a spirit in the form of a palm frond burst through their door and thrashed about inside, knocking objects over. One terror-stricken boy fled to Don Nicholson who came running and prayed with the boys to drive the spirit away. On another occasion spirits rocked their canoes violently and Peo stammered his first prayer in the same manner he had heard Nicholson calm such a crisis.

The Sasaghana school was barely a month old when Panda stole another man's wife. Tatangu was incensed and temporarily withdrew his boys from classes. Even though Panda quickly mended his ways the school limped along and struggled to regain its former influence. When the Nicholsons transferred to Telina the school was phased out and the station was dismantled later.

The Joneses returned to the Solomons in early December 1915, accompanied by David Gray. In the light of the Sasaghana episode Jones busied himself with securing some alternative site for a mission school. Kanijama was happy for his own children and others to attend the school providing he and his peers could continue with their ponda worship on the other half of the island. Jones agreed and obtained Kanijama's signature on December 17 to legalize the deal. However, the building of facilities on the site lagged because the Methodist Mission disputed Kanijama's right to the property. Adventism's growing presence in Methodist heartland generated increasing resentment.

To enable Nicholson to move quickly about the lagoon and visit the pockets of interest a motor dinghy was fitted up in Sydney and shipped out to him. He named it MINANDO, meaning "love" in the

local language, because it was a gift of love from the Australasian Sabbath Schools.

Jones and Nicholson were quick to take the MINANDO almost to the northern limit of the Marovo Lagoon. There they met with the inhabitants of two villages and Chief Uavo at Ramata. The following month, March 1916, they visited the deep south of the region at Gatukai Island. Their aim on that occasion was to establish a native materials mission home for Gray. Jones, Nicholson, Gray, and Jugha all made the journey but within a week Jones had to bring Gray back to Sasaghana delirious with a severe malaria attack. Nicholson and Jugha almost completed the home before they returned a few days later.

As soon as Gray recovered he returned to the outpost at Pejuku on Gatukai, completed his little two-roomed home, and remained for years gradually improving the station. By early 1917 Gray had built a native materials church-cure-school. The rich soil produced good crops for those who came to live on the station.

The people of Pejuku were in the habit of offering the first-fruits of the maria-nut crop to their god, Langiti. When Gray arrived all except the old chief gave up this celebration. One Sabbath while everyone was attending Gray's service the chief stole away to the nut grove to make his lone offering to Langiti. Apparently he slipped from a high branch while reaping some nuts and fell to his death. The incident cemented the decision of the people. First-fruit offerings to their heathen god were never attempted again.

Gray had been at Pejuku just a few months when he was asked to conduct a Christian funeral. He permitted the customary dirges because the people were simply expressing their sorrow.

But he told them it was unnecessary to shout and blow conch shells to frighten away evil spirits. Some tried to catch the spirit of the departed girl by circling the house with a leaf held high. Gray

had to tell them their quest was futile. Gradually Christian beliefs were accepted and the old fear of pondas waned.

In November 1916 the Hellestrands had to return to Australia. Two years of pioneering at Viru had eroded their health. Replacements did not arrive until some months later in the persons of Samuel and Florence Maunder. For this reason the first half of 1917 found Nicholson and Gray moving from station to station trying to care for everything. Jones himself had been given wider responsibilities as superintendent of the entire Melanesian region. He spent most of his time in the Solomons.

The gradual shift from Sasaghana to Telina was in process at this time. The Nicholsons would teach school at Sasaghana from Monday to Friday and conduct a Sabbath morning service, then take the MINANDO to Telina for an afternoon service and teach school there on Sunday. Gray divided his time between Pejuku and Viru.

To complicate matters other villages were still requesting a missionary. Nipala had given up his ponda worship and occasional church services had begun at Repi. To the north at Ramata, and inland at Varisi, the door was open to locate missionaries. And in the Ughele district, more precisely Buruku, where the people had been indecisive when Jones first called in 1914, a little mission station was already developing. The original pre-fabricated house at Viru had been dismantled in July 1916 and removed to Ughele in readiness for a missionary. Chief Romidi welcomed the Maunders there in October 1917 and he also supervised the building of a native materials church which doubled as a school. One boy, Hite, had briefly attended the Sasaghana school in July/ August 1916 and had returned home as an ambassador for the Adventists.

The highlight of 1917 was the commissioning of the MELANESIA. Its construction, dedication, and purpose was reminiscent of the larger and earlier dame of the deep, the PITCAIRN. The MELANESIA, an auxiliary ketch, was built in Berry's Bay, Sydney

harbour, at the Ford shipyards and dedicated on Sunday, June 3, 1917. She was little more than eighteen metres long with a shallow draught to allow sailing amid shoals and reefs. This compromise for an ocean-going boat apparently made her a 'roller' in rough seas. A 50 horse-power kerosene engine was used to supplement the wind in her sails. Adventist youth raised much of the boat's cost (nearly \$5000) by selling health magazines and Morning Watch calendars.

On Monday afternoon, July 2, 1917, the MELANESIA sailed through Sydney Heads bound for Marovo Lagoon. The Joneses had brought with them four trusty Solomon Islanders as part of the crew. They were Kioto, Londi, Lokete, and Varane. Will Fairfoul, who had spent his early years sailing the England-to-Australia route, acted as ship's mate. David Woolston was the engineer on board. Jack Radley served as the boatswain and Harry Tutty, a nurse from the Sydney Sanitarium, went to begin his mission duties in the Solomons.

Once out on the ocean they met ugly high seas and were pitched about for five days before struggling into Brisbane with a faulty chronometer. As on numerous occasions those sailing the Pacific discovered it was ill-named. For the first time in her long sailing experience Marion Jones was terribly seasick. So also were some of the crew. After four days respite they set out again, sailing north for eleven days before sighting Guadalcanal. The following day (July 25) they anchored at Tulagi. Not until later, when they sighted the peaks of Marovo, did Kioto and his friends begin to sing and laugh. The MELANESIA blew its whistle coming into Telina and took everyone by surprise. Then the entire mission station erupted with scampering black forms. They laughed and cried with excitement at the sight of their new boat.

This was just the beginning of the MELANESIA'S travels. Jones, as superintendent of the Melanesian Mission, sailed her as far as Vanuatu, Papua, and New Guinea in the following years. Later, others took over as skipper. With a major overhaul and rebuilding

in the 1930's the MELANESIA logged nearly thirty years of service.

There is conflicting evidence regarding the exact date of the first baptism in the Solomons. It occurred during the first few days of 1918 when about four hundred Adventists gathered at Sasaghana for a general meeting. Jones and Nicholson brought the people together for council, to break down old animosities, and to foster a church community spirit. Ten young people were baptised at the conclusion of these proceedings. Among them were Tatangu's sons, Ghusa Peo and Kata Rangoso; their cousin, Pana, who adopted the name Barnabas; the slave-boy Jugha; as well as Kioto and his wife Taruteko. Kioto was another slave boy in the Tatangu family. Hundreds of local people witnessed this unique event.

The high calibre of these early converts proved to be the strength of the Mission. They were young, zealous, and dependable. Two years before their baptism the Nicholsons had groomed them to conduct Sabbath School lesson reviews. These were the men who later took charge of mission stations.

After the 1917/18 maiden voyage of the MELANESIAN throughout Vanuatu, Papua, New Guinea, and the Solomons, Woolston and Fairfoul returned to Australia. Radley and Tutty remained to fill the desperate need for more missionaries. Radley operated and serviced the ADVENT HERALD and MINANDO. Tutty took charge at Sasaghana. Jones continued to direct the entire Melanesian region. Nicholson was appointed superintendent of the Solomons with Telina as his headquarters and training school. Gray still alternated between Pejuku and Viru. The Maunders persevered at Ughele in the face of stiff Methodist opposition. There, the church building was dedicated in mid-1918.

Tutty had worked at Sasaghana for six months when nurse Emily Koglin, with whom he had worked at the Sydney Sanitarium, came to the Solomons. They were married at his mission station on April 4, 1918. All the European missionaries were present as Jones conducted the service, in addition to numerous inquisitive islanders

who had never seen a wedding service of any kind. Many locals, who had been married simply by the husband handing over a bride-price, promised themselves they would like to go through a Christian service later. However, later marriage services were conducted only for new couples who were Christians. The first baptism (January 1918) and a second on March 8, 1919, ushered in the beginning of national leadership. Despite the appalling lack of education and training some achieved amazing results by using natural leadership skills. For example, when Gray was absent from Viru caring for the Pejuku station then Kimi, a local nineteen-year-old boy, led in worship services. The Viru church was rebuilt and dedicated on June 16, 1918. There, the local witchdoctor, Kapini, became a Seventh-day Adventist.

Kioto and his wife went to the northern waters of Marovo Lagoon and cared for the company of believers at Ramata in 1918. The following year Kata Rangoso and another baptised young man, Naghaha, replaced them. Both were about fifteen years old. Kioto and Taruteko returned to assist at Telina, mainly because they were expecting their first child. The infant was born on Sabbath, June 14, and named Samuel because on that day the Sabbath School lesson was about Samuel.

Repeated calls from the north-west kept coming for more national missionaries. A web of outposts began to grow. Companies cleared land for little church buildings at Loloha, Rukutu, and Segheghe in the Marovo region. On the west coast of Kolombangara Island (called the Duki coast) where Wheatley owned a number of plantations, villagers at Sambira, Ghatere, and Hambere were also pressing for teachers to come to them.

About 1919 Varane was appointed to care for an outpost at Sambira. Wheatley persuaded one person from Ghatere, Simeon Kapana, to attend school and on his return soon after he cared for his home station. Sei Jama, a lad from the Pejuku school, cared for the Hambere company in its early days.

The major thrust in 1919 was the opening of a station at Dovele on Vella Lavella Island. Vakapala, a native of Dovele, was married to Tatangu's niece, Duri, and attended the church at Saseghana. On earlier occasions Jones had included Vakapala among his passengers and crew as he sailed among the islands, calling in at Dovele where Vakapala could influence his own people to accept Adventists. This broke down prejudice. The villagers were further persuaded when they heard Jones and his crew sing gospel songs. The use of a portable gramophone astounded them, never before imagining that a human voice could be projected from a box.

It was decided that the Tuttys would pioneer the Dovele station, together with Vakapala's brother-in-law, Barnabas Pana, as their assistant. The little church at Sasaghana continued to operate for a time, but Tutty dismantled this mission home for its iron and timber materials and loaded it all onto the ADVENT HERALD. On March 20, 1919, Jones and Radley left with the three missionaries and steered for Dovele. Materials for a home were the priorities on this first trip. Beds and most personal belongings had to be left behind for a later time.

The Dovele region presented new challenges. The people spoke a different language, not Ulusagi. It was the usual custom for the locals to go naked. The only semblance of European influence was that two locals were wearing skimpy loincloths and one proudly sported an umbrella aloft. Tutty observed that the dog and pig population seemed more prolific than humans. Spiritism was the basis of their society. For example, green coconuts were forbidden as food because they believed the evil spirits had thrown these down in anger and would be further upset if the nuts were eaten. If evil spirits were to be avoided then sacred vines were draped around a hut or person's body. This was thought to ward off sickness or calamity. Leafy branches from sacred trees were also used to brush away evil spirits. These were the great antidotes used by the witchdoctors. The bodies of the dead were always hung up in trees to decay in the hot sun. One old man said he wouldn't have it any other way because if he was buried in the

ground when he died he believed he wouldn't be able to breathe.

The missionaries were offered the largest hut in the village when they landed. They first slept on wooden doors raised between boxes above the dirt floor. There was little privacy. The local folk fell back in amazement when Emily Tutty let down her long hair. When one of the missionaries took out some false teeth to clean the islanders were flabbergasted and milled around to see more, if possible, of this oddity who could take himself apart and put himself together again.

Everyone pitched in for a few weeks to re-assemble the little two-roomed home which Tutty brought from Sasaghana. Tutty found it obnoxious when the helpers were spitting betel-nut juice all over the timber, but he said nothing lest he offend them. After four attempts to grow a garden Tutty gave up in despair, conceding that the pigs could only be kept out with a strong perimeter fence.

Early efforts to instruct the people in worship habits proved equally frustrating. Local custom forbade a woman to sit on the same level as a man, so the women who attended had to sit on the ground and the men sat on the benches. Initially everyone brought their pipes to smoke but this practice ceased when Tutty asked them to leave these outside. Dogs were the greatest disruptors of all. One would start a snapping fight and in a moment the assembly would erupt with barking animals dashing in all directions, frightened women and children fleeing into the forest, and the menfolk chasing and cornering the hounds.

"It was heart-breaking work," Tutty wrote later. The little school was started before the building could be completed. The flooring was not laid down on the joists. At first the students perched on the narrow floor joists and often fell through. Tutty himself fell and injured his ankle and had to be piggy-backed around the station for some time. School was conducted for three hours each day. It was of mutual benefit, the Tuttys trying to teach the locals English and,

in turn, the locals teaching the Tuttys the Dovele language which they gradually reduced to a written form.

To add to their woes the influenza epidemic sweeping the world in 1919 was introduced at Dovele when some locals returned after working on overseas plantations. The only remedies the witch doctor could offer were the sacred vines and a ritual of skin-pinching to pluck the evil spirits out of the afflicted. Thirty died in the Dovele district. Pana became very sick and didn't fully recover for eight months despite the Tuttys' treatments. A few of the locals were saved only because Emily Tutty sewed clothing onto them so securely that they couldn't pull it off. This kept their bodies warm during the chills. The Tuttys themselves became so exhausted with nursing the numerous sick that they succumbed to malarial fever attacks.

As usual the Methodist Mission contested the right of the Adventists to establish a station in their territory on Vella Lavella. In July 1919 government authorities heard the court case and were satisfied that Chief Sosoko, who had called the Adventists to Dovele, was within his legal rights. However, the judge's decision did not deter local Methodists making a raid on the station in December and destroying garden crops. The case was reopened in 1923 and the Land Commission decreed in favour of the Adventists.

Sosoko took his chieftain role seriously. He would habitually sit with the little children in school to make sure they behaved themselves. However, at first he was a curious mix of the old notorious devil-man and the reformed mission-dweller. At one time he placed a spell on another leading man called Vozakana. Tutty noticed Vozakana had draped his body in sacred vines in an effort to protect himself from what he believed was certain death. Tutty convinced Vozakana it was all hocus-pocus. No longer fearful, Vozakana strode over to a smouldering fire nearby, tore off the vines and burned them. When Sosoko heard about Vozakana's resolve he admitted the traditional religion of his ancestors was

ineffective in the face of Christianity. Sosoko became a staunch member at Dovele.

The Dovele station proved to be the launching pad for more mission outposts. Some villagers at Mondo, on the rocky western coast of Ranonga Island, were impressed after visiting Maunder's school at Ughele as well as the fledgling Dovele mission. One of their number, Vavaso, worked for Wheatley and in this way received favourable reports about Adventist missions too.

Eventually, in March 1920, a Mondo delegation went to Tutty and asked for a missionary to be located in their village. Pana returned with them in their canoe, teaching them hymns as they rowed. Pana raised such a following that Jugha was sent to assist him in November. A large native materials church and a separate school were soon erected.

These developments were not without opposition from the Methodists and the local witchdoctor, Ghasobule. The latter was keen to keep his seance audiences. At these gatherings he would call the spirits and they would reply by whistling. The people would then hold up food in their hands and it would be snatched away by unseen hands. However, he angered the menfolk by conducting an all-woman séance. The men reported him to the government and he was jailed for a year.

Later, the Tuttys set out in an open cutter with seven others to visit Mondo. A violent storm forced them ashore at one stage. That night they slept in a ramshackle copra house after first killing all the snakes in the thatch roof. Arriving at Mondo, Tutty was delighted to find about eighty students in the school and approximately two hundred attending services. Within three years the Mondo congregation increased to three hundred - the largest single group of Adventist adherents in the Pacific at that time.

In 1920 there were considerable changes made in European staffing. The Nicholsons, after twelve months recuperation in

Australia, transferred to Vanuatu. The Joneses found it necessary to retire from the tropics for some years especially for the sake of Marion's health. There had been some niggling differences between Jones and Nicholson regarding their administrative styles. It was best that both men rest and then work elsewhere. Gray was confined to the Sydney Sanitarium suffering with blackwater fever. He took twelve months to fully recover. Early in 1921 he married Mabel Goldsmith and they returned to Pejuku where he had pioneered. The Maunders also left in 1920, having upset government authorities in the way he had responded to Methodist opposition.

All of the pioneer missionaries had experienced repeated bouts of malaria, dangers on the stormy seas, primitive housing facilities and isolation. They grappled with the daily problems as best they could, sometimes having to make decisions without advice from their colleagues.

Harold and Madeleine Wicks, after almost six years experience in the Cook Islands, transferred to superintend the Solomons. Both were trained nurses. As a young man in Christchurch, New Zealand, Wicks was a keen yachtsman. He understood boats. Prior to becoming a Seventh-day Adventist he had qualified and worked as an engineer. His many talents were ideal for mission service. Their seven-year term in the Solomons was a time of rapid expansion, consolidation, and sound administrative strategy.

Two newly-wed couples arrived to assist Wicks later in 1920. Charles and Isabel Wrigley, who had been working in the Victorian Conference and Sydney Vegetarian Cafe respectively, took charge of the Ugele station for three years until Charles contracted blackwater fever. Jack Anderson, usually known as "J.D.", and his wife Guinevere or "Guin", first settled at Telina. For the Andersons it was the beginning of an eventful eighteen years of service in the Solomons.

Persistent opposition from the Methodist Mission reached a crisis in 1919/20. With the rapid expansion of the Seventh-day Adventist Mission throughout their region they felt they were under siege. When a new station opened they usually contested the ownership of the land. Three cases in particular came before the Lands Commission in 1920 for legal resolution - the Ughele, Viru, and Telina properties.

The land cases were not resolved immediately. In the meantime John Goldie, the Methodist superintendent, toured New Zealand raising storm about Seventh-day Adventists poaching souls in his territory, likening it to the Methodist experience in Fiji. At the 1921 Methodist Conference in Wellington he warned his church members not to make donations should someone come collecting at their door for foreign missions. These collectors, he said, could be Seventh-day Adventists gathering money "to send out their white missionaries to introduce discord and unseemly competition among a people who are still in their infancy as a Christian church."

Legal resolutions did not occur until 1923/24. The Ughele dispute was settled out of court with the local Adventists agreeing to give the Methodists a considerable tract of adjoining land in order to retain between four and five hectares on which the mission station was established. The Viru property of twenty-four hectares was easily resolved when the claimant withdrew his objections just before the hearing. Adventist ownership of the Telina site, almost five hectares, was proved to the court's satisfaction in 1924 and so the mission continued there without any further legal questions.

One of the most loyal supporters of the Adventist mission, Tatangu, passed away in mid-1920. He was about eighty years old and had become blind. Another supporter, Kanijama, grew old and became anxious that his eldest son, Voki, should learn the inner secrets of ponda worship in order to carry on the heathen traditions. However, Voki had attended the Adventist school and did not care for the old folklore and paganism.

Kanijama, even though he was content for the mission to bring the advantages of a school and clinic, was unhappy about the erosion of confidence in ponda worship. At times he would tie Voki up and beat him unmercifully. His rage knew no bounds. One day he vowed he would kill Voki at sunrise. All night he shouted and paced up and down like a demented man, brandishing his axe and cursing the mission.

Kanijama's brother-in-law, Nipala, heard of the vow and in company with other men sped to Kanijama during the night. They tried to reason with him. They did not want bloodshed and a chain reaction of pay-backs. Just before sunrise four strong men grabbed Kanijama and held him fast until the sun was well above the horizon. His vow had been broken. Never before had his decisions and commands been overruled. His name meant "he never speaks a second time". This incident completely subdued him and afterwards he wished only to be called Jorovo, meaning "waning" or "setting".

Voki later became quite ill. Despite his father calling for help from the spirits and trying folk medicine (water in which crabs were boiled) Voki slipped into unconsciousness. In desperation they brought him to Wicks and Radley who revived him. These events caused Jorovo to give up his ponda worship. He testified in the Telina church about his change of heart.

Sadly, Voki contracted tuberculosis and died on December 29, 1921. Jorovo requested a Christian funeral for his son and allowed the women to attend at the graveside. (In former times women were strictly forbidden on the site). This was proof that Jorova had renounced ponda worship. The following year he himself passed away and was buried alongside Voki. He was over sixty years of age.

As superintendent of the mission Wicks administered his territory wisely. With increasing baptisms he was able to formally organize the leading companies into regular churches. The Telina group of

forty baptised members was organized into a church on July 2, 1921. Dovele, with eight members, was organized on March 5, 1922. Pejuku followed on April 22, and Viru on July 12. Mondo church was organized the following year. In addition, more stations were established, such as those at Lai River opposite Ramata (1920), Lokuru and Bariata on Rendova (1920), and Hepa on the northern tip of New Georgia (1921).

One of the most exciting advances made in 1921 was the pioneering of Choiseul Island. This occurred as another outpost of the Dovele mission. A deputation of six young men from Sega on Choiseul had arrived and remained at the Dovele School almost from its beginning. Then in June 1921 a second deputation came, this time from the village of Tauro in southern Choiseul. They stayed a month, trying to persuade someone from the school to come and teach them. Eventually Jugha, who was still assisting Pana at Mondo, was appointed to go alone.

The MELANESIA took Jugha (then about twenty-four years old), together with an interpreter from the Hambere outpost, and they disembarked at the southern tip of Choiseul on August 31, 1921. A number of villages in the area were anxious to accept Jugha. The spot finally chosen was Goghobe.

The only implement Jugha owned was an axe. He was given some packets of nails, a hammer, and a saw. Then he set to work to build a house and church from materials gathered locally. A ship had been wrecked in the nearby straits the previous year and large quantities of ready-made sawn timber had drifted ashore. Jugha salvaged ebony for the foundations and Philippine mahogany for his flooring and seating. Within a year the congregation filled the church and he was conducting a day school. Further calls kept coming from Choiseul villages as the locals heard of the transformation at Goghobe.

In response to the calls from Choiseul more missionaries were sent in 1924. On the northern coast Kioto and his wife established a

station at Sisiata, and Naghaha cared for another outpost at Vio. Later that year two young men from the Dovele school pioneered the southern coast of Choiseul. Goropava went to Kiu and Manovakito Sosovatara. After three months Goropava returned to Dovele, married deaconess Malipago, and together they worked at his new station. The first baptism on Choiseul was that of four young men at Goghobe in June 1924.

The first decade of the Solomon Islands Mission saw the establishment of key stations staffed by a European couple. At these places young men were briefly trained to care for branch stations. At times they would only stay at one outpost for a few months and then return to school for more training while another student replaced them. There was not a great deal of continuity and most of the preacher-teachers had left heathenism only a year or two beforehand. Their limited resources were a Sabbath School picture roll and the Sabbath School lessons. Peo had translated these lessons into the Ulusagi language, then typed and duplicated them. Men like Pana and Jugha, working in different language areas, had the added task of translating these orally into the local tongue.

Calls for national missionaries were more numerous than the supply. Wicks quickly became aware of the desperate need. He began to plan for a central training school which would produce both the quantity and quality required. About eighteen months after his arrival he initiated the search for a suitable site. He chose a small peninsula south of Telina called Motusu. It comprised two hundred hectares in a beautiful setting with a mountain behind it named Batuna, meaning "head". Batuna became the preferred name for the training school.

In August 1922 about eighty Marovo adherents spent two weeks clearing the site. Later, young men from the more distant mission stations were transported by the MELANESIA to help with the building of teachers' homes and dormitories. Harry Martin arrived from Australia in July 1923 and spent almost a year constructing

three main buildings. Bob Barrett and his wife, Hilda, arrived at the same time to lead out in the school. As young marrieds they had attended the Avondale School and he had graduated from the Ministerial Course in 1921.

Printing press machinery was donated by the Signs Publishing Company, Australia, and shipped out to Batuna in 1923. Gray supervised the setting up of the printshop and transferred from Pejuku to command the printing of the Sabbath School pamphlets. Larger works first appeared in 1926. These were two hymnbooks, indicating the islanders' love of singing. Peo, and later Rangoso, had helped in the translation of the hymns. It was Peo who had duplicated a small booklet of fifty-four hymns in 1922. The 1926 production entitled "Buke Va Hechi Pa Jinama Marovo" ("Book of Praise in the Marovo Language"), contained 166 hymns and a translation of the Gospel of John. This hymnal was preceded in the same year by a words-only translation of seventy-seven hymns from "Christ in Song". This was in the Marovo language and entitled "Na Rinoke" ("The Hymns").

The training school officially started on February 11, 1924, with unmarried male students from the Duki coast, Mondo, Dovele, Ughele, Viru, and the Marovo region itself. The uncompleted facilities did not include a school building so these initial students worked to better the property as well as themselves, meeting in Barrett's home for classes. With increased accommodation young women were enrolled the following year.

On September 13, 1924, the Batuna church was organised by Wicks with thirty-one charter members. From 1924 Batuna gradually assumed headquarters status. The MELANESIA's home port, administration, schooling and publishing were all eventually focused there. Telina continued as an ordinary station.

Other major developments in 1924 were the pioneering of Bougainville and Malaita Islands. A boy called Sarago, from southern Bougainville, came to the Telina school in January 1924

requesting a missionary for his people. Early in August Wicks, together with Sarago, as well as a national missionary called Nano and his wife, Pigiduri, sailed on the MELANESIA to Bougainville. Wicks secured two hectares at Lavilai on the southeast corner of the island, received endorsement for his plans from government officials, and left Nano and Pigiduri at the outpost to make a beginning.

The MELANESIA returned to Lavilai on October 23. Nano had cleared land and built a native materials hut for the Tuttys who then transferred from Dovele. Udumu accompanied them as another assistant. The following year Nano started an outpost at Leulo. Udumu cared for one at Taki. Vigorous opposition from the Roman Catholic Mission arose as the Adventists' influence grew.

One Malaitan, Shadrach Saulosia, had visited Sydney aboard a trading ship in 1917, was baptised at the New South Wales camp meeting, and returned to work on a Guadalcanal plantation. Earlier, Wheatley had provided Jones with a crew for the ADVENT HERALD (1914) which included Mae from Sinalagu Harbour, Malaita. Mae had relayed recommendations to his own people. A few other lads from Malaita had attended the Telina School in 1922 and calls for a missionary to enter their island were persistent, specifically from the Sinalagu Harbour region on the mid-eastern coast.

The South Seas Evangelical Mission had already established stations in the Sinalagu area. One of their missionaries, Mr Daniels, had been murdered there about 1914. Some coastal villagers were friendly but the interior bushmen were still treacherous and murderous.

The Andersons were appointed to pioneer Malaita. On September 14, 1924, the MELANESIA left the Marovo Lagoon with Wicks and the Andersons on board, together with two assistants, Charlie Olea and Billy. A Malaitan boy, Jackie, was also a passenger. He thought he may be able to persuade his family living on the north

side of the island at Makwaeno, to accept the Adventist missionaries.

Every nook and cranny on the boat was crammed with food supplies, building materials, hundreds of litres of drinking water, bedding and personal effects, a portable organ, and engine fuel. A cutter was towed so that Anderson would have some means of coastal transport.

At Makwaeno a storm forced them to shelter in the harbour for four days. A woman had recently died there in childbirth. The villagers, because of their fear of evil spirits, had simply collapsed the grass hut over the top of her body and left the infant to perish too. Jackie had no immediate success among his people. They did not accept a missionary for another two years.

On September 22 the missionaries entered Uru Harbour, just to the north of Sinalagu, where the people were waiting for the Adventists. However, most of the locals had an ulterior motive for their hospitality. They wanted Europeans to settle and provide work opportunities so that they could pay their taxes. The Andersons were shown a section on the beachfront at Lokai which the locals had reserved for the mission. Anderson discovered later, as he unearthed numerous bones, that it was a cemetery.

The day after arrival a temporary home was hurriedly built. It was simply a square bush-timber frame with sheets of iron nailed to the roof and three sides, with a sheet of canvas at the entrance. It was a tropical hot box. Into this they squeezed all their goods, leaving a small corner for a bed. A wood stove was set up under a coconut palm, and a door nailed to four stakes driven into the ground served as a table. A bathtub was placed near the home and a sheet of iron positioned to direct rainwater into it. The rising tide would cover the area every night and sweep into their hut, bringing numerous crabs.

Knowing the standards of the mission, the local chief ordered that

no-one should approach the Andersons unless they wore a loincloth. Normally, everyone was quite naked, except for a few ornaments. Guin Anderson therefore spent the first few days sewing loincloths to give away. Terrible ulcers and yaws were common among the people. The treatment of these later occupied a great deal of the Andersons' time.

Not everyone cared to welcome the Andersons. In fact, most locals were reluctant to give any assistance to build the mission station. They expected money for their work, not acknowledging the advantages of free schooling and medicine. Few brought any donations of food while the gardens were being established. Occasionally Guin would shoot a pigeon to provide food for the assistants. She told how, in order to conserve ammunition, she would wait until two or three birds were feeding in one spot and then bag more than one at a time.

The Andersons had trouble with the locals pilfering garden produce. When their permanent home was built on a nearby hillside an old man secreted a spell made of leaves and hair wrapped in bark under the flooring. It was discovered and Guin decided to beat the locals at their own ploy. In full view of everyone she took the spell apart and scattered the pieces all around the garden. This news spread via the 'coconut wireless' and from that time onwards the bushmen never raided the crops for fear of the evil spirits.

Valuables were always kept in the Andersons bedroom. Guin sat a baby doll to guard the entrance, knowing that the locals believed its eyes were an all-seeing spirit. It proved to be a certain guarantee of privacy.

Anderson himself visited the bushmen in the mountains surrounding Uru Harbour. He would set out with a knapsack of food and personal effects, as well as a picture roll. At set times he would signal home base by reflecting the sun in a hand-held mirror to reassure his wife he was safe.

On one walkabout Anderson came upon a marriage feast and was given a length of bamboo stuffed with cooked delicacies. Experience taught him to wait until he arrived home before breaking open the gift. When he did so, he discovered it to be filled with crickets, grasshoppers, grubs, frogs, small lizards and stick insects. A local woman waiting near his home for medical treatment pounced on the meal with great relish. On another occasion the Andersons snared two rats in their house and tossed them away. These were salvaged by a local for soup.

Malaita proved to be an eventful and arduous field much like Malekula in Vanuatu. On a number of occasions the bushmen made attempts on the Andersons' lives but were thwarted. In October 1927 two government officers and most of their police guard and boat crew were murdered while collecting taxes not far from the Andersons' station. For weeks the Anderson family lived on their little boat, the ADVENT, until calm was restored.

In mid 1929 a bushman called Onge fatally stabbed Akwasia, a girl who had broken from heathenism and was living across the bay from Lokai with national missionaries, Simi and his wife, Mary. In the same attack Onge killed Mary and bashed Simi unconscious with a rifle butt as they tried to escape in their canoe. Onge was brought to justice soon after. He said he had become enraged because Akwasia had refused to attend a heathen feast in honour of her deceased mother.

The Andersons experienced some tokens of success. Two years after their arrival Quinga, the bushman who had murdered Daniels years before, gave up his pagan worship and settled on the mission station together with some others. On July 20, 1926, Jackie and his wife were the first to be baptised on Malaita. Jackie finally persuaded his father, Sikoro, to accept an Adventist couple, Keso and Made, as missionaries at Makwaeno.

Guadalcanal Island was pioneered in mid-1926. Jack Sua had earlier attended the Telina school and returned to his home on Guadalcanal, recommending the Adventists to his own people. Jugha, together with his wife, Vella, whom he had just wed, began at Talisi on the south coast. Upstream on the Malamala River he started a little school. He cut his own blackboard from a tree and blackened it by scorching. Santa Isabel and San Cristoval Islands were not pioneered until the 1930's.

By 1930 there were almost six hundred baptised members in the Solomon Islands. This figure doubled before the Second World War and increased more rapidly after the War. The Solomons proved to be one of the most responsive groups in the South Pacific. The requests for village missionaries were numerous and persistent, some having to wait years for their wishes to be realised. If Jones, Nicholson, and Wicks had had five hundred overseas missionaries at their disposal it appears they would have been able to blanket the entire area in a short time. Instead, the mission superintendents gradually trained their own workers rather than import converts from other island groups.

The Solomon Islanders did not request Seventh-day Adventist missionaries because of a preference for the Saturday Sabbath. Initially, Wheatley's recommendations paved the way. Gradually the people themselves observed the lifestyle at the Adventist mission stations. Their favourable impressions were passed on by word of mouth.

When the missionaries forbade betel-nut chewing, swine's flesh, and certain fish, this presented few problems because the locals were accustomed to living with strict taboos.

From one village to another and from one island to another the advantages of the little schools, as well as the medical assistance, became desirable. At times gospel songs proved to be an entering wedge. Literature was not a factor in the early years. Their ponda worship fell into disrepute as they experienced the superior power

of the Holy Spirit working through prayer. Repeatedly the name of Jesus was used to bring victory over the evils spirits. The islanders also grew to value the peace which came to their society when Christian love was practised. The days of murderous head-hunting, human sacrifice, and spell-casting were gradually buried with the passing years.

Major sources for this booklet are the "Australasian Record", the "Missionary Leader", the Telina Church Diary and Record Book, the Wicks' papers, Denis Steley's 1983 unpublished Masters thesis entitled "Juapa Rane: The Seventh-day Adventist Mission in the Solomon Islands, 1914-42", and the author's personal collection of pioneer data.

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