was ridiculed for doing so. Blunden was told that when Malresres was absent from Atchin for six months working on an inter-island steamer that part of his rations consisted of tobacco which he constantly refused to touch. The European crew did their best to force him to use alcohol but this he also refused.

When given washing to do the crew intentionally left money in the pockets to test his integrity. He returned the clothing to them and asked that the money be removed otherwise he would not wash the clothes.

Blunden further commented that at meetings held at Atchin that Malresres testified and prayed intelligently and should soon be ready for baptism. Others who were progressing toward baptism were Meltic, Meiek Semmi and Meiek Woraim.[4]

Ross and Mabel James returned to Atchin from furlough in October 1921 and settled once again at Big Bay and Donald and Lilian Nicholson who were caring for the station moved to Atchin and worked with Andrew and Jean Stewart until the Stewarts returned to Australia in December 1921 on the *Pacifique*. The vessel arrived in Sydney on January 15, 1922. Naomi travelled with her foster parents to Sydney. [5]



Andrew & Jean Stewart

During the absence of the Stewarts in Australia, Donald Nicholson cared for Atchin and North-east and North-west Malekula and was the first to make contact with a tribe of bush people who later settled at Espiegles Bay. He also encouraged the beginnings of outreach on the island of Ambrym.

Andrew Stewart writing relative to the progress of the Seventh-day Adventist Church on Atchin during the nine years of mission influence said:

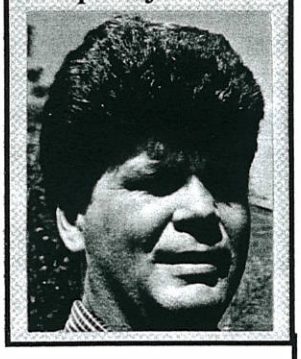
> After about nine years' work on the island of Atchin, six of which has been our privilege to be connected with the mission, we see indications of the desired change, the most encouraging being the attitude of many of the young people. From a state of semi-savage living and almost nude condition, they had been converted to clean, kind, happy young people with evidence of a spiritual experience. Sabbath is observed by a number of people on the island and the home life and social conditions are much improved. [6]

References

1,2,3 A G Stewart, *Australasian Record*, 13 Nov 1916.
4 H M Blunden, *AR*, 23 Jan 1922.
5 Editorial, ibid.
6 A G Stewart, *AR*, 30 Oct 1922.

PIONEER AUSTRALIAN MISSIONARIES TO FIJI:
Arthur & Louis Currow (1901-1904 & 1903-1906)

Stephen J Currow



When E D Sharp advised the Foreign Mission Board that on health grounds he was unable to accept the call to relieve John Fulton in Fiji, the Board requested that the Australasian Union Conference find someone, even though the position would continue to be funded by the North Pacific Conference.[1] In response to this, the 1901 Australasian Union Conference Session appointed Arthur Currow to ministerial and canvassing work in Fiji[2] on a salary of £1.15/- per week..[3]

After two shattered dreams, the rejection by Ethel May Lacey in favour of marrying Willie White[4] and Morse's letter declining denominational endorsement for studying towards a medical degree,[5] Arthur appeared set to make a meaningful contribution to the church as the first Australian Adventist missionary to Fiji.[6] Already in the seven or eight years he had been an Adventist, Arthur had been influential in the conversion from the Salvation Army of his elder brother Louis,[7] and the conversion of his younger sister Miriam. Both Louis and his family and Miriam and her family would also serve in the Pacific—Louis with Arthur in Fiji and Miriam on Pitcairn and Norfolk Islands.[8]

Arthur's Arrival in Fiji

Arthur sold his land, including a

Stephen J Currow, DMin, a graduate of Avondale College, Trinity College of Music (speech), Andrews University, and Fuller Theological Seminary began his service in South NZ as pastor and chaplain from 1981—84 . He spent the next 2 years in the South Queensland Conference as Assistant Youth Director and chaplain. He commenced mission service in 1987 when he was appointed Chair of Theology at Fulton College, Fiji. On transferring to Pacific Adventist University (then College) in PNG in 1993, Stephen taught in the Department of Theology for the next 3 years. During 1996 and 7 he pastored the Papatoetoe Church, Auckland in the NNZ Conference.

From 1998-2002 (August), Stephen was located at Avondale College where he was a Senior Lecturer in Ministry & Mission, Director of both Theological Field Education and the Institute of Church Ministry (2001—02). He is now on the faculty of Newbold College, England.

He is married to Narisa (Stanton). They have two daughters, Chelise and Chanel.

During recent years he has authored a variety of articles and prepared papers for conferences, workshops and seminars on current issues, particularly involving church growth and nurture of members.

He holds membership in The Alban Institute and Australian New Zealand Association of Theological Schools.

small three-bedroom house, 120 fruit trees and over 100 young grape vines, adjacent to Mr Fletcher's store in Cooranbong,[9] boarded the USS Hauroto in Sydney on 25 September (8.30 pm)[10] and arrived in Suva on 2 October 1901 (7.00 pm), never to live in Australia again.[11] With his background in printing,[12] nursing,[13] ministry[14] and canvassing,[15] John Fulton greatly welcomed Arthur, especially as his printing skills were urgently needed for the ongoing publication of the new evangelistic paper, *Rarama* meaning light[16]

As in any expanding mission with fledgling resources, Arthur's job description soon expanded beyond ministry and canvassing. In just a few months, he was also giving simple medical treatments[17] and was busy fundraising for the building and outfitting of a new mission launch to replace the cutter *Cina,* meaning lamp, which had recently been wrecked on a reef.[18] Arthur challenged the locals to give sacrificially to the project and then urged the Australasian churches to show economy in Sabbath-school expenses so that the largest offering yet could be given to purchase the urgently needed launch.[19] The Napier Church was one church to respond to this challenge.[20]

Arthur had also stepped into the role of teacher at a school for children and also a school for young men. It was obviously only a temporary assignment, as the Polynesian Committee searched for another teacher to respond to the call to Fiji. But when the search proved unsuccessful, the Committee wrote to John Fulton requesting he allow Arthur to continue teaching. Arthur liked the work and was considered by Fulton to be "a good labourer for the islands."[22]

When C. H. Parker returned to Fiji in July 1902, he was reassigned from Suva Vou to the Lau group to commence Adventist mission work in the eastern islands of Fiji.[23] This allowed Arthur to continue living in what had been Parker's house on the Suva Vou compound.[24]

As the impact of the tropical conditions took their toll on John Fulton's health, he requested relocation to Avondale where he planned to continue working on the translation and publication of an abridged edition of *The Great Controversy* in Fijian. This request was granted and the Fulton family left Fiji around October 1902. However, John Fulton, from the distance of Avondale, remained the Superintendent of Fiji Mission. The Parkers continued as the missionaries in the eastern islands and Arthur as the missionary based in Suva.

During his first year, Arthur learnt the Fijian language[25] and observed the customs and lifestyle of the islanders. In his letter to the *Good Health* magazine, Arthur upholds the Fijians as positive proof of the principles advocated by the magazine. He commends their simple diet which was free from complex combinations of food laden with "condiments, sweets and grease". He also applauds their practical dress code, free from the restrictions of contemporary fashions. Arthur envied the simplicity of their life and noted the freedom from disease wherever the Fijian was separated from "the corrupting influences ... and enslaving forms of civilisation."[26] He also clearly differentiated between the role of Christianising and westernising the people of Fiji when he wrote, "If our civilisation cannot put us in the enjoyment of better health of mind and body, and make us better morally, then our so-called advancement is not worth the trouble and expense of acquiring it."[27]

In a letter to Willie White Arthur described his work as "very pleasant" and giving "constant joy," yet expressed his frustration at his inability to respond to the many requests created from the interests aroused through the Adventist literature. He laments that "the isles shall wait (patiently and long) for the law." This same letter outlined the financial conditions of the church members and requested a donation of £2 or £3 from Ellen White and Willie White's family toward the construction of the Suva Vou church. This request was in response to Ellen White's commitment "to put something into every church."[28]

E H Gates, as Secretary for Missions, visited Suva Vou in January 1903

confirming Arthur's account in the letter to Willie White. During the Gates visit, Arthur "briefed Gates on work in Fiji, translated for him at meetings and expressed his anxiety for another white teacher to come so he (Arthur) can visit the islands."[29]

Fulton, writing on Fiji from Cooranbong, also notes that "a very cheering report comes from the work in his (Arthur's) district."[30] "Brother Currow has a very busy life visiting different parts, printing, preaching and tied down with a school for children and another for young men ... (and) helping to erect a church in Suva Vou."[31] Fulton also notes that the Avondale Press had donated a larger press to save "time and wearing labour" in the printing of the *Rarama* in such a hot climate.[32]

The building of the launch proved to be quite a challenge. Fifteen months after the thirteenth Sabbath offering, the launch was still being outfitted. The problems included sending a 10 hp motor from the USA, when the boat was only built for a 6-8 hp motor, and supplying steel and bronze fittings instead of just bronze fittings. These steel and bronze fittings were deemed in Fiji to be only suitable for fresh-water, yet the US supplier and the Fijian importer of the fittings claimed that they had provided what was required. The Adventist books were ready to be sold, but until the launch was completed, there was no way of travelling with them.[33] The launch, named *Adi Suva* (Queen of Suva)[34] by the ship-builder, eventually commenced service after another three months.[35]



Hydrotherapy staff at the Hamilton(NSW) Turkish baths c 1900.
Back Row: (L to R) R A Natrass, Miriam Currow, (later Minnie Adams)), Alice Booth (Later Mrs Rowe)
Front Row: Dr Rand, Lizzie & Louis Currow
"Historic Photo Gallery", *Australasian Record* 11 Aug 1969, 7.

Another report, towards the end of 1903, describes Arthur's work on the *Rarama*, as well as his teaching, church building and general missionary work. The church was soon to be dedicated and there had been three baptisms on the previous Sabbath.[36]

Louis' Call to Fiji

Arthur, in true missionary style, dreamed of ways in which he could reach not only the 93,000 Fijians, but also 2,500 Europeans and the 20,000 indentured Indians, many of whom at the end of their contracts were getting residential status.[37] With his nursing background and his desire to integrate the medical and gospel work,[38] Arthur thought that treatment rooms offering medical missionary work could be such a key, despite the free medical treatments offered by the government to the citizens. Consequently he suggested this evangelistic opportunity to his brother, Louis, who with his wife Lizzie and Arthur, had trained as nurses in the first intake at Summer Hill.[39] Louis and Lizzie volunteered to come and were appointed as the first self-supporting medical missionaries to Fiji,[40] despite Fulton's publicly expressed concern regarding the difficulties of self-supporting work in that country.[41] Louis, Lizzie and their children George (3 yrs) and Miriam (1 yr), along with Eva Edwards under appointment to work with the Parkers,[42] and John Fulton, visiting for two months, sailed on USS *Manapouri* from Sydney 23 September 1903 (10.30 pm) via Lautoka and arrived in Suva 2 October (4.00 am).[43] This voyage, two years after Arthur's arrival brought the second group of Australian Adventist missionaries to Fiji. It was quite an eventful trip with the ship encountering a heavy gale including mountainous waves, strong north-easterly winds, seasickness and damage to the boat's hatch.[44] Louis' family's travel costs from Melbourne amounted to £18 and were authorised as Mission expenses.[45]

Louis took little time in placing advertisements in both local newspapers, the *Fiji Times* published on Wednesday and Saturday and the *Western Pacific Herald* published on Tuesday and Friday. These advertisements over the next three months varied from the initial advertorial[46] to the block advertisement which described the range of services offered by both Louis and Lizzie[47] to the later ones which tried to create a need for health services and offer massage as a solution.[48] The address listed was always PO Suva.

Louis, as a masseur, was prepared to treat all forms of acute and chronic disease by "rational methods".[49] Initial advertising offered treatment for rheumatics, dyspepsia and indigestion, with later advertisements recommending tonic treatments, to be administered in homes, for nervous complaints.[50] Massage, combining both the use of water and electricity, was the main method of treatment, with Louis claiming that it would accomplish amazing results.[51]

The First Fijian Council [52]

During this visit to Fiji, John Fulton convened the first Fijian Church Council in Suva Vou, on 2-5 November 1903. Expatriate delegates to this Council were John Fulton, the Parkers, Arthur Currow, the newly arrived Sister Read, Sister Edwards, and Louis & Lizzie Currow and Sister Peoples who was en route to America. Fulton was the chairperson and Arthur was appointed as the secretary of the Council. Unlike the custom of other denominations where one or maybe two island brethren joined such councils, this Council was well attended by them. The meeting started with worship based on Acts 15, followed by Fulton's remarks that under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, similar decisions needed to be made in Fiji. The agenda was presented and a sub-committee of C. H. Parker, Pauliasi Bunoa and Arthur Currow was appointed to draft resolutions.

While awaiting the subcommittee's recommendations, the group discussed the medical work. Louis Currow reported on his first three weeks, in which he had given 66 treatments, 29 of which were free; for the other 37 he earned £10.15s. Louis was asked to express his desires and make suggestions for the work. Following that discussion, the meeting voted that:

- the medical work be known as the *Fiji Medical Mission*, and take the form of health education for whites and the island people;
- islanders would be charged a nominal fee which could be paid in cash or labour according to the ability of the individual;
- in order to give the work a public standing, rooms were to be secured in Suva as soon as advisable;
- Louis would also be responsible for the health foods and sanitary supplies;
- the *Rarama* would run free advertisements advertising Louis' medical ministry amongst the people.

In the subsequent meetings of the Council, twelve other resolutions, as recommended by the subcommittee, were passed. These included:

- adopting the Fijian name given by outsiders, *The Church of the Seventh Day*, as the official denominational name in Fijian;
- requesting that the Australasian Union Conference unite Fiji with Samoa and Tonga.;
- developing publishing strategies to encourage people to become canvassers of literature on a commission basis; targeting the Solomon Islanders living in Fiji so that the truth would return with them on their return home; commissioning publication projects including four new tracts in 1904 and a hymn book containing not less than 100 hymns;
- organising Sabbath School programs, facilities and reports as well as arranging for the publication of the monthly Sabbath School lessons in the *Rarama;*
- endorsing the Union Conference's action to appoint a teacher and establish the Polynesian Mission Training School in Fiji, which, in the interim, would continue to operate at Suva Vou;
- abstaining from the cultivation, sale or use in any way of the island drink *yaqona* and tobacco and pledging to discard all things classed as unclean and unsuitable for food;
- separating from idolatry, riotous feasting and worldly pleasures which are contrary to the spirit and practices of the gospel;
- shunning debt as leprosy;
- defining marriage with unbelievers as being "unequally yoked" and denying ministers the ability to marry parties divided in religious belief,
- exhorting faithfulness in tithing, returning to the Lord His own,
- conducting meetings at sunset to welcome in and close the Sabbath and
- acknowledging by praise and thanksgiving the goodness of God and gratitude for the presence of the Holy Spirit in the meetings.

Parker perceived that the Council "sat together in heavenly places; for not a note of discord marred the sweet influence of the Spirit."[54] A number of these actions were subsequently endorsed by the Australasian Union Conference.[55]

Mr. & Mrs. L Currow

MASSEURS

Are prepared to treat all Forms of Acute And Chronic Diseases. Tonic Treatments for nervous complaints administered in homes

Address— Suva P.O.

An early advertisement. *Western Pacific Herald* 20 October 1903.

Arthur's Marriage

Arthur left Suva on USS *Rokotino* on 14 January (11.30pm), bound for Auckland[56] for a three month break.[57] On 8 March 1904, Pastor Baker, Arthur's fellow student from Australasian Bible School days[58] and now acting President of the New Zealand Conference, [59] officiated at Arthur's marriage to Margaret Elisabeth Reid in Napier, New Zealand.[60] On the day he arrived in Napier, Pastor Baker received an urgent request from the Kaeo Church.[61] Within a fifty-mile radius, interest had been aroused amongst 5000 Maoris. Baker, concerned that he didn't have the resources to meet this exciting opportunity, shared the matter with Arthur Currow, who expressed interest in the project. He obviously explained to Baker that he was not due back in Fiji until 20 April and proposed that he could stay another month to make the visit to the Maoris worth-

while if Fulton was prepared to print the *Rarama* at Avondale and send it to Fiji for distribution. Consequently, Arthur sent a letter to Fulton and Baker sent a letter of request to Gates, which in Gates' absence was forwarded to Fulton.[62] Apparently, Arthur's letter to Fulton also expressed discontent regarding some issues in Fiji, revealing an attitude which Fulton didn't appreciate.[63]

Arthur's Return to Fiji

Arthur and Elisabeth left Napier on 17 March. The Napier Church expressed their disappointment at the loss of such an active member.[64] However, in Auckland a few days later, Arthur received a reply from Fulton. Fulton's position, as described in a letter to Irwin, was to tell Arthur to return at once to Fiji and recommence the publication of the *Rarama*.[65] Apparently, Elisabeth and her family were also not happy about Arthur considering the trip to Kaeo.[66] Consequently, Arthur and Elisabeth boarded the USS *Moura* in Auckland on 23 March 1904 (2.10 pm) and arrived in Suva on 27 March 1904 (4.00 pm).[67]

While Arthur was away, Parker visited Suva in March 1904, and with Louis Currow, met E H Gates on his tour of the islands, made an itinerary to the Ra Coast and also supervised the building of a new cutter to service the eastern islands.[68] Louis was the major donor for this cutter.[69] Parker noted that the Suva Vou school students were working in their gardens awaiting Arthur's return.[70]

Also in progress, awaiting the final £50 expected from the first quarter 1904 thirteenth Sabbath School offering, was the Suva Vou Church building. In promoting the offering through the *Record*, Arthur, in his role as both overseer of the Suva Vou church and Treasurer of Fiji Mission,[71] reviewed the financial circumstances and sacrificial commitment of the Fijians and requested support from Australia and New Zealand.[72]

In addition, Arthur faced a number of important issues: adjustment to marital responsibilities, readjustment to Fijian cultural context, his wife's culture shock, a backlog of work, additional roles due to not only the existing lack of personnel but also the transfer of a worker to the Lau group, an increasing interest from literature distribution but limited human resources to meet the enquiries, temperamental health[73] and the attitudinal complications which had surfaced in New Zealand.

Challenges for the Medical Work

In the meantime, Louis' work continued to be blessed by God. In March 1904, Louis reported to Gates that "he had all the work he could do." Louis also reported that a prominent dentist in Suva had offered him the privilege of opening treatment rooms in his centrally located house. God was giving him favour with all classes—Fijians, whites and Indians—as he was helping them both physically and spiritually. In his first four-and-a-half months, Louis had earned £80.11s.1d and still given almost a third (142) of his treatments free. Louis noted that many of the Indians showed enthusiastic appreciation for the medical work and it was hoped that a spiritual foothold could be gained amongst them through this activity.[74]

A new development in the medical missionary ministry was advertised by way of public notices in the Fiji Times. Louis and Lizzie advised the residents of Suva, Levuka and Lautoka of the limited opportunity for indoor patients with chronic disease to be treated at their Suva Vou Health Home. They claimed that this residential experience would assist nature in restoring the sick.[75]

PUBLIC NOTICE

We beg to inform the Public of Suva, Levuka, Lautoka and other towns, that we are prepared to take in a limited number of INDOOR PATIENTS, for all forms of Chronic Diseases, at our

SUVA VOU HEALTH HOME.

Acute Diseases also treated by the most Modern Up-to-date methods.

We employ Hot Air, Vapour, Russian Electric Sitz, and Massage. Baths, Salt Glows, Saline Sponges, Dry Electricity, and General Massage. These methods, coupled with a corrected dietary and delightful surroundings, all assist Nature in restoring the sick.

Terms: Two Guineas.

Correspondence invited.

L Currow, Masseur.

Suva Vou Health Home advertisement. *Fiji Times*, 7 May 1904.

However, despite the positive results and glowing testimonials, Louis faced some serious challenges. In a letter to Irwin, the Union Conference President, Louis highlighted the serious opposition from two of the four doctors and two dentists already operating in Suva. The two opposing doctors were also government medical officers, entrusted with the responsibility of administering the law. When one of these officials found Louis administering treatments to one of his patients, as requested by the patient, he abused Louis by calling him a charlatan and an unqualified man. He also set about to visit other patients of Louis and turn them against Louis. Louis, although operating within the ordinance and supported by the favourable doctors and dentist, had no documentation to show the authorities if they were to ask for his qualifications. Consequently, as a Conference employee, albeit self-supporting, he requested the Union Conference President to take steps to confirm his claim to be a duly qualified worker.[76]

Louis and Lizzie later found a home and land, belonging to a patient, for lease on the outskirts of Suva. Here they continued to serve both Europeans, indentured Indians and Fijians. They treated the Europeans in the house and the Indians and Fijians in the outhouses. Amongst the Indians, Louis continued to have

good results. He longed for the day when some "present truth literature" would be available for these very needy souls. Again, Louis testified that they had "not really been idle one day" since they began. Despite the challenges, their prospects were bright, and their hope and confidence were in God.[77]

Fulton Returns to Fiji

The complications which arose as Arthur and Elisabeth were leaving New Zealand set the stage for the relationship between Arthur and Fulton to deteriorate. Fulton didn't appreciate the letter that Arthur sent on his return to Fiji. Subsequently, Fulton transferred Arthur to the Ra Coast. Arthur wrote to Fulton in May, telling him that, instead of relocating as requested, he had settled in his mind to spend the rest of the year at Suva Vou until those who were planning to come were prepared. Fulton felt this decision was sudden, unexpected and something like an explosion.[78]

Susie Fulton with her children Agnes and Georgie, and accompanied by Edith Guillard, returned to Fiji[79] during May 1904. On her arrival, she wrote at least two reports back to John Fulton. Fulton's letters to Irwin quote from these reports, accusing Arthur of appearing not to do any work, not attending Sabbath School, only preaching once a week on Sabbath morning, allowing mission equipment to deteriorate in the tropical conditions, leaving the mission compound overgrown with weeds, agitating discontent amongst the nationals by continuing to contact the Fijian who had been transferred to the Lau group, planning to use the money raised in Napier only for work in the Suva Vou district and employing a house-help. Susie Fulton also feared that Louis would side with Arthur and compound the problem.[80] In her first five days back in Fiji, she summarised her perceptions of Arthur as "I have married a wife, please excuse me."[81]

At the Committee Meeting of the Australasian Union Conference, 31 May 1904, "portions of a letter from J E Fulton were read, showing that Arthur Currow was taking a course which was likely to prove detrimental to the work in Fiji, and refuses to follow instructions sent to him. In view of this Brother Fulton thinks it desirable for him [Fulton] to return to Fiji at the close of the present school term."[82] Only then was action taken to reappoint John Fulton to Fiji at the end of the current Avondale School term. John Fulton, accompanied by his daughter, Jessie, returned to Fiji on the USS *Manapouri* in July 1904 to join his wife and son who had returned prior to this decision.[83] Also on the vessel was Stephenson, a British Adventist missionary who had already worked in Samoa, en route to pioneer the work in Rotuma.[84]

In the meeting, 9 August 1904, a second "letter from J E Fulton was read, referring to the condition of affairs in Fiji, particularly to the course pursued by Arthur Currow, against whom he makes charges of continued neglect of duty, and harsh conduct towards the natives."[85] Action was then taken to recall Arthur Currow from Fiji. Also at this series of meetings, action was taken to refer Arthur's wages for the period while he was in New Zealand to the Conference Committee who later decided to pay him only half wages for this time.[86]

In September, Georgie Fulton fell sick and died unexpectedly. Arthur secured the child's coffin from Suva and during the funeral service led in the Scripture Reading.[87]

When Anna Hindson, the Sabbath School and Youth Secretary for the Australasian Union Conference, visited Fiji on 7 November, in transit from Sydney to the United States with her family, they were met in a boat by Arthur and Elisabeth. Around town they also met Sybil Read and the Louis Currow family. They then proceeded to Suva Vou, enjoying the excitement of seeing the reality of projects, including the church building and the launch, for which they, along with many other Sabbath School members, had given sacrificially. The printing press was now located in one of the rooms in Fulton's house. Anna Hindson noted that there were now four organised churches throughout the Fijian Islands, representing about 150 Sabbath-keepers.[88]

Arthur's Departure

A few days later, 11 November 1904 (2.30 pm), Arthur and Elizabeth sailed from Suva to Auckland on the USS *Navua*[89] and returned to Napier. The next mention of Arthur and Elisabeth is in Parker's report from the Fiji Mission to the 1906 Australasian Union Conference Session where he expressed concern at being the only expatriate missionary in Fiji. Arthur Currow had been recalled, Louis had returned due to poor health and John Fulton had been appointed as President of the New South Wales Conference.[90] Arthur had been so keen to ensure that his first church was a success.[91] Despite Arthur's contribution to the breakdown in the relationship with Fulton, his return to self-supporting medical work for eight years suggests that he viewed this recall from Fiji as a major disappointment.

Developing Buresela

The needs of the Polynesian Mission Training Institution continued to be discussed. Because of the limitations of the Suva Vou site, the decision was made in February 1905 to relocate the interim training institution to leased land at Buresela. This decision meant

that many of the missionaries would also relocate from Suva Vou to Buresela. Plans for the relocation of some of the houses were made.

When considering how the mission at Suva Vou would continue, it was decided that Louis Currow would lease the house and land at Suva Vou at a price which would not only pay for the land rental at Suva Vou but also contribute to the land rental of the new property. It was also hoped that Louis could assist the local church, so as not to look as if the Church was abandoning the Suva Vou mission.[92] This arrangement lasted for about nine months when Louis decided that due to impaired health he also must leave Fiji.[93]

Louis' Departure

Sixteen months after Arthur and Elisabeth departed, Louis, Lizzie and their two children sailed on the AUSN *Pilbarra* from Suva on 8 March (4.30 am) [94] and arrived in Sydney 15 March 1906. He was assigned to work with the Marrickville Mission.[95]

Arthur's Reappointment

Significantly, when the 1912 Australasian Union Conference Session, under the Presidency of John Fulton, considered a request to have a worker in the Lau Group of Fiji, Arthur was reappointed to Fiji.[96] Although this call from John Fulton was eventually rescinded,[97] it appears to have healed the disappointment of his initial recall from Fiji and given him enough confidence to return to ministry in New Zealand. In 1919 Arthur requested a transfer to Fiji. This was not considered advisable.[98] Consequently he went to California where he studied the pre-medical course at Pacific Union College and then re-entered ministry in California again under the Union Presidency of John Fulton,[99] where he was subsequently ordained.[100] In 1927, Arthur again applied for work in Fiji but no place was available.[101]

The same persistence that Morse and Fulton seemed to encounter appears to have enabled Arthur to eventually realise the dreams which had shattered prior to his appointment to Fiji: he was able to gain further medical training and combine the health and gospel work in California; and after the death of both Willie White and Elisabeth Currow, Arthur, in December 1955 married May Lacey, his sweetheart from the Australasian Bible School days, at age eighty-three and eighty-two respectively, and they enjoyed nine sunset years together.[102]



Arthur Currow & May Lacey White Currow's wedding day, December 1955.

Louis' Legacy

Subsequent to his return from Fiji, Louis was appointed to ministry in Queensland, where he was ordained in 1916,[103] then back to New South Wales, North New Zealand and Victoria [104] In 1928, Louis's son, George, was appointed to the Navosa School, Wainibuka, Fiji, but was unable to go due to his wife Dulce's health.[105] In 1951, Louis' granddaughter, June, and husband, Lin Burns, were called to Fiji where Lin worked for six months with John Schuler in the Suva School of Evangelism as choirmaster with a Fulton College choir.[106] In 1987, Louis' great-grandson, Stephen, was appointed to Fiji as the chair of the Theology Department at Fulton College where he served for six years, before transferring to Pacific Adventist University as a lecturer in the Theology Department for another three years.

Conclusion

One hundred years after the ministry of Arthur and Louis in Fiji, Fijian Seventh-day Adventists still adhere to the decisions of the first Fijian Church Council regarding *yaqona.* Villages with a significant Adventist presence still conduct opening and closing Sabbath meetings. Twelve hymns translated into Fijian by Arthur[107] are in the current Fijian hymnal. The influence of one of Arthur's converts, Ratu Meli from the Ra Coast, can still be traced.

Insights can also be gained regarding missionaries and mission processes. Lessons can still be learned regarding the complications of making administrative decisions from a distance. Administrative styles, including power-plays, usually have implications for staff morale. "Compounditis," including the perceptions as to who is working the hardest, spouse reports, and relatives as work colleagues, can also be an emotionally-draining experience. The health consequences of being a missionary in unfamiliar tropical conditions still need to be addressed. Preparation for cross-cultural ministry requires more than the idealistic dream of working for God. Culture shock still happens. Missionaries are human. Marriage is an adjustment and newly-marrieds can benefit from a new assignment. Issues of accreditation and public credibility cannot be assumed or taken for granted. Mission is restricted when vision focuses only on the immediate

view at the expense of the "big picture," as illustrated by Fulton's attitude to the potential of the visit to the Maoris and Arthur's attitude to the work in Lau and Ra at the expense of Suva Vou.

Yet the highlights of this research were the insights I gained regarding Arthur and Louis' strategies for mission.

- Consider Arthur's careful delineations of the need to Christianise but not westernise. Although he may have portrayed a romantic view of the Fijian lifestyle that he saw in the honeymoon stage of his mission service, he clearly was able to separate conceptually the Christian message from the "corrupting influences" of westernisation.
- Consider both Arthur's and Louis' commitment to and practice of integrating the medical and gospel work. Even then, Arthur felt it was too easy to not have enough of a spiritual dimension in our medical work and too little practical Christianity in our gospel work.
- Consider the desire expressed initially by Fulton [109] and endorsed at the first Church Council to expose the indentured Solomon Islanders to "present truth" knowing that if they were to be converted, on their inevitable return to the Solomon Islands, they would continue the spread of the Great Commission in their yet un-entered homeland.
- Consider also the desire to reach not only the Fijians, but also the Europeans and indentured Indians. Although there is no subsequent record of the success of the outreach to the Europeans, this is an area that is too often overlooked in mission today.

Despite the issues which arose in Fiji, Arthur in his application for sustentation affirmed that "ever since he received the message, it has held him in service."[110] The motivation for Louis' ministry, especially in these pioneering years in Fiji, seems to be encapsulated in the words of the following song which Louis wrote in 1895, on the eve of becoming an Adventist.

A LOVE FOR SOULS [111]

Give me a love for souls
A love that dares to die
A passion, Lord, for dying souls
To fit them for the sky,
My heart washed white and clean
In Jesus' precious blood
As day by day I walk with Thee
Make me a saviour, Lord

Give me Thy blood-washed robes
Thy spotless purity
The image of Thyself impart
Oh make me just like Thee
Give me the Holy Ghost
And make me love the fight
Be satisfied with nothing less
Than bringing souls to light.

Teach me to save lost souls
And stop their mad career
To stand upon the precipice
Of grief and black despair
To cry, look up and live!
Oh, sinner, turn and flee!
Look to the Christ of Calvary
He's calling now for thee.

Notes & References

1 "Fiji," *Foreign Mission Board Minutes 4*, General Conference Archives, 20 June 1901, 16.

2 "16th Meeting, Sunday 28 July - Report from the Committee on the Distribution of Labour," *Union Conference Recorder*, 31 July 1901, 93.

3 *Australasian Union Conference Minutes*, SPD Archives, 24 Apr 1902, 145: Auditing Committee's Report, AUC Minutes, (1897-1909) SPD Archives, 8 Jan 1903, 201.

4 "Life Sketch of May Lacey," *Australasian Record*, 3 Nov 1969, 12

5 G W Morse was on the sub-committee of the Australasian Medical Missionary & Benevolent Assn. reviewing Arthur Currow's request. He wrote to him to advise him of the committee's decision. "Letter to Arthur Currow," *Letter File Sydney Adventist Hospital Heritage Room*, 27 February 1899. Around this time, the church endorsed H E Minchin, J S Reekie & A W Semmens to study medicine at Sydney University & Dorees Reekie at Melbourne University. *Minutes*, AMM&B Assn, 17th Meeting, 29 Dec 1898 & 21 St Mtg, 19 Feb 1899, SAH Heritage Room.

6 In Fiji, Arthur joined the Fulton family from USA via Auckland., (see Robert Hare *Fulton's Footprints in Fiji, 33-60), accompanied by Edith Guillard from Napier, (*ibid, 61*) & the Parker family from USA (*ibid, 92*). Ephraim Hathaway*, a half-caste Fijian who had become a SDA on the goldfields of NZ & attended Avondale in 1898 prior to his return to Fiji, had also been a licensed minister in Fiji from 1899-1901. *Hathaway, Ehraim, Service Cards* SPD Archives.

7 Louis Currow, *Affadavit Regarding William Booth and the Sabbath*, declared at Ballarat Vic, 10 May 1934 in front of F A Cooper JP: declared at Melbourne Vic, 10 Sep 1936 in front of J R Partridge.

8 Miriam Adams, "By Faith Alone," Six part series *Australasian Record*, 30 Apr - 4 Jun 1956.

9 "Advertisement," *UCR*, 1 Sep, 1901, 15.

10 "Shipping," *Fiji Times*, 3 Oct 1901, 2.

11 ibid & *Western Pacific Herald*, 4 Oct, 1901, 5.

12 J E Fulton, *Letter to W. C. White*, 27 Nov 1901. After Arthur left school at the age of 14 he spent 2 yrs in a print shop & a further 2 yrs in a publishing house. He also managed a daily newspaper. When he became an Adventist after reading the *Great Controversy*, he was soon employed at the Bible Echo Publishing Company. He also attended the Australasian Bible College. See Ernest Lloyd "Full of Years" *Review & Herald*, 13 Aug 1959, 6.

13 Arthur, along with Louis and his future wife Lizzie Hubbard, was in the initial nurses training class at the Summer Hill Sanitarium in 1896. See Bert Clifford and Noel Clapham, "Health & Healing" in Noel Clapham, *Seventh-day Adventists in the South Pacific 1885-1985*, 79. Arthur also spent 1899 in nurse training at Summer Hill. See G W Morse's letter to Arthur Currow 29 Feb 1899 and UCR, 1 Nov 1899, 15.

14 Arthur attended Avondale School for Christian Workers in 1900 &1901 doing the Biblical and Normal Course. Some of the fees needed was paid by the E. G. White Education Fund.

15 Throughout his denominational service, Arthur spent six years canvassing. See Arthur Currow's *Sustentation Fund Application Blank*. Most of this appears to have taken place prior to his appointment to Fiji. Certainly, Arthur spent the summer of

1899/1900 canvassing in South Queensland (see *UCR*,1 Nov 1899, 15) and was appointed to canvassing in Parkes, NSW at the end of 1900 (see *UCR*, 1 Nov 1900, 15 and Canvassing Reports Dec 1900 - Jun 1901 *UCR*,1 Jan 1901, 8; 1 Mar 1901, 10; 1 Apr 1901, 8; 1 May 1901, 10; 1 Jul 1901, 10; 1 Aug 1901, 11) until his return to Avondale School for Christian Workers.

16 John Fulton, *Letter to W. C. White*, 27 Nov 1901, 2.

17 Fulton, "The Work in Fiji," *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, 15 Apr 1902, 17.

18 For the story of the wrecking of the *Cina* see "Letter from Brother Fulton: Letter to H E Minchin, 10 Sep 1901," *UCR*, 1 Nov 1901, 3.

19 A Currow, "The Situation in Fiji," *UCR*, 1 Mar 1902, 9.

20 *UCR*, 1 Sep 1902, 5

21 *Polynesian Committee Report*, Avondale College Heritage Room, 1902, # 17.

22 "Suva Vou, Fiji," *Medical Missionary*, May 1902, 214.

23 C. H. & M. G. Parker, " *UCR*, 15 Oct 1902, 4.

24 Hare, 147

25 Parker, & Parker op cit

26 A Currow, "A Letter From Fiji," *Good Health*, 1 Dec 1902, 192.

27 ibid

28 Currow, *Extract from Letter to W C White*, 4 Dec 1902, 1.

29 E H Gates, "Reports from the Field," *UCR*, 1 Apr 1903, 5.

30 Fulton, "Cause in Fiji," *Advent Review & Sabbath Herald*, (*R & H*), 14 Apr 1903, 14.

31 ibid.

32 ibid.

33 Fulton, "Report from Fiji to the Australasian Union Conference Session," *UCR*, 11 Sep 1903.

34 Hare, 157

35 *UCR* 1 Nov 1903, 8

36 Fulton, *Fiji*, *R & H*, 26 Nov 1903, 19.

37 The official population estimates as at Dec 31 1902 are recorded in "Vital Statistics," *Fiji Times*, 12 Dec 1903, 2. Europeans - 2,548; Half-castes - 1,571; Indians - 19,876; Polynesians - 1,886; Rotumans - 2,195; Fijians - 93,384; Others - 465 totalling 121,925 people.

38 Currow, *Letter to E G White*, 4 Jul 1897, 4. EGW Research Centre, 4 Jul 1897, 4.

39 Hare, 155.

40 "Distribution of Labour," *UCR*, 22 Sep 1903, 24.

41 "The Work in Fiji,- Report to Union Conference" *UCR*, 1 Sep 1901, 6.

42 "Notes & Personals", *UCR*, 1 Oct 1903, 7.

43 "Shipping," *Fiji Times*, 3 Oct, 1903, 2.

44 "Shipping," *Western Pacific Herald*, 4 Oct 1903, 4; & "Notes & Personals" *UCR*, 1 Nov 1903, 8.

45 "Trial Balance" *AUC Minutes*, SPD Archives, 1903 # 234.

46 "Local & General," *Western Pacific Herald*, 16 Oct 1903, 4; and "Local News," *Fiji Times*, 21 Oct 1903, 2.

47 Mr L Currow, Masseur, is prepared to treat all forms of chronic disease—rheumatics and Dyspepsia and indigestion...by rational means." *WPH*, 16 Oct 1903, 3; *FT*, 17 Oct 1903, 3.

48 "Are you run down? Feeling Out of Sorts? Massage will Benefit You. For terms, address L. Currow Masseur, Suva PO."

49 "Mr L. Currow, Masseur," *WPH*, 16 Oct1903, 4.

50 Advertisements commencing *WPH*, 20 Oct 1903, 5.

51 Advertisements commencing *FT*, 20 Jan 1904.

52 E H Gates, "Council Meeting in Fiji," *R & H*, 3 Mar 1904, 14-15; "Council Meeting in Fiji," *UCR* 15 May 1904, 2-3.

53 Hare, 157.

54 C. H. Parker, "Council Meeting in Fiji" *UCR*, 1 Dec 1903, 8.

55 The publication of the Fijian Hymn book was authorised at this meeting, *AUC Committee*, *1897-1901*, 31 Dec 1903, #226. It is also significant that the cutter for Parker's use in the Eastern Islands was also approved.

56 "Shipping," *FT*, 16 Jan 1904, 2.

57 W. L. H. Baker, *Letter to Gates*, Napier, 3 Mar 1904.

58 *Avondale School for Christian Workers Register*, Avondale Heritage Room. 24 Aug-14 Dec 1892; 1 Feb-Nov 6,1893; 4 Apr-Sep 21 1894.

59 "Conference Session Report," *AUC*, SPD Archives 1 Mar 1904, 4.

60 "Notes & Personals", *UCR*, 1 Apr 1904, 7.

61 W L H Baker, *Letter to E H Gates*, E G White Research Centre, 3 Mar 1904

62 J E Fulton, *Letter to G A Irwin*, EGWRC, 13 Mar 1904.

63 ibid

64 "Notes & Personals," *UCR*, 1 Apr 1904, 7.

65 Fulton, op cit.

66 Baker, *Letter to Irwin*, EGWRC, 25 Mar 1904.

67 "Shipping," *Fiji Times*, 30 Mar 1904, 2.

68 "Notes from the Field," *4th Sabbath Reading*, May 28, 1904.

69 The cost of this cutter was provided by Louis Currow (£40) with the remainder (£20) being donated by people in Australia. See C. H. Parker, "Fiji", *UCR*, 15 Feb 1904, 2, and Gates, "Notes from the Field," *4th Sabbath Reading*, 23 Apr 1904.

70 Parker, "Fiji," *UCR*, 15 Apr 1904, 3.

71 Secretariat, "Fiji Mission," *SDA Yearbook*, 1904, Washington DC: General Conference, 1904, 59.

72 "Suva Vou Mission, Fiji," *UCR*, 15 Mar 1904, 5.

73 See Arthur's letter to EGW Jul 1897 and Sustentation Application.

74 "Notes from the Field," *4th Sabbath Reading*, May 28, 1904.

75 "Public Notice," *Fiji Times*, 7 & 11 May 1904, 3.

76 L Currow, "Letter to Elder Irwin," EGWRC, 2 Jun 1904

77 L Currow, as quoted in "4th Sabbath Reading," 23 Apr 1904.

78 Fulton, *Letter to Irwin*, 24 May 1904.

79 Hare 156

80 Fulton, *Letter to Irwin*, 19 May 1904.

81 Fulton, *Letter to Irwin*, 24 May 1904.

82 Letter from Fulton, *AUC Committee Minutes*, SPD Archives, 31 May 1904, 252.

83 "Suva Vou Fiji", *UCR*, 8 Nov 1903,7.

84 "Notes & Personals", *UCR*, 1 Jul 1904, 7.

85 "Letter from Fulton," *AUC Committee Minutes*, SPD Archives, 9 August 1904, 268.

86 *AUC Committee 1897-1909*, SPD Archives, 4 Aug 1904, # 254; 17 Oct 1904. #274.

87 Hare, 168-9.

88 A L Hindosn, "A Visit to Fiji," *UCR*, 15 Dec 1904, 2-3.

89 "Shipping," *Fiji Times*, 12 Nov 1904, 2.

90 "Report of Fiji," *UCR*, 1 Oct, 1906, 33.

91 See Arthur's letter to Willie White 4 Dec 1902.

92 "Fiji Training School," *UCR*, 1 May 1905, 4-5.

93 "Notes & Personals", *UCR*, 2 Apr 1906, 7.

94 "Shipping," *Fiji Times*, 10 Mar 1906, 2.

95 "Notes & Personals", *UCR*, 2 Apr 1906, 7.

96 "Distribution of Labour," *UCR*, 16 Sep 1912, 3.

97 *AUC Council*, SPD Archives, 25 Sep 1913, #119.

98 *Currow, Arthur—Service Card*, SPD Archives, 5 Oct 1919, #145.

99 Secretariat, "Southern California Conference-Licensed Ministers," *SDA Yearbook, 1922*, Washington DC: GC, 1922; "Pacific Union Conference," ibid 56.

100 *Secretariat, ibid, 1926*, 73.

101 *Currow, Arthur—Service Card*, SPD Archives, 15 Mar 1927,#110.

102 "Life Sketch of May Lacey White," *AR*, 3 Nov 1969, 12.

103 "Currow, Louis—Obituary", *AR*, 25 Aug 1947.

104 "Notes & Personals", *UCR*, 2 Apr 1906, 7; 30 Nov 1908, 7; 20 Dec 1909, 3; 30 Jan 1911, 7; 16 Sep 1912, 3; Secretariat, *SDA Yearbook 1911-1930*.

105 *Currow, George—Service Card*, SPD, 9 Jan 1928, #237.

106 Conversation with June & Lin Burns, Mar 2002.

107 *Fijian Adventist Hymnal*, 1979 ed. - #12 All Glory Laud & Honour; #13 O For a Heart to Praise My God; #17 For the Beauty of the Earth; #21 We Would See Jesus; #99 Just As I Am; #164 Speak Lord in the Stillness; #315 I've Wandered Far Away from God; #316 There is a Gate That Stands Ajar; #324 Whosoever Heareth; and #420 Out on an Ocean Boundless We Ride.

108 "Currow, Arthur—Obituary", *R & H*, 2 Jul 1964, 24.

109 Fulton, "The Work in Fiji-Evening After Sabbath, Jul 12" Union Conference Session Report, *UCR*, 22 Jul 1901, 21.

110 Arthur Currow, *Sustentation Fund Application Blank*, GC Archives, 16 Aug 1927.

111 L. Currow, "A Love for Souls," *The War Cry*