

Anderson, John David (1896–1967) and Guinevere Mary (Smith) (1895–1988)

BARRY OLIVER

Barry Oliver, Ph.D., retired in 2015 as president of the South Pacific Division of Seventh-day Adventists, Sydney, Australia. An Australian by birth Oliver has served the Church as a pastor, evangelist, college teacher, and administrator. In retirement, he is a conjoint associate professor at Avondale College of Higher Education. He has authored over 106 significant publications and 192 magazine articles. He is married to Julie with three adult sons and three grandchildren.

John David and Guinevere Mary Anderson were missionaries to the Solomon Islands. John Anderson served also as a pastor, translator, and church administrator.

Early Life

John David Anderson, a missionary to the Solomon Islands, was born to William J. and Susan A. Anderson¹ on November 5, 1896, at Quipolly, New South Wales, Australia,² his birth being registered at Quirindi. John became a Seventh-day Adventist through the influence of a layperson who studied the Bible with him.³ He was baptized in 1915.⁴ At the time he had been working as a carpenter and a farmer.⁵ In September 1915 he commenced working on the farm at the Australasian Missionary College.⁶ He earned his tuition so that he could commence classes in 1916 and graduated from the ministerial training course in 1919.⁷



John David Anderson and family.

Photo courtesy of Adventist Heritage Centre.

Guinevere Mary Smith was born to John E. and Mary A. Smith⁸ on November 10, 1895, at Tamworth, New South Wales, Australia.⁹ Guinevere attended the Australasian Missionary College, graduating in 1918, and was appointed to work as a Bible worker in New Zealand.¹⁰

Marriage

On graduation, Anderson was appointed to work as a literature evangelist in Mildura, Victoria, Australia.¹¹ He worked there only until September 1920, when he accepted an appointment to the Solomon Islands.¹² He rang Guinevere with a problem. He needed to be married before he could leave for the Solomons. She accepted his "proposal."¹³ John and Guinevere were married at Tamworth, New South Wales, on September 15, 1920.¹⁴ Three children were later born into the family: Myrtle Guinevere (born July 30, 1921, at Telina, Marovo Lagoon, Solomon Islands); Cyril David (born February 17, 1923, at the Sydney Sanitarium); and Raymond Sefton (born November 26, 1929, at the Sydney Sanitarium).¹⁵

Years of Service

Just a few weeks after their marriage, the Andersons departed Australia for their first mission station.¹⁶ Telina in the Marovo Lagoon, Western Solomon Islands.¹⁷ There they set about to learn the language as quickly as possible so they could communicate and share the good news of the gospel.¹⁸ After just three months, Guinevere commenced teaching the children at a day school in Telina.¹⁹

They remained in Telina for a little over a year. Then they were transferred to Viru Harbour. Viru was where G. F. Jones had first established a presence in the Solomon Islands in 1914.²⁰ Oscar and Ella Hellestrand had been the first to live there, but they had left some years before the arrival of the Andersons.²¹ During the first year in Viru, Myrtle, just one year old, became so ill with malaria that it was necessary for Guinevere to take her by steamship back to Sydney. Both mother and daughter were dangerously ill with malaria on the trip.²² Guinevere returned after four and a half months, leaving their little daughter with her sister in Sydney. They were not reunited until the Andersons returned to Sydney for their furlough a year later.²³

While on furlough at the end of 1923, John and Guinevere Anderson were asked to transfer from Viru to the island of Malaita.²⁴ They were to be the first Seventh-day Adventist missionaries on Malaita. Back at Viru, preparations were made, and after much prayer, the mission ship *Melanesia* sailed from Viru on September 14, 1924, bound for Malaita.²⁵ They were accompanied on the journey by Pastor and Mrs. Harold Wicks. Pastor Wicks was Superintendent of the Solomon Islands Mission at the time.²⁶

After traveling through a "fearful storm," the small vessel arrived at Uru, Malaita, on September 22, 1924.²⁷ Conditions were rudimentary, to say the least. Anderson commented: "The double bed and cot were set up, leaving us scarcely room to move, but Guinevere and I were pioneering, so inconveniences were not considered.

Our main task was to win the people of Malaita for Christ.²⁸

Conditions were very difficult, and there was little growth for the first year. The Andersons became ill, and they had no option but to return to Australia for a time to recuperate.²⁹ While there, they joined with a number of other missionaries to receive some instruction on nursing and dealing with tropical diseases. The classes were conducted at the Sydney Sanitarium.³⁰

Returning to Malaita, the Andersons received the first mission boat that had been obtained with funds raised by Sabbath School offerings in the Australasian Union Conference. Anderson wrote: "We feel very, very thankful indeed to the Sabbath school members for their gift that has made it possible for us to have such a boat."³¹ The boat was called *Mizpah*.³² Conditions were challenging, nevertheless. Anderson later commented:

Why, I asked, why was it that all who showed any love or desire toward the mission were taken from us? The first seven years had been almost fruitless, or so it seemed. We would stand on our hill and look over the Uru Harbour to those green acres and mountain peaks, wondering, as did people so long ago, "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?"³³

At the end of the second term of service on Malaita, Guinevere traveled home to Sydney so that their third child, Ray, could be born there. John followed a few weeks later. It was their third furlough. Myrtle attended school at Wahroonga. Then in the new year, they traveled back to the Solomon Islands, this time to a new appointment at Buri Village, Ranongga Island, in the Western Solomons. It was 1930.³⁴

The family remained at Ranongga until it was approaching time for their furlough in 1936. While Guinevere and the children returned to Australia,³⁵ John attended the General Conference Session in San Francisco, California. He also took the opportunity to visit the Holy Land and report on his visit to the people of the Solomon Islands. Pastor Anderson reported that "one little fellow was so full of it all that he ran to his mother and cried: 'Come quick—see Pastor Anderson! He's been to heaven! He's walked where Jesus walked!'"³⁶

In May 1938, with war looming, the family was transferred to the North Island of New Zealand.³⁷ They spent three years in Gisborne and then moved to Rotorua. While at Rotorua, Anderson was appointed as the Youth leader for the North New Zealand Conference. Somewhat reluctantly they moved to Auckland, where they remained until 1944 when they were invited to return to Australia.³⁸ They spent three years at Lismore and then moved to Cooranbong, close to the Australasian Missionary College, where Ray was able to complete his Leaving Certificate.³⁹

In 1949 John and Guinevere Anderson returned to the Solomon Islands, this time with John as president.⁴⁰ They were located in Honiara.⁴¹ In 1950, however, there was a reorganization of the mission into a Western Solomon Mission with headquarters at Kukudu on Kolombangara and an Eastern Solomons Mission with headquarters at Honiara. The Andersons transferred to the West but lived at Batuna rather than Kukudu.⁴² In the west they cared for Choiseul, Bougainville, Vella Lavella, and New Georgia.⁴³ Anderson said, "It was like home to us. We

had worked in Marovo and at Viru after our first landing in the mission field in 1920. Here we had our first missionary experiences; here our first child was born; here we learned the language—and, oh, how patient and helpful everyone had been with us!”⁴⁴

John and Guinevere Anderson were transferred back to Australia in 1950. They had given 21 years of service in the Solomon Islands.⁴⁵ The translation of the Bible into the Marovo Wasagi language had been recognized as an urgent need, and four Solomon Islanders had been sent to Australia to work under the supervision of Archibald Robert Barrett to begin the work.⁴⁶ Rini, the son of Nepala, the chief of Telina island; Tasa from Viru Harbour, and Pana and Pastor Ragoso from Marovo.⁴⁷ The people of Marovo raised one thousand pounds towards the costs.⁴⁸ John Anderson joined in the work of translation, and the project was completed in 1951.

Eight years were then spent in pastoral ministry in the North New South Wales Conference, at the Port Macquarie and Grafton Churches, before retirement.

Summary of Service⁴⁹

Time	Place	Type of appointment and service
Dec. 1919–Sep. 1920	Victoria	Colporteur and Bible work
Oct. 1920–Apr. 1938	Solomon Islands	District Director/field work
1920–1921	Telina, Marovo Lagoon	District Director/field work
1922–Sep 1924	Viru Harbor	District Director/field work
Sep 1924–1930	Uru, Malaita	District Director/field work
1930–1938	Buri, Ranongga	District Director/field work
May 1938–Mar. 1945	North New Zealand, Gisborne, Rotorua, Auckland	Pastoral & MV Secretary
Apr. 1945–Dec. 1948	North NSW, Lismore, Cooranbong	Pastoral work
Jan. 1949–June 1950	Solomon Islands	President and translation
July 1950–1951	Australasian Union	Translation
1952–Feb. 1960	North NSW, Port Macquarie, Grafton	Pastoral work

Later Life

John and Guinevere Anderson retired in Brisbane on April 1, 1960.⁵⁰ They set up home in Mount Gravatt.⁵¹ In retirement, Pastor Anderson continued to serve the Church and the people he loved. A “Conference Worker’s Evangelistic Record” in his name listed “Evangelistic Sermons,” “Bible Studies” and “Baptisms” right up until 1967, the year of his death.⁵²

Pastor John Anderson died in Brisbane on Sabbath afternoon, July 7, 1967.⁵³ After the death of her husband, Guinevere lived in Redland Bay, Gatton, and Beaudesert, Queensland, and Elizabeth Lodge, New South Wales.⁵⁴

In 1975 she was the guest of honor at the Jubilee celebrations on Malaita.⁵⁵ It was 50 years since John and Guinevere Anderson had commenced the work of the Church at Uru Harbour, Malaita. Overwhelmed by the growth that had occurred, she wrote:

“Sabbath, December 13, 1975, was a wonderful day. Was I dreaming, or was it real? Here were three men—Malaita men who had been called, tried, found trustworthy and faithful servants of God—dedicated to the gospel ministry. My eyes were beholding more than my very being could realise. What God can do for man! How I wished that my husband could have been present! Just across the harbour lay the bodies of Akwasia and Mary, on my front lawn; two who paid the supreme sacrifice for these dear people. And now, right in their shadow, three of Malaita’s men were ordained to the gospel ministry. What God has done for fallen humanity!”⁵⁶

Guinevere Anderson died on July 6, 1988.⁵⁷ She was buried with her husband in the Hemmant Cemetery, Brisbane.⁵⁸

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