Milton Hook, Ed.D. (Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Michigan, the United States). Hook retired in 1997 as a minister in the Greater Sydney Conference, Australia. An Australian by birth Hook has served the Church as a teacher at the elementary, academy and college levels, a missionary in Papua New Guinea, and as a local church pastor. In retirement he is a conjoint senior lecturer at Avondale College of Higher Education. He has authored *Flames Over Battle Creek*, *Avondale: Experiment on the Dora*, *Desmond Ford: Reformist Theologian*, *Gospel Revivalist* the *Seventh-day Adventist Heritage Series*, and many magazine articles. He is married to Noeleen and has two sons and three grandchildren.
Western Samoa, as distinct from American Samoa, was a German protectorate until the outbreak of World War I when New Zealand occupied the group. New Zealand continued to administer the islands as a trust territory until 1962, when the country became independent. In 1997 the word “Western” was dropped from its name. It is a Polynesian nation in the South Pacific Ocean consisting of two main islands, Sava'i and Upolu. The capital is Apia on Upolu Island, where 75 percent of the population live. Fifty-two percent of the people profess various Protestant faiths, predominately Congregational and Methodist. Seventh-day Adventists hold approximately 5 percent of the population.¹

Visits of the Pitcairn

On the first voyage of the Pitcairn a short visit was made to Apia in May 1891. The missionaries sold some English-language books and sailed on.² The more important event occurred in October 1895 during its fourth voyage when Dr. Frederick Braucht and his wife, Mina, together with her father-in-law, Dudley Owen, and Pitcairn nurse Emily McCoy, disembarked to establish a mission base at Apia. Their chief aim was to begin self-supporting medical work.³ The Pitcairn made brief visits on its fifth (1896)⁴ and final voyage (1899)⁵ without significant incidents.

Initial Efforts

Braucht leased a derelict stone warehouse on Mulinu'u Peninsula, scrubbed it, rid it of the rancid copra odor, and refurbished it as a downstairs surgery and upstairs living quarters.⁶ Despite its isolation from the township, he and McCoy were kept busy with treatments for a large clientele.⁷ In 1896 Dr. Merritt Kellogg, an accomplished carpenter, stayed long enough to build a small sanitarium at Tufuiopa in Apia with the assistance of Owen.⁸ It was better situated and continued to attract many European and Samoan patients. Unfortunately, Braucht was persuaded to accept an appointment to the Christchurch Sanitarium in 1899. In his closing report to church leaders he pleaded for some ministerial support to be dispatched to Samoa, but there was no response.⁹ Replacement medical staff came and went spasmodically until the enterprise closed.

Delos Lake came from America with a view to engage in self-supporting schoolwork. He found himself fully occupied with assistance at the sanitarium, but eventually began to develop an industrial school on the coast several miles from Apia. He came down with elephantiasis and in early 1903 was forced to return home.¹⁰

The most enduring legacy of the early efforts was the translation of Christ Our Savior. It was ready to go to press in 1901, and by 1904 there were reports that it was being distributed around the island.¹¹

A Fresh Beginning
Mission work languished until church leadership in Australia realized that opportunities had been lost for capitalizing on the benefits generated by the medical work. John Fulton finally made an impassioned plea for Samoa at a 1907 council meeting. “I never felt sadder in my life,” he lamented, “than when I beheld . . . the condition of our work [in Samoa]. . . . We ought speedily to do something for this field.” Something was done. Joseph and Julia Steed were appointed at the same council meeting, arriving in Apia late December 1907.

**Slow Progress**

Steed tidied up the dilapidated sanitarium and used it as his home while its ownership was transferred from Braucht to the Australasian Union Conference (AUC). Initially the German governor complained there were already enough religions in Samoa and wished to confine Steed to Sava’i, but Steed explained that he wanted to reopen the medical services, so he was allowed to remain on Upolu. Further restrictions forbade Steed from conducting an English school so in order to circumvent the rules, he taught hymns to any Samoan who visited him. In what seemed to be a premature move he formed a church of approximately five baptized Europeans, including he and his wife. He reported there were 11 enrolled as Sabbath School members and seven who attended the missionary meetings. He also admitted two local young people to his family, and together they did translation work, producing five tracts and making a start on a book of Bible studies. After two years Steed’s poor health forced a temporary return to Australia. No attempt was made to revive the medical work.

Thomas and Edith Howse arrived in January 1910 to replace the Steeds. It wasn’t long before Thomas initiated the production of a Samoan periodical titled *O Le Tala Moni* (The True Story). When the sanitarium site was sold in 1913, another was purchased on high ground in the Saoluafata district to the east of Apia, a place that came to be known as Vailoa. During 1914 the property was readied for teachers to move in and prepare a school. Apia, however, was not abandoned. The handful of believers no longer could meet in the sanitarium, so they purchased a small lot in Lalovaea near the old sanitarium, suburban Apia, and erected their first church in 1915. At the time of its dedication the first baptism of Samoan nationals, five in number, was held on September 23, 1915, in the nearby Vaisigano River on a moonlit evening. The candidates were Sauni Lauilo and his wife, Fiailoa, a young man named Leni from Sava’i, and two elderly women named Va and Sieva.

Toward the end of 1916 Harold and Annie Larwood arrived at Vailoa to teach approximately seventy young men and women and children during 1917. Annie taught the elementary levels. Unfortunately, the school operated for only 12 months before Larwood was troubled by evil spirits and returned to Australia. It was not reopened until 1930.

At the 1926 AUC quadrennial session the secretary spent only two lines on Samoa, noting it had been without a leader for portions of the four years, 1922–1926. The Vailoa property had become overgrown with vines. Baptized membership had dropped to 27, and Sabbath School membership totaled only 25. These were very
poor results for three decades of mission efforts.

**Brighter Days**

Toward the end of 1925 Raimund Reye was appointed to Samoa to redress the grave situation. He was born and baptized in Samoa and was the most promising candidate. Early in his term he announced his modus operandi. Rather than multiply the constituency and develop a school from it, he would, instead, develop a school and from it derive a constituency. It was an intelligent move based on his familiarity with the culture in which he was raised.

Early in 1928 Reye, with the help of others, began to clear away the overgrowth at the Vailoa property, plant crops, and prepare to reestablish the training school. His work was well advanced when he received word from AUC headquarters that he was reassigned to Vanuatu. Reye resisted, arguing that the Samoan field could not afford another reversal. Pressure from headquarters was unrelenting, but Reye was adamant and, without precedent, won the tussle and continued at his post.

An appropriation from headquarters in 1929 enabled Reye to construct the main hall of his Vailoa Training School, and classes opened on March 3, 1930, with an enrollment of 18 young men aged between 14 and 18. They were taught Bible, arithmetic, hygiene, Samoan history, reading, and writing, all conducted in the Samoan language and English. The 1932 report spoke of 26 advanced students and 32 in a new elementary division. A church was formed at Vailoa, the second in Samoa. Missionary Volunteer Societies for the young people were also initiated at both the Apia and Vailoa churches.

In 1934 Thomas and Edith Howse returned to Vailoa. Edith taught the younger pupils with the help of a senior student, Fa'apoi. Another national, Tini Inu, conducted a feeder school at Salomai in the Faleasau district. Reye's strategy soon bore fruit, with more young men joining the mission efforts. Sanika Afa'ese became Reye's assistant. Uta and Tua went across to Savai'i to prepare the way for the Howse's to pioneer at Tuasivi in March 1937. Others, such as Afele and Sione Tanielu, followed. The end of year report for 1936 stated there were 91 baptized members and 242 in four separate Sabbath Schools. It vindicated Reye's methods.

One of the chief obstacles to mission advancement was the control that a chief exercised over his people and their property. The culture allowed little room for individual freedom of conscience. Under British influence these powers were gradually lessened. However, the example of a chief's actions remained a powerful precedent for others to follow. Any conversion of a chief to the SDA cause made it easier for his clan to follow without adverse repercussions. In the late 1930s and early 1940s a few chiefs made the bold step to become members of the church. Chief Letele of Sagafili was one of the first to do so. Chief Fepulea'i and his wife, Tagisia, were among the first candidates on Savai'i to make a stand against stiff opposition from their compatriots. At Samatau village on Upolu, Chief Puni Leota Ierome Al'i'i and his wife, Vau Saibai, were baptized
by Afa’ese in June 1941. Puni was instrumental in building the community of SDA believers at Samatau, his clan later demonstrating exceptional judicial, teaching, and ministerial leadership abilities.46

War Years

During World War II thousands of American marines were stationed at Faleolo, where Samoa’s international airport is located today. Their occupation had no direct impact on the SDA mission. However, Reye was the mission superintendent, and because of his German heritage and friendly ties to the German community in Apia, the New Zealand government authorities grew increasingly uneasy about his presence. Finally, in May 1942 Reye was interned as an enemy alien in New Zealand.47 Back in 1940 he had recognized his vulnerability and suggested to Australian headquarters that he be replaced by a British national, but nothing was done.48 On the eve of his forced departure from Samoa he hastily ordained Siaosi Neru,49 who would oversee the church membership in his absence, and Sanika Afa’ese would care for the Vailoa Training School.50 They acquitted themselves well. At the time there were 163 baptized members among four churches.51

Postwar Years

Reye returned to Samoa after the war under assignment to do translation work until the end of 1947. He settled in the relative solitude of Tuasivi on Savai’i and produced a Samoan version of Steps to Christ and two volumes of Bible Doctrines in Samoan, each with 44 chapters. Wherever possible he included supportive quotations from the works of early Protestant missionaries familiar to the local people.52

Reye’s educational and literary work established the strength of the Samoan Mission. It was enhanced by high-profile public crusades that began in the 1950s. One of the earliest, held in 1951 in Apia’s Tivoli Theatre, was largely instrumental in a baptism of 78 candidates, then the largest in Samoa.53 In the same year plans were laid to open a self-supporting elementary school at Lalovaea, Apia. It became known as the Apia Central School. By 1958 its enrollment had risen to more than five hundred, the largest of any school in the Australasian Division.54 The Vailoa College was closed in 195855 and reopened in 1967 as the Vailoa Laymen’s Training School.56

Results from the emphasis placed on training mission workers became more evident in time. When administrative departments were introduced in 1952, some nationals were given leadership positions.57 A decade later Siaosi Neru was appointed assistant to the mission president.58 Later still, in 1976, Fereti Puni became the first Samoan president.59 Others to follow him were Ripine Rimoni,60 Samuelu Afamasaga,61 Uili Solofa,62 and Kenneth Fuliesi.63

The position of the International Date Line (IDL) was changed for Samoa in 2011/2012. Friday, December 30, 2011, was followed by Sunday, January 1, 2012.64 It brought confusion for Sabbathkeepers in Samoa. Some church members chose to ignore the change and maintain the seven-day cycle, causing them to worship on
Sundays at the same time as other Christians. Other church members wished to be distinctive, accepting the IDL change in order to worship on Saturday according to the new calendar. Those in the latter group congregate at Vaivase-uta in eastern Apia, Leauva'a in western Apia, Samatau on the south coast of Upolu, and Fogapoa in Savai'i.\footnote{65}

The SDA Church in Samoa currently operates two schools. The Apia Central School at Lalovaea, now renamed Samoa Adventist College, has been expanded to include kindergarten to academy level. An elementary school is also functioning at Si'ufaga in the northeast of Savai'i.\footnote{66} A permanent ADRA center is established at mission headquarters at Lalovaea, Apia, providing shelter, for example, to two hundred people when Cyclone Gita tore through Samoa in February 2018.\footnote{67} Previously, in 2012, when Cyclone Evan damaged churches and the head office, the mission prioritized the repair of church buildings and then restored headquarters in 2014.\footnote{68} Latest mission records give totals of 36 churches catering to 7,743 baptized members.\footnote{69}

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