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FIJIAN METHODISM, 1874-1945:

THE EMERGENCE OF A NATIONAL CHURCH

by

A.W. THORNLEY

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of the requirements for the
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Except where otherwise acknowledged in the text, this thesis is based on my original research.

[Signature]
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THIS thesis examines the evolution of Methodism in Fiji from the time Christianity was nominally accepted by a majority of Fijians to the point at which the church was self-supporting and its independence a matter for gradual negotiation. The study is one of culture contact after the early years of European penetration when the indigenous population either accepted or modified the ideas and institutions that were imported. The thesis gives greater attention to theme rather than chronology in order to highlight the issues involved in the emergence of a church possessing, but not necessarily conscious of, a unique national identity.

An examination of leadership reveals that for much of the period this role was dominated by the missionary presence and Fijian ministers only received the trappings of authority. As a counter-balance to clerical control, chiefly power, strengthened rather than weakened by various influences including Christianity, compromised and circumscribed the position of both missionary and Fijian minister within the church hierarchy.

At the village level, Methodism derived its strength and broad appeal from the unity of Fijian communal life, the latter in turn bolstered by colonial policies. However the excesses of missionary rule in the late nineteenth century - particularly a severe disciplinary code - resulted in a decline in the degree of Fijian commitment to the church after 1910. At the same time Methodism failed to diminish Fijian attraction to traditional beliefs which, either in their original form or through syncretic cults, co-existed alongside the institutional church and provided an outlet for nationalist feelings, a role the conservatively-inclined Methodist Mission found difficult to perform.

The struggle of Methodism with rival Christian denominations indicated that in the futile years of sectarian conflict, the differences were mainly introduced rather than innate, a reflection of bitter acrimony among European missionaries loyal to their particular religious tradition. Methodism survived this period of hostility with no significant loss in adherents, a feature attributable not to enlightened
leadership but to the church's strength at the village level. A similar pattern of conflict giving way to co-operation characterized relations between church and state. Mission authorities acknowledged the supremacy of governmental control over Fijians only after considerable friction between the two institutions. By the 1920s Methodism was the de facto if not de jure Established Church.

The thesis finally examines the theme of devolution of responsibility. In the field of education the dominant position of the Mission before 1900 gradually declined to be replaced by the Government which alone possessed the financial resources to satisfy growing Fijian demands for improved educational access. Within the church itself, the assumption of control by Fijians is shown to have its roots in the methods of mission finance. Fijian concern at their exclusion from decisions relating to the disbursement of mission funds, led for more vocal demands for self-support at the circuit level and subsequently to minority-sponsored requests for church independence. In the seventy years after 1874, Methodism took root as the major claimant to the Fijians' religious allegiance. Today the church remains one of the three pillars (along with traditional custom and the Fijian administration) which uphold Fijian society.
FOR many Fijians, the history of the Methodist Church begins in 1835 with the coming of European missionaries and ends in 1875 with the departure of the first Fijian missionaries for New Britain. Those dates are undoubtedly important in Fiji's Christian history. One sign of a vital church is its self-propagating ability; when a church sends out its native converts to be missionaries, it could be said to have come of age. Fijian missionaries are better known and remembered in their own country than any minister who served his time within Fiji. The reason for this is simple: the Fijian missionaries wrote letters home which were published and widely read. Missionary work carried an aura of challenge, danger and excitement; it captured the imagination of Fijians in the same way that early mission work in the Pacific was a focus of colonial church activity. Significantly the ministers who spent their time within Fiji and are remembered - such as the fearless Joeli Bulu - belong to the first generation converts; all were working before 1874 when Christianity had still to be accepted by many Fijians.

Part of the reason for the preoccupation with early Methodist history in Fiji is simply lack of information about the later period. After 1874 the development of Methodism in Fiji was neglected, even ignored by historians. They devoted their attention to an era when missionaries formed the most influential group of European residents; once those years were past the progress of the Mission was regarded as predictable, requiring a minimum of comment. Furthermore, the Mission in Fiji did not appear to suffer from the conflict and division which racked Wesleyanism in Tonga and secured for it more attention. There is a tendency among historians to gravitate towards events of the past which are unusual or concentrate particularly on the realm of political life. It is little wonder that Fijian Methodism, its history apparently well-ordered and mostly on the fringe of politics, has received scarce attention.

For a movement with the degree of influence which the Methodist Church has among Fijians, this omission demands correction. Along with the interest in the establishment of Christianity and the inevitable conflict which arises from the initial clash of ideas, it is also important
to study the longer process, arguably less dramatic, by which the introduced religious belief gains its independent local momentum and characteristics which are unique to the people among whom it takes root. I would not be overstating the case when saying that Fijians themselves are anxious to learn more about the period of church history when their own involvement in mission affairs became more significant.

Motivated towards this present thesis subject by the comparative neglect of Fiji's post-cession Methodist history, I was able to take advantage of the extensive collection of mission records in the National Archives of Fiji, which have only recently been organised and which relate mainly to the years after 1880. Within the church-oriented material there was much that cast light on Fiji's social history in recent times and the way in which Fijians have gradually asserted their own interests and concerns in an institution possessing considerable status and influence. Leadership, questions of continuity and change, loyalties to conflicting ideas and institutions, self-support: these were some of the issues of the period that had to be resolved after the acceptance of Christianity. The process of conversion in the years before 1874 - on which there already exists a considerable body of literature - lies outside the scope of this present work and appears in the introductory chapter only for the purposes of conveying background information.

Today the Methodist Church in Fiji has a small but committed number of Indians among its membership. Up till 1945, when this thesis terminates, the two branches of Methodist work in Fiji, Indian and Fijian, remained independent of each other. It is possible then to discuss Methodism in Fiji by looking at the experience of each communal group. My M.A. thesis (Auckland University 1973) examined mission work among the Indians to 1920. In this study I have been able to turn my attention to the larger topic of Fijian Methodism.

The thesis falls naturally into four parts, following a thematic rather than chronological structure. This means that some subjects introduced at an early stage may not be fully developed till a later chapter. On this point, although Appendices 1 and 2 exist in their own right as information not previously collated, Appendix 3 is included as an aid to those who wish to relate a particular event in the text to the chronological framework of Methodist history.
Methodist structure and nomenclature requires an introductory explanation. After 1855 the Wesleyan Methodist Mission in Fiji was a district within the Wesleyan Methodist Church of New South Wales, itself a part of the Australasian Wesleyan Methodist Conference. Administration of the Fiji District at the Australian end was the responsibility of the Australasian Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society, its headquarters in Sydney, which through a Mission Board and General Secretary recruited missionaries, handled finance and generally supervised the overseas mission work of the Wesleyan Methodist Church. After 1902 - when the various divisions within Methodism (mainly Wesleyan Methodists, Primitive Methodists and Bible Christians) were united - the Fiji District was renamed the Methodist Mission. In this thesis 'Wesleyan' (or 'Wesleyan Methodist') has usually been used to describe the Mission in the nineteenth century and 'Methodist' in the twentieth century.

Writing this thesis has been a privilege made possible initially by a generous scholarship from the Australian National University. The staff of the Petherick Reading Room in the National Library of Australia and in the Mitchell Library, Sydney, dealt with my many requests promptly and patiently. To the former missionaries whom I interviewed - D.F. Boorman, S.G.C. Cowled, P. Davis and C.F. Gribble in Sydney; A.G. Adamson, R.H. Green and Dr A.H. Wood in Melbourne; W.R. Steadman and D.I. Telfer in Adelaide - I convey my appreciation for being able to record and share in their vivid experiences. I received written accounts of missionary work from Mr A.J. Birtles of Brisbane, and Mr Tony Weir of Suva who allowed me to read his maternal grandfather's memoirs.

I am particularly indebted to the many people in Fiji who, while I was there on field work in 1976-77, helped bring a wider perspective to the thesis. The Fiji Government kindly permitted me to carry out research in the National Archives of Fiji. Setareki Tuinaceva, the Archivist, and his capable staff gave me every assistance and made me feel at home again. My thanks also to the following for giving their time and hospitality: the Reverend John Garrett and family, Mrs Margaret Knox, the Reverend Tomasi Kanailagi, Archbishop Petero Mataca, Mrs Vane Bokovada, Meleti Saurara, and the Reverends Usaia Sotucu and Alifereti Waqabaca.

The Methodist Church in Fiji generously granted me access to
all their records in the National Archives and in Epworth House. The Connexional Secretary of the Church, the Reverend Josateki Koroi, introduced me to valuable contacts and informants within the Church, passed on his extensive knowledge of Fiji to me and, together with his wife Nola and children, Ela, Ulu and Eccli, made the original Suva Methodist Mission house a second home for me in Fiji. To them I am deeply grateful. Others associated with the Methodist Church who rendered assistance and friendship were Daniel Mastapha, President of the Church, Setareki Tuilovoni, ex-President of the Church, Apenisa Ciwa, Cakaudrove Circuit Superintendent, Matavesi Doro, Savusavu Circuit Superintendent, Ragho Prasad, Vanua Levu Indian Circuit Superintendent, Aisake Rabuku, Police Sergeant and Methodist Lay Preacher at Nabouwalu, and their respective families.

In the Australian National University, the Department of Pacific and Southeast Asian History, under Professor Gavan Daws, has given me continued encouragement and intellectual stimulus. I was fortunate to have as supervisor Dr Niel Gunson, whose experienced counsel and extensive acquaintance of the field of mission history proved invaluable. Gavan Daws and Drs Ken Gillion, Hugh Laracy (while a Visiting Fellow in the Department) and Deryck Scarr willingly read and offered suggestions on the thesis in draft. Thanks also to my fellow research scholars who shared with me their friendship and insights into Fiji's Pacific neighbours; to Robyn Walker, Judith Poulos and Vicki Baas-Becking for their typing of the draft; to Elizabeth and Marjorie Basnett for assistance with proof-reading and to Anvida Lamberts for her meticulous typing of the final copy.

To my wife, Carolyn, I owe the greatest debt for having completely committed herself to sharing her husband's aims over the last three years.
GLOSSARY OF FIJIAN WORDS

b is pronounced 'mb' as in number

c " " 'th' " " that
d " " 'nd' " " end
g " " 'ng' " " singer
q " " 'ng' " " finger

Bose Levu, Bose ko Viti

Fiji Methodist Mission annual meeting or Synod

Buli

government district officer

kai colo

the people of inland Fiji

lala

chief's right to command labour and tribute from subjects

lali

wooden drum used in the Christian era to summon people to church

lotu

Christianity, the church

lotu ni gauna

Apolosi Navai's 'religion of the new era'

Lotu Wesele

the Wesleyan or Methodist Church in Fiji

magiti

feast

mata-ni-vanua

spokesman for the chief

matanitu

government

meke

Fijian song with dance movement

polotu, bolotu

song and prayer service (in Lau)

Qase Levu

Chairman of the Methodist Mission

qase-ni-vuli

senior Fijian tutor (in mission school)

raicacakaka

circuit visitation by missionary or Fijian minister

rara

village 'common'
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fijian Word</th>
<th>English Translation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Roko Tui</td>
<td>government head of province</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>siga dina</td>
<td>church member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>solevu</td>
<td>ceremonial exchange of food and goods</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tabu</td>
<td>taboo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tabua</td>
<td>whale's tooth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>talatala, talatala qase</td>
<td>missionary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>talatala-i-taukei</td>
<td>Fijian minister</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>taralala</td>
<td>Fijian dance based on European style</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tikina</td>
<td>government district</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tuirora (levu)</td>
<td>(senior) circuit steward</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vakamisoneri</td>
<td>missionary meeting (for contributions to mission funds)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vakatawa</td>
<td>catechist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vakavanua</td>
<td>traditional, customary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vakavulatolu</td>
<td>quarterly offering to teachers and local pastors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vakavuvuli</td>
<td>teacher, pastor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vanua</td>
<td>land</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vuli</td>
<td>student in training for mission work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yaqona</td>
<td>traditional Fijian beverage (kava)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# ABBREVIATIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>C.O.</td>
<td>Colonial Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C.S.O.</td>
<td>Colonial Secretary's Office, Fiji</td>
</tr>
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<td>F/1/[year]</td>
<td>Chairman's correspondence, Fiji Methodist Mission Collection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fiji Records</td>
<td><em>Stanmore, Arthur Charles Hamilton Gordon, Records of Private and Public Life in Fiji, 1875-80, Edinburgh 1901-04</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NF</td>
<td>Fiji Methodist Mission Collection, National Archives of Fiji, Suva</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ML</td>
<td>Mitchell Library, Sydney</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MMS</td>
<td>Methodist Missionary Society, London</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MMSA</td>
<td>Methodist Missionary Society of Australasia (before 1902, Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society of Australasia), <em>Annual Report</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MOM</td>
<td>Methodist Overseas Missions Collection, ML</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MOM Uncat.</td>
<td>Recent and as yet uncatalogued additions to MOM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NR</td>
<td>Missionary Review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NAP</td>
<td>National Archives of Fiji, Suva</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pac.Hist.</td>
<td>Department of Pacific and Southeast Asian History, Australian National University, Canberra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PMB</td>
<td>Pacific Manuscripts Bureau, A.N.U.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WMM</td>
<td>Wesleyan Missionary Notices</td>
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</table>
WESLEYAN Methodism thrust itself onto the Fijian stage in 1835. This was the third venture of British Methodist missionary penetration in the South Pacific, which had commenced in 1819 with mission work among the New Zealand Maoris and continued three years later with the dispatch of a missionary to Tonga. From there in October 1835 the Reverends David Cargill and William Cross sailed with the wind to the Lau islands in the east of Fiji. In Lau, Tongan influence ensured the establishment of a mission station on Lakeba and, over the following two decades, the *lotu* filtered west to Viti Levu, north to Vanua Levu and Taveuni, south-west to Kadavu. By 1874, when Fiji was ceded to Britain, opposition to Christianity was strongest in inland Viti Levu among the populous tribes of the Rewa river tributaries and the Upper Sigatoka valley. Elsewhere in Fiji the Wesleyans claimed a majority of Fijians as nominal adherents and there were some districts giving allegiance to

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1 The first Christian teachers in Fiji were three Tahitians brought to Lakeba under the auspices of the London Missionary Society in July 1830 by Captain Samuel Henry. In 1832 the Tahitians moved to Oneata, south-east of Lakeba, and worked under the protection of the chief Takai. A chapel was built and a few people joined the teachers in worship. Although the Tahitians remained on Oneata it appears they made little impact. The Reverend William Cross found them there in 1836 and reported that they had made no attempt 'either to exhort or pray in the Fijian or Tongan languages or to teach any of the people to read'. J. Calvert and T. Williams, *Fiji and the Fijians*, London, 1870, 231; see also R.P. Gilson, *Samoa 1830-1900*, Melbourne, 1970, 82, n.46.

2 Fijian word for the Christian religion, used as a noun and verb, i.e., to convert. The origin of the word is uncertain but *lotu* is probably a borrowed word from the Tongan language. Samoa and Niue also use *lotu* for Christianity, the latter island acknowledging it as a borrowing from Tonga. At least one European with missionary connections in Fiji has suggested that the word *lotu* comes from 'two Fijian words, Lo and Tu meaning to stand or remain silent and carries us back to the heathen days when the people waited in silence and breathed awe for the message from the gods delivered through the medium of the priest'. N.C. Fison to C. Brown, 2 May 1913, MSS 263/1, Mitchell Library (ML). See also Niel Gunson, *Messengers of Grace*, Melbourne 1978, x.
Roman Catholicism which, with more limited resources than the Wesleyans, had commenced a Fiji mission in 1844.  

Several factors accounted for Wesleyan predominance in Fiji though there could be no suggestion of inevitability about its accomplishment. First, Wesleyan missionaries, by verbal agreement with the Reverend John Williams of the London Missionary Society, were the only Protestants to proselytise among Fijians before 1874 and their entry to Fiji ahead of the Roman Catholics gave them added advantage. Second, the missionaries in Fiji, like their counterparts in Samoa and Tonga, sought the patronage of hereditary chiefs, leaders in Fijian society. Third, the Wesleyan cause was assisted by Tongan imperialism in Fiji and recently converted teachers from Tonga were employed extensively among Fijian villages. Finally, Wesleyanism possessed the organisation, the power of the printed word and an educational programme, all vital to the spread of Christian influence following its nominal acceptance.

3 The Roman Catholics chose to commence their mission on the same island as the Wesleyans - Lakeba. Five years later, after Tui Nayau professed Wesleyanism, their cause declined and they virtually made a fresh start. See Chapter 6.

4 The Reverend John Williams of the London Missionary Society claimed that in 1830 he came to an agreement with the Wesleyan Mission at Tongatapu assigning Fiji to the latter Society and Samoa to the former. The three Tahitians (see n.1) had been deposited in Fiji prior to the agreement. Gilson, op.cit., 82. In 1869 a Church of England clergyman, William Floyd, was appointed to Levuka but confined his work to the European community. In 1880 a comity agreement between the Church of England and the Wesleyans preserved for the latter their Protestant monopoly over Fijians; W.N. Gunson, 'A missionary comity agreement of 1880', Journal of Pacific History, vol.8, 1973, 191-95. Although the Church of England adhered strictly to the agreement, Fijians, mainly of high rank, were attracted to it of their own volition. See Chapter 3.

Traditional chiefs made a decisive contribution to the growth of Christianity in Fiji. Tui Nayau, high chief of Lakeba, gave the missionaries access to his dominion after receiving gifts and a note of introduction from Tāufa'āhū (King George) of Tonga. This was to be the pattern for mission progress; where a chief of status was tolerant of the lotu, the missionaries generally found that their cause survived and eventually prospered. On Lakeba, Tui Nayau, anxious not to offend the chiefs of Bau and Cakaudrove to whom he was tributary, soon abandoned his conciliatory attitude to the mission. Cargill believed there were many on the island who wished to convert but were 'afraid of the King'. Fear of a chief was mixed with loyalty as a deterrent to conversion. However Tui Nayau was frustrated in his opposition to the Christians on Lakeba by the presence of a powerful Tongan chief which ensured their protection from violence.

Chiefly influence was instrumental in bringing the first significant response to Christianity among Lauans. A chief from Ono-i-Lau, the southernmost island of Fiji and one which had regular intercourse with Tonga, learnt of Christianity on Lakeba and returned to his home where he employed Tongan converts to teach the people. The senior teacher on Ono-i-Lau was a chief of rank and by virtue of his position assumed 'great authority' and received 'many presents'. The chiefs' exemplary role, together with the island's complete isolation and small homogeneous population, facilitated the conversion of all on the island.

Wesleyan attempts to establish a mission station at Somosomo, leading village of the powerful Cakaudrove confederation, provides a striking example of the chief's crucial role in the general response to Christianity. Although seeking out missionaries to reside at Somosomo, Tui Cakau (Ratu Yavala), and more particularly his son Tui Kilakila,

6 Calvert and Williams, op.cit., 217.
7 David Cargill, Diary, 7 August 1838, A. Schutz (ed), The Diaries and Correspondence of David Cargill, 1832-43, Canberra, 1977, 114.
8 Calvert and Williams, op.cit., 224, 229, 283.
9 Ibid., 273.
strictly forbade their people to become Christians 'declaring that death and the oven should be the punishment for such an offence'.

As with Cargill on Lakeba, the Reverend John Hunt felt that, except for the hostile attitude of the chiefs, many of the Somosomo people might have followed the lotu. In 1847, faced with resolute opposition, the missionaries abandoned Somosomo. Three years earlier the Rewa mission station had been closed after the outbreak of war between Bau and Rewa. Since its founding in 1838, the Rewa mission had met with failure due to the active resistance of Ratu Qara-ni-qio, the brother of the highest ranking chief. At Suva there had been some progress where, in keeping with the general pattern, the leading chief and his wife became very 'earnest' believers. The missionaries were delighted, realising the advantage of 'having the direct help of some powerful chief, both to countenance the lotu, and to relieve the heavy burden of many temporal cares'.

It was no accident that missionaries in Fiji exerted considerable and deliberate effort to solicit the allegiance of powerful chiefs. In New Zealand the missionary experience had highlighted the important position and dominant influence of chiefs. In Tonga the alliance of Tāufa'āhau and Wesleyanism had successfully furthered the ambitions of both parties. Wesleyan Methodism by character followed its founder's convictions and avoided exercising direct political power, acting instead on conservative instincts in its support of traditional, legitimate authority. James Calvert, missionary in Fiji after 1838, frequently adopted an advisory role to Fijian chiefs. He was influenced by a small book he read before leaving England entitled Suggestions for the Conversion of the World. The writer, Robert Young (a Wesleyan minister), advised that some prominent individual should be selected whose conversion the missionaries 'should resolve to promote and seek'.

10 Ibid., 242.
11 Somosomo Circuit Annual Report, 1840; ibid., 243.
12 Ibid., 337.
13 J. Calvert, Fiji, Cannibal and Christian, NS, M/154, MHS. See also Gunson, op.cit., 280-81.
time Calvert was aware of the dangers involved in driving a wedge between the people and their chiefs. The latter were thus assured by the missionaries that under the Christian order the people would continue 'to diligently provide and cheerfully render tribute in property, and willingly obey their Chiefs in all reasonable labour and service'.

As evidence of this, the co-operative response of the people on Ono-i-Lau created a favourable image for the mission throughout Fiji and the missionaries focussed their attention on central Fiji under the sway of Ratu Seru Cakobau.

In 1838 William Cross transferred from Lakeba to Viti Levu, the most populous island, but when he sought permission of Cakobau to live at Bau, the chief told him that he could not guarantee the missionary's safety; nor was he, Cakobau, interested in the lotu at that time. Cross tactlessly if not deliberately offended Cakobau by taking advantage of Roko Tui Dreketi's offer to establish a mission station at Rewa, the traditional rival of Bau. A second station was opened on the island of Viwa, two miles north of Bau. Under John Hunt's leadership and the necessary support of the Viwan chief Namosimalua, followed by the conversion of his nephew Varani, Viwa became an enthusiastic centre of Christianity. But Cakobau's influence was predominant. It was at his discretion that the mission on Viwa was permitted to survive and missionaries admitted that, had he so desired, he could have crushed the fledgeling Christian cell on Viwa; the fact that he did not do so owes less to the spiritual strength of Christianity and more to Cakobau's personal regard for Hunt and his reluctance to take responsibility for the death of white missionaries.

Cakobau's conversion in 1854 can be attributed primarily to political problems arising out of the protracted war between Rewa and Bau.

14 Calvert and Williams, op.cit., 269-70.
15 Ibid., 408.
16 Ibid., 431-35.
17 Waterhouse, op.cit., 127-29.
Cakobau also received a persuasive letter from Thufa'Ahau urging him to become a Christian and the official missionary account of these years suggests that the intervention of the United States Consul in Fiji with veiled threats against Cakobau contributed to the chief's decision. Joseph Nettleton, missionary in Fiji, interpreted Cakobau's motives for conversion:

The Fijian Gods brought him [Cakobau] no help. In his emergency he began to reason - 'The white man's axe is true and a great improvement on our stone hatchets. The white man's musket is true and much better for the purposes of warfare than our clubs and spears. The white man's ship is true, sails better and carries more freight than our canoes. Perhaps the white man's God is true also, and will help me where Degei is useless'.

Despite the clear bias of mission accounts such as Nettleton's, the arguments attributed to Cakobau do shed some light on the vexed question of chiefly conversion. What factors led them to abandon, at least nominally, their pagan gods and hence pave the way for the wider impact of Christianity? Missionaries were convinced that chiefly sanctions were the main obstacle to conversion. Chiefs were concerned above all with questions of power and the retention of their position. Confronted with an increasing display of European power - ships, weapons of warfare, technology and material comforts - they were impressed if not over-awed. Cakobau was typical of most Fijian chiefs in viewing the Christian religion as inseparable from the white man's wealth and power just as Fijian religion was inextricably linked with tradition and custom. Furthermore, Protestant Christianity in the chief's mind was a distinctly English lotu and preferable to French power and Roman Catholicism. Wesleyanism, under the influential direction of John Hunt and Richard Lyth, denounced warfare and proved attractive to threatened chiefs such as Varani of Viwa but unacceptable to Cakobau at a time when

18 Calvert and Williams, op.cit., 485-90.
his small kingdom of Bau was increasing its power successfully under the old dispensation.20

Fijian chiefs, in short, recognised the formidable power structure underpinning Christianity, a force which continually challenged and attacked their own deities and provided a desirable alternative when, as with Cakobau in 1854, their star was faltering and they saw in Christianity a measure of stability and security not available to them from the traditional, revengeful deities. Despite the strongly political motivation behind the conversion of chiefs such as Varani and Cakobau, they became exemplary church members as evidenced by their Christian conduct in the years following baptism. 21

Cakobau's conversion in 1854 did not guarantee his survival as a paramount chief. He was still under considerable threat from disaffected Bauans and his long-standing adversaries of Rewa, all anxious to destroy his authority. If naked power impressed the Fijians, the Battle of Kaba in 1855 not only bolstered Cakobau's position but also assisted the Wesleyan cause in central Fiji. In what proved to be the final engagement between the mutually hostile Bau and Rewa confederations, Cakobau's forces, decisively supported by 2,000 Tongans under the chief and Wesleyan patron, Tāufa'ahau, were victorious. The timing of the battle after Cakobau's conversion lent a religious colouring to the conflict; Jehovah confirmed his position as a deity in the ascendant. 22

The significance of Cakobau's conversion cannot be underrated. It has been argued that before the conversion of the Bauan chief there was a 'more or less well-organised Christian community in action' and that

20 The process and significance of chiefly conversion lies beyond the boundaries of this thesis. Some indication of chiefly attitudes to Christianity and their motives for conversion can be found in Cargill Diary, op.cit., 70, 95; M.D. Wallis, Life in Feejee, Boston, 1851; Wood, op.cit., 52; R. Young, New Zealand and Polynesia, London, 1858, 181-82; Deryck Scarr, 'Cakobau and Ma'afu', Pacific Islands Portraits, Wellington, 1970, 104-05; Henderson, op.cit.

21 See examples of Cakobau's role in the church, Chapters 3 and 4.

22 Henderson, op.cit., 271; Calvert and Williams, op.cit., 365.
Church membership derived no benefit or increase by his conversion. Church statistics cast doubts on this interpretation. Apart from Lakeba where there were large numbers of Tongans, church membership in other parts of Fiji was declining by 1854. In the years following there was a complete reversal of this trend with a rapid increase in church members and adherents in the areas where Cakobau's influence was predominant. Furthermore, after 1854, the large number of adherents gradually affected the list of members. This process did not occur overnight. Wesleyan Mission rules demanded an adequate period of trial, normally a year, before a nominal adherent was admitted into the ranks of membership.

In the late 1850s many Fijians 'by royal command' were acknowledging the lotu. Chiefs subordinate to Cakobau submitted to the new god; on the southern coasts of Vanua Levu and Viti Levu, on the islands of Lomaiviti and Kadavu, church attendance mushroomed. 'Those must be strangely ignorant of the working of the Polynesian mind', commented a visiting European in 1862, 'who fancy that doctrines of so recent a growth as those of Christianity would even induce a native of subordinate position to remain indifferent to the wishes and orders of his chief'.

In their reliance on chiefly patronage Wesleyan missionaries were obliged by the realities of their situation, both in Tonga and Fiji, to turn a blind eye to principles of political non-involvement. Church and state could not be separated. Mission support of paramount chiefs drew them unavoidably into complex power struggles to the point where the missionary's preferred role of adviser was indistinguishable from his image as collaborator. By 1860 the Wesleyans in Fiji were in the

23 Tippett, op.cit., 3, 7.
24 See Table 1.
25 Derrick, op.cit., 115.
26 Kadavu Circuit, Annual Report, 1860, MNSA.
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<th>NANDY</th>
<th>VIWA</th>
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<th>REWA</th>
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Table compiled from Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society Annual Reports, 1848-1858. Statistics recorded at beginning of each year.

+ These statistics taken from Annual Reports of Australasian Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society. In these cases British records were incomplete.

**Abbreviations:**

- M Full member of society (i.e., communicant)
- O/T On trial for membership
- Atts Attendents at public worship (i.e., nominal adherents)

**Note:** Members and those on trial were included in numbers of attendants at public worship.
delicate situation politically of having two of the most influential chiefs in Fiji - Cakobau and Ma'afu - supporting mission expansion, partly as a means to their own self-aggrandisement even if it was rationalised as a means to others' salvation.

Henele Ma'afu, a Tongan and cousin to King George, came to Fiji in 1847 and six years later assumed leadership of the Tongans in Fiji. Ma'afu's power base was centred on the northern Lau island of Vanua Balavu and his influence spread rapidly. His overt and unashamed exploitation of Tongan Christian teachers, using them to further his own political ambitions, alienated many Fijians and considerably embarrassed the European missionaries. Their belated attempts to restrain Ma'afu's over-zealous activity had little or no effect on the Tongan chief and his army of disciples. In 1861 the Yasawa Islands at the western extremity of Fiji were invaded by teachers to the accompaniment of Tongan war threats. One community was warned that if the people did not follow the 'true lotu', Ma'afu would send Wainiqolo, a feared Tongan general, to secure their compliance. The choice was predictable: a paper was signed vowing allegiance to Wesleyanism and Tonga. Inevitably Fijians reacted adversely to Ma'afu's strategy. The strength Roman Catholicism was to acquire on Taveuni and parts of Vanua Levu could be partly attributed to the intimidatory methods of teachers and the association of Wesleyanism with Tongan domination.

The Tongan impact was not wholly counter-productive: in many areas of Fiji the reverse was the case. Many Tongan teachers less dramatically executed their duties with dedication, preaching Christianity among the villages at a time when missionaries were occupied with the establishment of centres for the training of Fijian teachers. Most of the early ordained ministers in Fiji were Tongan teachers who had been in Fiji for many years - Joeli Bulu, Taniela Afu, Jemesa Havea, Tevita Nauhamen and Joeli Nau were a few of them. Often on leaving Fiji to

28 Scarr, 'Cakobau and Ma'afu', op.cit., 108-09.
29 J. Eggleston to Ma'afu, 30 July 1859, quoted in Seeman, op.cit., 254.
31 J. Calvert to J. Eggleston, 13 October 1862, MOM 99.
return to Tonga, teachers and ministers were presented with gifts by the Fijians in appreciation of their work. 32

Tongan ascendancy within the church was over by the 1870s. Ma'afu died in 1881, Joeli Bulu in 1877. Taniela Afu along with most other ministers returned to Tonga at the same time. As they departed Fijians stepped into the teaching posts, an indication of the rapid maturation of local training facilities. However, Tongan influence did remain strong among the eastern islands of Fiji and services in Tongan were regularly preached on Vanua Balavu.

Acceptance of the lotu was initially a communal rather than an individual act. After a number of villages, usually linked by tribal affiliation, had resolved to lotu, their chief would send a message to the nearest European missionary requesting as many teachers as could be given, if possible one for each village under the chief's influence. The arrival of teachers, of whom there were never sufficient to satisfy the demand after 1860, was generally celebrated by a solemn feast, at which the priests of the old order would formally farewell their gods, 'gravely informing them that they are respectfully dismissed' since the people had resolved to serve another God. 33 Following this ceremony, tangible links with past beliefs and practices would be severed; the villagers would reduce their sizeable heads of hair and wrap two yards of calico or native cloth around their waists; cannibalism, where it had been practised, would cease, murder was forbidden, infanticide regarded as a crime, and war prevented wherever possible. The people were then regarded as nominally Christian. 34 Their actions, as one mission commentator noted in 1853, proclaimed their changed belief:

The Christian Feejeean endeavours to provide suitable clothing for himself and family. He sends his children to the school. He conducts family-worship twice every

32 J. Robson to B. Chapman, 18 March 1878, NCM 98. See also Miss C.F. Gordon Cumming, At Home in Fiji, Edinburgh, 1881, vol.1, 140.

33 L. Fison, Press Copy-Book, B.591, NL. Rewa Circuit, Annual Report, 1869, MNSA.

34 Ibid.
day. He plants his food, instead of stealing it. He nurses the sick of his household. He acquaints the Missionary or Teacher of any deeds of darkness, such as strangling etc., which are on the eve of being performed. He endeavours to overcome the national thirst for revenge, and refuses to join in war expeditions. 35

There was, understandably, division of opinion over the impact which Christianity made upon the individual Fijian. On the one hand Joeli Bulu, the senior native minister, saw ample evidence of repentance and faith: 'their hearts have become changed, their disposition and conduct have become good'. 36 Missionaries tended to be a little more sceptical when faced with assessing the degree of inward change. They viewed Christianity as a gradual process of learning through which to eventually replace adherence to traditional beliefs. It is probable that Christianity has never been able to adequately compensate for some features of pagan belief. 37

The emphasis on an alternative code of conduct was one method by which Christianity gained an identifiable character. The local teacher was a key figure in this process. He had the demanding and vital task of explaining the requirements of the new religion and setting the Wesleyan machinery in motion. With only a limited Christian experience to call on, the teacher instructed both young and old in the tenets of belief, using primarily the Bible, the Wesleyan Catechism and sometimes a limited number of reading books; he visited the sick, prayed with the dying and performed burial services; he conducted worship and established 'classes', placing on trial those who wished to become members of the church.

Individual commitment to Wesleyan Christianity became more prominent at the level of membership. After a twelve month probation, during which time their adherence to Wesleyan rules was observed, prospective members were examined by the missionary while on visitation

35 R. Young, *New Zealand and Polynesia*, 200-05.
36 Ibid., 164.
37 See Chapter 5.
through his extensive circuit. To be accepted, Fijians needed to convince the missionary of the sincerity of their 'repentance' and conversion experience. By its nature, the decision to enrol for membership required an individual rather than a collective act and most people examined for membership were accepted. Subsequently many were expelled for breaking the Wesleyan code of conduct but the system was elastic, allowing the penitent to re-apply for membership. Only those who were members could partake of communion or be eligible for church offices such as class leader, local (lay) preacher and church steward.

For administration purposes, the Wesleyans divided Fiji into eleven ecclesiastical areas, called circuits, each under the superintendence of a European missionary. Many of these circuits paralleled in their boundaries the traditional confederations such as Bau, Cakaudrove and Bua, a deliberate continuation of mission policy to preserve and exploit the relationship between chief and commoner. Similarly the 'sections', or smaller divisions within the circuits, corresponded within Fijian society to the tikina, compact tribal areas conveniently headed by a local chief.

The oldest circuits were in the east of Fiji where the lotu was first introduced. Lakeba for many years included all the islands of Lau but in 1871 a second circuit was created. It was called Lomaloma and included the northern islands of Vanua Balavu, Yacata, Mago, Tuvuca and Cicia. Ma'afu had been the prime mover behind this division; he was eager to have a white missionary resident at Lomaloma. The man appointed, Isaac Rooney, developed a close relationship with the Tongan chief and Ma'afu proved to be a generous patron. Lomaloma Circuit had a character of its own. Its small area enabled Rooney to devote his time to teaching an up-and-coming generation of ministers. 'In this part of Fiji', Rooney noted contentedly, 'we are hundreds of miles from the heathen. We are all lotu here - a quiet civilized community'. Following Ma'afu's death Lomaloma once again joined Lakeba but a missionary continued to reside on Vanua Balavu till the early 1900s.

38 I. Rooney to B. Chapman, 27 July 1874, MOM 165.
The southern islands of Lau together with the Moala Group, or Yasayasa Moala, made up the important Lakeba Circuit. By 1874 the island of Lakeba was bringing up its second generation of converts. Gone was the awesome unquestioning respect for mission officials. Church adherents were disillusioned, caught between the decline of old traditions and the inadequate comprehension of the new way; young people were drifting away and the services were not well patronised. In his failure to comprehend this problem, even though he had noted the symptoms, the resident missionary attributed the indifferent attitude of the people to 'the present exciting state of political affairs', a reference to the issue of British annexation. 39 But Lakeba was displaying the signs of a healthy dissatisfaction with features of the church, which once recognised could be tackled, and other circuits would have the same problems after lengthy contact with Christianity. Among the outlying islands of Lakeba Circuit, the response to the lotu varied. On Natuku, all members were 'holding fast to the faith', while on Moala lack of chiefly interest in the Christian gospel was blamed for a low state of religious life. Congregation size was being affected by adherents 'having indulged too freely in drinking yaqona'. 40 On Ono-i-Lau in the far south the minister reported that 'the religious and irreligious seem to be alike in this land. All seem very diligent in regard to the ordinance of religion'. 41 At least the outward show was satisfactory.

Kadavu Circuit, compact and well-defined, was in a prosperous state at the opening of the 1870s, a situation brought about by the 'strong attachment of the chiefs and people to the lotu and a fine lot of native agents'. 42 In the north of Fiji, the islands of Vanua Levu and Taveuni were shared between three circuits, Cakaudrove - the largest, Ovalau and Bua. The latter was embroiled in wars during the 1850s between the districts ruled by Tui Bua (Ratu Vakavaletabua) in the north and Wainunu and Solevu in the south. With the cessation of

39 T. Rootes, Wesleyan Missionary Notices (WMN), April 1874, 30.
40 Ibid., October 1872, 64-66, and January 1874, 9. Yaqona is the local term for Fijian kava.
41 Ibid., July 1874, 46.
42 WMN, October 1872, 56, and January 1874, 14.
hostilities, Baunn and Tongan influence ensured the spread of Methodism among the tribes under Tui Bua but Solevu and Wainunu, the defeated chiefdoms, chose to hold out against Wesleyanism, the former welcoming Roman Catholicism and the latter not accepting the Lotu Wesole until 1872. The Yanawn Islands, a distant outpost of the Bua Circuit, were evangelised by aggressive Tongan teachers but subsequently, to the good fortune of the image of the lotu, a series of outstanding Fijian ministers consolidated the initial work. In 1876 the Yasawan people built their native minister a new lime house and a school was established for the training of young men aspiring to positions in the church. In that year the lotu was reported to be in a 'cheering and successful state'.

Parts of Ovalau Circuit were engaged in wars, as late as 1871, involving the Lovoni people of the mountainous interior but their resistance to Cakobau was quelled by the end of the year. Despite the fact that Ovalau Circuit was one of the smallest circuits in Fiji, it boasted more adherents than the two islands of Vava'u and Ha'apai in Tonga combined, and more than all of the Wesleyans in Samoa, an indication of the overall size of the Wesleyan Mission in Fiji and the organization required to manage it. The Ovalau Circuit missionary, who resided at Levuka, had a large responsibility to the white community of his town, although the work-load was relieved somewhat by the arrival of the Reverend William Floyd, an Anglican clergyman, in 1869. Ovalau Circuit also included the coastal sections of Wailevu and Savusavu on Vanua Levu, which had been tacked on to Ovalau solely in order 'to give the missionary an opportunity of having a visit from home and a place from where to get food'. This uncharacteristic deviation from the guidelines for circuit boundaries lasted till 1899 when Wailevu and Savusavu were attached to Cakaudrove thus following their traditional allegiance.

43 J. Leggoe to B. Chapman, 19 August 1872, MOM 98.
44 Leggoe to Chapman, 12 August 1876, MOM 98.
45 D.S. Wylie to Chapman, 11 April 1876, MOM 98.
46 F. Langham to Chapman, 13 January 1876, MOM 103.
Cakaudrove Circuit best illustrates the manner in which denominational affiliation reflected political alliances and antagonisms. Traditionally northern Lau had been dependent on Cakaudrove and the success of the Wesleyans in Lau offended the chiefs of Cakaudrove who were jealous to see their vassals assume a greater importance than themselves. Not only did the three powerful brothers, Tui Cakau (Ratu Colea), Ratu Matakitoga and Ratu Koliloa oppose the spread of the Lotu Wesley, so often part of Ma'afu's design, but when they did declare for Christianity it was Roman Catholicism they chose. In 1867, however, Ma'afu came to a political agreement with these chiefs and the laws of the Lau Confederation, headed by Ma'afu, were extended to Taveuni and Vanua Levu. Four years later Ratu Matakitoga and Ratu Koliloa buried memories of the past and professed Wesleyanism, their decision considerably assisting its progress. Up to that time 'no man entered at the door of Christ's religion. Now they [the chiefs] have opened the door by entering themselves and great numbers have followed them'. Meanwhile in the Macuata province on the northern coast of Vanua Levu, another powerful chief, Ritova, espoused Wesleyanism, as with most chiefs nominally, but the serious shortage of teachers and the concentration of the mission's strength on Taveuni to counter Tui Cakau's continued support for Roman Catholicism meant that Macuata remained a comparatively neglected area.

Responsibility for the island of Viti Levu was shared between four circuits, Bau, Navula, Viwa and Rewa. Bau included all the islands of Lomaiviti (except Ovalau) together with the mainland districts on Viti Levu adjacent to the island of Bau. Since most of these areas were in close tributary relations with Bau, mission influence extended throughout the circuit in the late 1850s. Part of the Rewa river delta including the populous areas of Nakelo and Tokatoka became the responsibility

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48 Scarr, op. cit., 114.
49 Eroni Fotofili to J. Nettleton, 27 April 1871, WMN, July 1871, 266-67.
50 For Ritova's conversion and support for the lotu, see WMN, January 1872, 8.
of the Navuloa Circuit in 1871 when the Theological Training Institution was established at Navuloa near Kaba Point on land sold by Cakobau. The missionaries had hoped to place the institution on freehold mission land at Davuilevu but the unsettled political state of that district prevented the move.

Viwa and Rewa Circuits covered most of Viti Levu, the former circuit having responsibility for the northern and eastern parts of the island, the latter circuit including the south and west. Both circuits were able to place teachers among the coastal villages but their contact even in these areas was tenuous up to the 1870s. The Wesleyans experienced their strongest opposition among the people of the Viti Levu interior. The death of Thomas Baker in 1867, who was killed along with seven Fijians while on a pioneering though foolhardy journey across Viti Levu from east to west, was followed by a loose coalition of inland tribes formed to resist any introduction of Christianity. The highland people, or kai colo, demonstrated their hostility by making frequent raids upon the nominally lotu villages of the lowlands and coast. At least one missionary was convinced that inland opposition arose from Christianity being misunderstood as a political agent - the kai colo attitude being that Cakobau's close association with Wesleyanism was yet another intrigue by which to resolve permanently the long-standing conflict between coastal and highland groups. Significantly people have only recently ceased to speak of Christianity as Na Lotu nei Ratu Cakobau (Cakobau's religion).

In March 1873, war broke out on the Rewa river. Taniela Afu, a Tongan minister, had been visiting the solitary Christian village of Viria at Matailobau in the Bau Circuit and on his return, 'the heathen insulted and jeered him from the banks of the river'. Afu warned

53 Derrick, *op.cit.*, 115.
54 A.J. Webb to E. Chapman, 14 March 1873, MON 98.
Frederick Longham and Arthur Webb, missionaries at Bau and Rewa, not to visit the area. Within two weeks, to the astonishment and dismay of the mission, the people of Virla 'throw off the cloth' and, together with its dependent villages, made a surprise raid on a nearby community killing between 40 and 50 people. 'The whole scheme was kept so secret', lamented Webb, 'that no Christian chief was told lest he should inform the teacher and the whole affair get wind'. In the same year war broke out in north-west Viti Levu involving many tribes on the Upper Sigatoka river.

The campaign mounted against the Fijians of the interior was decided in favour of the forces of the Cakobau government. While some of the defeated tribes adhered to their traditional beliefs, others such as the Soloira, Matalobau and Nailega, 'who were wavering between Christianity and the old way' decided to lotu. In these cases submission to the government was closely associated in the minds of the people with the nominal acceptance of Christianity.

If church and state made gains inland these were quickly neutralised by the measles epidemic which afflicted Fiji in 1875. Not only were its physical effects disastrous - although missionary calculations of the death rate were probably exaggerated - but the

55 Webb to Chapman, 15 April 1873, WHM, July 1873. The phrase 'throw off the cloth' refers to the native cloth or calico which was wound around the waist as a sign of joining the lotu; when Christianity was abandoned the garment was discarded.

56 A.B. Brewster, The Hill Tribes of Fiji, London 1922, 65. See also Viva Circuit, Annual Report, 1874, MMSA.

57 Joseph Waterhouse, who was resident missionary at Navula, calculated a death count of 40,000, which would have been a third of the estimated population. Norma McArthur believes the figure was between 15-20 percent, Island Populations of the Pacific, Canberra 1967, 9-11. Although the total death rate will remain a matter for conjecture, the effect of the measles epidemic on life in Fiji and on the work of the Wesleyans is less a matter of debate. Waterhouse, in a graphic account of the epidemic, noted that 'all work was suspended for months, not merely labour and amusement, but religious worship in the houses and Churches. There was no travelling, no sending a native messenger, no canoes to be seen for months'. At the particular stage of its work, the mission could ill-afford to lose over ten percent of its Fijian teachers and ministers. J. Waterhouse to General Secretaries, Wesleyan Mission, London, 21 June 1875, M/148, M.M.S.
suspicions it aroused towards the established colonial government and the religion of the white man brought renewed conflict. In the Sigatoka valley the recently converted villages, ascribing the mysterious malady to the wrath of ancestral gods, threw out their mission teachers, once more propitiated the spirits of their forebears, and attacked their Christian neighbours. Such was the hostile mood of some of the inland people that Langham deemed it advisable to 'carry a good revolver' when he visited communities on the Wainimala tributary of the Rewa river.58

The inland tribes resurrected their former alliance and confronted the colonial administration with rebellion. Once again the lotu, as well as tribes friendly to the Government, were among the targets for attack as symbols of European influence.59 A protracted campaign ensued, finally resulting in the pacification though neither the defeat nor humiliation of the highland tribes. The Government, aware of the sensitivity of the chiefs to undue pressure, explained that Fijians were under no compulsion to lotu - not that they had been before - but were permitted complete toleration on matters of religion. Whether as a result of this counsel or not, the demand for teachers was quiet at first but increased after 1876.60

The principle of religious toleration brought much needed relief in 1879 to Rotuma, 300 km to the north of Fiji and the most isolated circuit of the Fiji Wesleyan District. John Williams, the London Missionary Society missionary, had left two Samoan teachers there in 1839 but the Wesleyans took over Protestant evangelisation of the island after 1841. The Roman Catholics left priests there in the 1850s.

58 A.J. Webb to B. Chapman, 2 December 1875, MOM 165; A.B. Brewster, op.cit., 67; C.F. Gordon Cumming, op.cit., 179-80. In the eastern islands of Fiji where Wesleyanism was more securely established, the measles epidemic had a more predictable 'revival' effect among the people who saw the disease as a manifestation of the Christian God's divine wrath.


60 A.J. Webb to B. Chapman, 27 August 1877, MOM 165.
but not till a decade later were both Wesleyans and then Roman Catholics able to establish themselves. These two denominations had barely managed to co-exist peacefully in Fiji; Rotuma's small size precluded any tolerable relations. In one sense Rotuma was unique being the only Fiji circuit to experience the bitterness and bloodshed of sectarian war, Wesleyan against Roman Catholic. Yet the imposition of religious supremacy, as exemplified in Ma'afu's campaigns, was not foreign to Fiji's experience and to this extent Rotuma was part of a tradition, though it had the questionable distinction of being the last circuit to resolve its religious differences by violence. 61

In 1874 the Wesleyan Mission claimed 124,344 Fijians as church adherents. One-fifth of those were listed as members. 62 Taking into account the general missionary inclination to inflate statistics for the supporter at home, it was still a large following, possibly as much as eighty percent of the total Fijian population. 63 Nominal association of Fijians with Wesleyanism was to rise to a peak at the turn of the century. Membership however was to decline. This was only one of the many perplexing issues to confront the Wesleyan Mission during the period of colonial Fiji. Questions of leadership, rival beliefs, relations with chiefs and government, educational and financial difficulties, self-support - these were the problems to be resolved now that the mission was established.

61 For details of the religious wars in Rotuma, see Chapter 6.
62 See Table 2.
63 The population was estimated to be between 135,000 and 150,000 before the measles epidemic. McArthur, op.cit., 11.
TABLE 2

WESLEYAN METHODIST MISSION, FIJI: STATISTICS, 1852-1880

NUMBERS OF CHURCH MEMBERS AND ADHERENTS FOR SELECTED YEARS
1852-1880

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Church Members</th>
<th>Total Church Adherents (including members)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1852</td>
<td>2,322</td>
<td>5,120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1859</td>
<td>9,175</td>
<td>58,928</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1874</td>
<td>25,225</td>
<td>124,344</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1875</td>
<td>17,393</td>
<td>86,290</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1880</td>
<td>24,109</td>
<td>102,639</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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1 Figures taken from Annual Reports of the Australasian Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society.
2 Prior to conversion of Cakobau.
3 After Cakobau's conversion.
4 Prior to measles epidemic.
5 After measles epidemic.
PART I: LEADERSHIP
BY 1874 the Wesleyans had consolidated their mission in Fiji and claimed the nominal adherence of a majority of Fijians. The mission was large, almost unwieldy, equal to if not greater in numbers than, the Wesleyan Methodist Church in New South Wales. As a consequence of the mission's size, the small nucleus of missionaries, never more than twelve or thirteen at any one time, assumed a pivotal leadership role in Fiji. In many respects they became administrators rather than pastors. With expansive circuits to superintend, their major task after 1870 shifted from proselytising to organising, a move which reflected the rapid institutionalisation of the mission during the years bounded by Cakobau's conversion (1854) and the end of the Rotuma wars (1880).  

Missionaries occupied the most powerful clerical positions in the mission. Limited supervisory responsibilities were granted to Fijian ministers who served in a subordinate and assistant capacity, while at the base of the mission hierarchy were the village catechists and teachers, whose numbers exceeded 800 in 1875.  

1 A sociological concept I have found useful in viewing the development of the mission from 1854 to 1880 is the process of routinisation discussed and analysed by the German sociologist Max Weber ('The Social Psychology of World Religions', in H.H. Garth and C. Wright Mills (eds), From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology, London 1947, 297-301). The three decades after 1854 can be regarded as the second phase of mission growth in Fiji following on from a period of initial contact and complex interaction but little outward success. With the rapid influx of nominal converts that followed Cakobau's conversion, the individual 'charismatic authority' of the missionaries was inadequate to meet the demands of a growing institution, hence the development of what Weber calls a 'rational administration' within which authority could be properly and permanently organised. By 1880 mission structures had been routinised and the Wesleyans were entrenched in Fiji.

2 Statistical returns, Fiji District, Annual Report, 1876, MMSA.
and control in the mission, involving the interplay of missionary, Fijian minister and chief, was one of the major issues that became prominent after 1874 and one that required resolution for the satisfactory development of a Fijian church.

The first generation of missionaries in Fiji was appointed from England but in 1855 responsibility for Wesleyan missions in Fiji, Tonga and Samoa passed to the Australasian Conference, with its headquarters in Sydney, and by 1874 all the missionaries were drawn from either Australia or New Zealand. Support for missionary work in these two countries was strongest in Victoria and New South Wales, colonies with a strong Methodist tradition and close commercial links with the Pacific. In addition, New Zealand Methodism, from its foundation in 1822, diverted much of its missionary energy into work among the Maoris. Recruitment of missionaries to Fiji reflected the dominant interest of Victoria and New South Wales: between 1916 and 1938 seventy percent of European missionaries appointed to Fiji were sent by these states.

Most young ministers in the eastern colonies of Australia probably entertained the thought of engaging in missionary work. They were exposed to a considerable output of propaganda in the form of literature and deputation tours, all stressing the need for missionaries in the Pacific. The decision was made a little easier for Methodist ministers in both Australia and New Zealand by the well-organised circuit arrangement whereby appointments to Fiji and other mission districts were given equal consideration and carried the same conditions (with added benefits such as an educational allowance for children) as colonial circuits. The ease of transition from a circuit in Australia to a similar post in Fiji gave the colonial minister an opportunity to satisfy his interest in the exotic by spending one or two terms

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3 As part of the Australasian Methodist Conference, New Zealand ministers were recruited for Pacific missions. In 1922 New Zealand Methodism took sole responsibility for the Solomon Islands Methodist Mission.

4 Register of missionaries, MON 216. The Victoria Conference included Tasmania. Of the 47 ordained missionaries, 20 were from either Victoria or Tasmania and 16 from NSW; of 12 lay missionaries, 7 were from Victoria and 2 from NSW; of 48 missionary sisters, 19 came from either Victoria or Tasmania and 11 from NSW.
(approximately six years) or longer in the islands. The Methodist missionary call did not necessarily demand a life commitment, an appealing consideration to those with family responsibilities. The fact that many missionaries did stay longer in Fiji than they might have originally anticipated, is a commentary on the kind of life they led in the islands.5

In the late nineteenth century the 'heroic' attractions of Methodist missionary work no longer applied to Polynesia (Tonga, Fiji and Samoa) but had shifted west to the Melanesian islands of New Britain and Papua-New Guinea. Yet the challenging and romantic ideal was still associated with Fiji - an incentive to all ministers seeking 'to follow in the steps of the heroic pioneers' before returning to a secure and safe incumbency in the colonies.6 In the 1920s and later, missionaries were still attracted by the appeal of Pacific mission work but their more liberal upbringing and theological training combined with a greater understanding of the situation in Fiji, especially the growth of a self-supporting church and the co-existence of two races - Fijian and Indian - meant that the element of drama and adventure was subservient to the need for 'racial understanding, non-violence, justice, self-reliance, independent action and tolerance'.7

Generally speaking, the formal education of Wesleyan Methodist missionaries, as might be expected, improved with each succeeding generation. By contrast, their theological training remained inadequate for most of the nineteenth century. With the transferral of mission control in 1855 from English Methodism to Australian, the latter was ill-prepared to provide even the equal of the limited facilities that had existed in England. Not till the early 1880s in both Victoria (Queens College) and New South Wales (Newington College) did separate and continuous theological institutions emerge.8 Furthermore, missionary

5 See below, 34-36.
6 See W.E. Bromilow's reaction to his 'call', Twenty Years among the Papuans, London 1929, 23.
7 R.H. Green, My Story, 7, MS in possession of A. Weir, Suva.
work tended to attract the eager, young ministers, many of whom were accepted for the ministry and then posted to Fiji where they would complete their probation. Caught up in the demands of missionary work, their study opportunities were restricted and they were deprived of the benefits of two or three full-time years in a theological institution. The major effect of this was reflected in the scarce number of Fijian theological texts and the limited training imparted to Fijian ministers. The situation changed in 1912 when William Bennett introduced courses of advanced instruction involving more thorough theological study and elements of higher criticism, a progressive move, the benefits of which were seen in the succeeding generation of Fijian ministers.

In terms of the results upon the Fijian church, the social background of Methodist missionaries was less important than the quality of their ministerial preparation or training. Most of the missionaries after 1874 were, like their predecessors, products of the aspiring working-class 'elite' or the middle-class. A number of ministers had been school teachers; others went directly into their 'calling' as a result of church or missionary links within the family or after a sudden conversion in the classic Wesleyan pattern, though all missionaries would have testified to a religious 'rebirth', whether gradual or unexpected. There was in addition a large group of ministers who had graduated from apprenticeship and trade experiences such as printer, wheelwright, carpenter, blacksmith and jewellery-maker. Others were men of untrained practical skill whose work had been as varied as gold-mining and insurance-touting. Often missionaries were able to turn their abilities to good use in Fiji. William Slade built a 1,500 sq.ft. mission house at Ba virtually singlehanded and then installed a piped supply of water to the village of Ba after which the chief 'rejoiced in the possession of a fine shower bath of his own'.

In the 1880s Arthur Small resurrected the printing press on Viwa that had lain dormant for over two decades. Small, printer by trade and then

missionary in Fiji for forty-five years - the last twenty as Chairman of the Methodist Mission - was representative of a group of missionaries who took pride in their movement through the ranks of society to a position of standing and respect. Writing to his wayward eldest son in 1909, Small compared the fortunes of both:

Look at our respective opportunities. Why mine were of the most meagre. Born of poor parents, given an inadequate education, started at work before I was out of my teens, living in a licentious city with much to drag me down - and yet here I am today the Chairman of this Mission with 30 years of service behind me, while you have scarcely anything to show...What has made the difference?...conversion in the one case, and the want of it in the other.10

As circuit superintendents in Fiji, missionaries, by virtue of their position, carried considerable status and authority. Unlike their brethren in the colonies, they were the dominant force in the most important church courts, such as the Quarterly Meeting, owing to their superior knowledge of Wesleyan canon law, mission regulations and financial matters. Much of a missionary's time was spent in meetings, ensuring that each village had a teacher, adjudicating on matters of church discipline, arranging the dates of major church collections, in short, maintaining the mission machinery in working order. Each missionary had a further responsibility to give basic theological education to the youths who migrated to the circuit head station seeking entry into church positions. Every year the missionary would be absent from his circuit for up to a month attending the annual meeting of the Fiji District at which major policy decisions would be made.

Although responsible for the pastoral oversight of every village in his circuit, a missionary delegated this task to ordained Fijian ministers who were each assigned between five and fifteen villages - depending on the size of the circuit and the number of ministers available to a missionary - to take charge of, though

10 A.J. Small to S. Small, 24 November 1909, F/3/(e).
reporting regularly to the missionary on all church matters. At least
twice a year in most circuits and more often in the smaller ones such
as Rotuma, Kadavu, Bua and Ovalau, missionaries made visits to each
village in order to examine the school, baptize new members, administer
discipline where necessary, preside at church meetings and fund-raising
activities and generally assess the progress and state of the local
Methodist community. In some of the less accessible areas of larger
circuits such as Rewa, Nadroga, Ra and Cakaudrove, biannual visits
were not possible; sometimes villages were neglected for well over
a year, while among the islands of Lau scarcity of transport and
inclement weather also prevented regular visitations. Missionary standing
in more isolated Fijian villages often rose or fell on the frequency
with which missionaries journeyed through the circuit: familiarity
bred popularity.

The senior missionary, appointed by the Board of Missions
in Sydney, was titled the Chairman. This position, singled out by
Fijians as qase levu (lit. 'great elder'), always went to missionaries
of considerable experience although seniority was not the sole criterion;
in 1937 the Mission Board appointed William Green, a missionary of
fewer years experience than W.R. Steadman, the choice of the Fiji
missionaries, the influencing factor being Green's previous involvement
in Fijian work as against Steadman's position in the Indian Mission.11
Unlike bishops in the Anglican and Roman Catholic churches, the Chairman
of the Methodist Mission possessed few statutory powers. In the
Wesleyan tradition of representative church government, a Chairman's
decision was subject to the sanction of Synod, or annual meeting of
the mission district. Missionaries rarely however challenged the will
of their Chairman, either outside or within Synod. But in their own
circuits, missionaries had considerable control and Chairman intervened
through persuasive advice rather than instruction.12

11 C.O. Lelean to R.H. Green, 3 June 1937; W. Green to Lelean, 21
December 1937, F/1/1937. The Methodist Indian Mission, separately
constituted, had been in operation since 1892.

12 Langham to S. Rabone, 30 June 1871, MOM 103; A.J. Webb to
Frederick Langham, who dominated the Methodist Mission in Fiji as Chairman from 1869 to 1895, ruled by force of personality. Of Tasmanian extraction and having trained as a teacher in England, Langham while in his early twenties became headmaster of a Wesleyan school at Castlemaine. In 1858 he offered for the ministry and carried out his probation in Fiji. His initial appointment as Chairman over the heads of missionaries such as Jesse Carey and Joseph Nettleton, at least his equals in experience and capability, followed by a leadership tussle in 1876 with Joseph Waterhouse, who had been led to believe that the Chairmanship would be his if he returned to Fiji for a further term, tended to vindicate the accusations of Langham’s critics that he controlled his fellow missionaries by bluster if not intimidation.

Langham made enemies easily; Commodore Goodenough used Samuel Johnson’s phrase 'a good hater' to describe the Chairman. Certainly Langham in his determination to maintain the wide influence of the mission, succeeded in alienating most government officials including successive Governors. With his missionaries, Langham encouraged an unhealthy dependence upon his authority and influence, to the extent that in his absence from Fiji missionaries claimed they were like 'a poor headless body' or a 'ship without a captain'.

Throughout the last three decades of the nineteenth century Langham, by his personality and policies, made a critical impact on the Methodist mission. Before the 1870s the mission had endeavoured to maintain the support of chiefs; Langham jeopardised that relationship with his regular tirades against overweening chiefly power. His contempt for the Council of Chiefs (established in 1875) which at times exercised its independent voice in criticism of the mission, and his failure to


14 Sir Arthur Gordon to B. Chapman, 10 October 1878, MOM 167.

15 D.S. Wylie to Chapman, 24 June 1875, MOM 165; J. Robson to Chapman, 15 June 1875, MOM 98.
work alongside Cakobau's eldest son, Ratu Epeli Nailatikau, with whom as Roko Tui Tailevu Langham had frequent contact, did immeasurable harm to relations between the mission and those Fijians in the higher echelons of the chiefly hierarchy. At times Langham almost wittingly offended chiefs in authority by highlighting the alleged ill-treatment of commoners by their superiors. With his judgemental approach to Christianity, Langham spearheaded mission emphasis on a regimental, moralistic system of church rules that narrowed the definition of church membership and resulted in disillusionment among Fijians anxious to maintain their links with the church. Within the mission hierarchy Langham advocated continued missionary dominance, opposing the equality of Fijian minister with European missionary and resisting the introduction of Fijian lay representation at annual meetings of the Fiji District.

A man of high principles, Langham was prepared to conceal the misconduct of a fellow missionary in order to avoid injury to the image of Methodism among Fijians. The evidence suggests that, in his attempts to influence Fijians and government officials, Langham was inclined to act upon rumour but records also testify to the Chairman's 'saving sense of humour' and an 'absolute fearlessness' when faced with moments of crisis and danger. Sir Arthur Gordon, who nicknamed Langham the 'Cardinal' of Fiji, treated him with forebearance, aware of the missionary's 'force and power' in the Fijian community. There was even a hint of envy in the Governor's cynical yet revealing account of Langham's reception at the village of Nakorovatu in Ra, when the people appeared to favour their physically impressive qase levu with god-like awe.

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16 See, for example, C.S.O 1021/1889, especially memo by D. Wilkinson, 8.6.82.
Despite the inevitable sense of loss missionaries felt when Langham left Fiji in 1895 to revise the Fijian Bible in London (where he died in 1903), they recognised that his departure was ultimately to the mission's benefit. In the words of one missionary, 'he had done his work and was not conscious of changes taking place round him'. Fijians might have disagreed with features of Langham's leadership but they appreciated the Chairman's life commitment to missionary work in Fiji. In 1896 Ratu Josefa Lala, on behalf of the Cakaudrove province, made a monetary presentation to Langham, as a 'love gift to him and a momento of his long residence and work'. When Benjamin Danks, the Methodist Mission Board General Secretary, visited Fiji in 1913, he heard Fijians of Rewa recalling Langham's mission work with pride: 'They show the greatest respect for his memory and use the chiefly word Bale in connection with his death'.

In contrast to the overbearing, theocratically-minded Langham, Arthur Small, Chairman from 1900 to 1924, was undramatic, patient and sympathetic to the problems of a developing Fijian church. Fiji became his home after he went there as a probationer in 1879. Having restored the neglected printing press, he inaugurated the influential church paper for Fijians, Ai Tukutuku Vakalotu. Conscious of the manner in which chiefs had been alienated from the mission during Langham's years, Small gradually yet remarkably restored confidence and support among the Fijian leaders, in particular the Vunivalu of Bau, Ratu Pope (Seniloli) Cakobau. Small worked closely with colonial authorities on issues of education and social welfare and reversed Langham's policy of centralised decision-making. Theologically conservative and described by one Governor as 'a well-meaning little fellow but terribly narrow-minded', Small, who always dressed in a long clerical coat, made up for his lack of physical stature and presence

19 W. Slade to G. Brown, 12 May 1900, MCM 165.
20 MR, May 1896, 10.
21 Danks, Diary, Friday, 21 November 1913, Methodist Church of Australia, 625, ML.
by determined and methodical leadership. 22

Relations between the Chairman in Fiji and the Mission Board in Sydney deteriorated during the term of Small's successor, Richard McDonald. In 1925 the Reverend John Wear Burton was elected to the position of General Secretary. Together with his ingrained qualities of strong leadership and commanding oratory which enabled him to secure the confidence and support of the Board of Missions, Burton, who had been a missionary for some years among Fiji's Indians, held firm ideas regarding the future of overseas missions. McDonald, also a man of strongly held principles, and Burton were too alike in personality to compromise on crucial policies. In the field of education McDonald believed in state aid, Burton opposed it; on the matter of finances Burton argued for devolution of responsibility to the Fijians, whereas McDonald never wholeheartedly supported this, believing with other missionaries that the people were not ready for it. The fundamental debate between Burton and McDonald was over control and direction of district affairs. 23 Burton won in the short term; McDonald resigned in frustration at the end of 1935 but what he had failed to achieve by confrontation, his successors, Charles LeLcan and William Green, were able to accomplish by indirect methods, due partly to improved relations with Burton and to the onset of the Second World War under which conditions the missionaries in Fiji were free to assume more direct responsibility for mission policy.

While Chairmen, by virtue of their senior position, derived power and status, circuit missionaries of ability were also influential. Some, by a combination of physical stature (an attribute which was

22 Governor Everard im Thurn, Diary, 11 November 1904, Im Thurn Papers, M/273, Pac.Hist., (Diary original in the Royal Anthropological Institute, London). Small died in Suva on 28 September 1925. It was the biggest funeral for years and 266 Fijians from Davuilevu marched in columns of four the twelve miles to Suva to attend the missionary's funeral at the Jubilee Fijian Church, Fiji Times, 29 September 1925.

23 McDonald's tendency to dominate affairs in Fiji was resented by some missionaries. See C.O. Lelean to C.N. Churchward, 25 July 1933, Lomai/A/1(c) and R.H. Green to H. Chambers, 27 March 1935, N/61, MF.
always of immediate psychological benefit) and forceful personality, impressed their will upon the Fijian; for example, James Calvert, who retired from Fiji before 1874 and Lorimer Fison, who returned to Fiji in 1875 after an initial term of ten years from 1861.

Fison was a graduate of Cambridge and Melbourne Universities, deeply interested in the origins, social system and land tenure of the Fijian people. He became a zealous apostle of the American anthropologist, Lewis Morgan, whose theories on kinship Fison applied to the communal manner of life in Fiji. The principle of inalienability of land which Fison enunciated at a lecture at Levuka in 1880 was popularly acclaimed but largely ignored by the Land Claims Commission which realised that the practice in Fiji deviated considerably from the missionary's attractive theory. A Social Darwinian in outlook, Fison was pessimistic about the survival of the Fijian race and his views were echoed in mission literature on Fiji up to the early decades of the twentieth century. Fison spent three years at Lakeba from 1875 to 1877, during which time he revolutionised the method of church collections and upgraded the circuit training institution to the point where Lauan dominance in the Fijian ministry would never be relinquished. His last six years in Fiji were spent at the Navula District Training Institution, where he compiled lectures on theology for the Fijian students that unfortunately were never made available in published form, although a life of Christ which he wrote was printed. Fison remonstrated against the inequality of ordained Fijian ministers in the laws of the Australian Methodist Church but, at the point of commitment, he was reluctant to grant them

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24 See M.D. Sahlins' seminal article, 'Poor Man, Rich Man, Big Man, Chief. Political Types in Melanesia and Polynesia', in I. Hogbin and L.R. Hiatt, Readings in Australian and Pacific Anthropology, Melbourne, 1966, esp. 164; B. Seeman, Mission to Viti, Cambridge 1862, 70; Gunson, op.cit., 94.


full rights in the Fiji District Synod. 'In this as in many other things', he wrote, 'I am an ultra-radical in theory but a moderate conservative in practice'. 28

Non-ranking Fijians, who recognised the association between missionary power and chiefly position, accorded missionaries the same respect, distance and authority given to chiefs, a situation reinforced by visible means. The front paths to mission houses were forbidden to everyone except the missionary and chiefs of status; others using them were disciplined; missionaries when on their circuit visitation, or raicakacaka, were usually accommodated with the local chief or government official; Fijians never stood in the presence of a missionary but crouched down 'in a most submissive posture' as they would in front of their chief. 29 The mission house on the hill, situated there to take full advantage of any cooling breeze and well away from the mosquito-infested swamps, was a social as well as a physical barrier between missionary and Fijian.

As a result of this separation in status, it was not surprising that very few missionaries secured the unqualified confidence of Fijians. Joseph Waterhouse in the 1870s and Arthur Lelean in the 1920s were two who did so, the former in exceptional circumstances when he championed the rights and status of Fijian ministers, 30 and the latter in his encouragement of individual enterprise and economic independence for Fijians in northern Viti Levu.

Appointed to Fiji in 1918, Lelean spent most of his years at Nailaga, Ba. He was a man of charisma, an enigma to many of his fellow missionaries, exasperating and sometimes unco-operative in his relations with the Mission Chairman. He was the antithesis of a model

28 Fison to B. Chapman, 11 May 1876, MOM 104.


30 See Chapter 2.
circuit missionary, failing to keep accurate accounts and unconstitutionally diverting mission funds to circuit projects. 31 Lelean's strength lay in his relationship with and understanding of Fijians whose customs and mode of thought he knew 'better than any other missionary' of his time. 32 He acquired mana among the Fijians through his impulsive generosity and his acknowledged healing powers which he administered privately to alleviate the physical suffering of Fijians who sought his help. 33 With characteristic benevolence, Lelean paid the school fees of Fijian students in hardship and secretly lent circuit money to both Indians and Fijians. 34 An ardent individualist, he instituted and became heavily involved financially in a Fijian farm scheme, whereby large numbers of villagers from Colo North in the interior of his circuit were resettled on cane farms near Tavua. It was a sensitive programme politically and not the economic miracle that Lelean had optimistically hoped for, but significantly it did produce a group of Fijian farmers who made the first coherent and united request for an independent Methodist Church in Fiji. 35 Lelean's relations with the Fijian ministers in his circuit may be gauged from the fact that in 1933 they were prepared to forfeit £742 owing to them in stipends as their contribution to wiping off a circuit debt of £1,153. 36

Anxious to remain in Fiji, Lelean was prevailed upon to leave in 1936 by his uncle, Charles Lelean, who was then Chairman of the Methodist Mission and who had been apprehensive for some time that his nephew's finances would go 'deeper into the mire' should he remain. 37 Lelean confided his despair at leaving Fiji to Robert Green, his closest

31 Report of Commission appointed by Board of Missions to visit Fiji, Sydney 1928, 8, (limited circulation only). Copy in H.O./4/E, MF.
32 Green, My Story, 286.
33 Interview with R.H. Green, Brighton, Melbourne, 11 May 1977.
34 H.H. Bock to A.E. Barker, 7 January 1939, F/1/1939; C.O. Lelean to H. Chambers, 1 December 1930, CAK/A/1(a), MF.
35 See Chapter 9 for further details.
36 H.H. Bock to W. Green, 4 October 1940, F/1/1940.
37 C.O. Lelean to R.L. McDonald, 5 March 1934, F/1/1934.
missionary acquaintance:

It nearly broke my heart to leave Fiji. After a few days of mkes we had the sacramental service and said 'Goodbye' and for my part I coiled up in my room for a few hours and sobbed and blubbered like a school-girl. So much so, that I determined to return outside the Mission, after a year or so, to die later on with the Fijians.38

Lelean continued his ministry in Ballarat, Victoria, his reputation there for faith healing almost equal to that in Viti Levu.39 But he was like many missionaries in Fiji who, finding work and environment to their liking, were reluctant to return to Australia or New Zealand. The longer missionaries stayed in Fiji the less inclined they were to return to a 'home' circuit and the less they enjoyed it once they did. The idea of a fairly rigid three years appointment system was anathema after the luxury of ten years or more on one station in Fiji. Even though family demands often forced missionaries back to the colonies they retained a deep dislike of 'colonial circuits'.40 Joseph Nettleton expressed the unstated feeling of many missionaries when, returning to England in 1874 after fifteen years in Fiji, he confessed that 'the ignoble lot of a mere minister in the home work seems to have fallen to me and my laurels are in the past and Fijian'.41

The ability of missionary wives to adapt to life in Fiji was a crucial factor in determining the amount of time a missionary would spend in Fiji. William Slade, from New Zealand, would have remained in Fiji but for the poor health of his wife and this problem prematurely terminated a number of missionary appointments. George Brown claimed that missionary wives of the 1890s were 'a new race' and he identified the absurdity in mission marriage policy:

38 A.D. Lelean to R.H. Green, 26 March 1936, M/61, MF.
39 Interview with R.H. Green, 11 May 1977.
40 A.J. Small to J.C. Wheen, 28 January 1914, H.O./1/1914, MF; W. Slade to G. Brown, 12 May 1900, MOM 165; MR, January 1896, 3; Slade to H. Worrall, 11 August 1890 and W.A. Heighway to Worrall, 18 July 1890, MOM 295.
41 Nettleton to J. Calvert, 24 August 1875, N.156, MMS.
They [missionary wives] go down for few months and then they must rush up to the Colonies... We refuse to send an unmarried man to Fiji and yet will allow him to send away his wife after being a few months married.\textsuperscript{42}

Brown was quite blunt in his advice to Charles Lelean over the choice of wife: 'She must be a strong healthy woman or your work will be hindered'.\textsuperscript{43}

Missionary wives did receive substantial domestic assistance from the Fijian students and their wives who resided in the circuit training institution on the mission compound. In the eyes of the missionaries domestic help prepared the Fijians to act as future models of Christian living in the villages to which they would be appointed. Robert Green described the system as it operated at Davuilevu in the late 1930s:

All domestic help in Fijian Mission houses was given by boys from the schools. They didn't need money. Originally a boy served for a week only and was replaced by another and these boys were freed from school community work such as grass cutting and path making. Many of the vulis [students] had worked as house boys in the various circuits before coming to the training centre. Their English had improved and their knowledge of all domestic affairs had increased which made the position quite sought after. It was part of their education for modern living.\textsuperscript{44}

Missionary remuneration was equal to if not more generous than that paid to ministers in Australia: Their basic salary rose from £180 per annum in 1875 to £280 by 1925 (an amount equivalent to that received by a Third Class clerk in the Fiji Colonial Administration). Missionaries were also entitled to furlough expenses, children's allowances and a supplementary educational grant for those children who were sent to boarding schools in either Australia or New Zealand. An additional sum was provided for family medical supplies. There were extra costs involved in missionary work particularly as most missionaries chose to maintain a European diet and way of life, a decision which

\textsuperscript{42} Brown to Small, 2 December 1895, NOM 44.

\textsuperscript{43} Brown to Lelean, 15 July 1896, NOM 44.

\textsuperscript{44} Green, \textit{My Story}, 377.
sometimes necessitated the importation of food and general goods at high tariffs. In 1892 missionaries submitted a lengthy document to the Board of Missions protesting at a proposed salary cut. Among other points they complained that the cost of servants was higher in Fiji than Australia because 'while the cost of each individual is small, the large number of natives to equal the services of one competent English servant raises the whole cost of domestic servants to a higher rate than that paid by Ministers in the Colonies'. Generally speaking, however, missionaries were sufficiently well paid to save a proportion of their salary and most who were prepared to discuss their financial situation admitted that they had been better off in Fiji than in the home colonies.

While most missionaries found their experience in Fiji to be personally satisfying - one even called life in Fiji 'heaven' when compared to Australia - a small number recognised their unsuitability for an island appointment. The diaries of Alfred Collocott, missionary on Kadavu from 1881-84, provide an illuminating if atypical insight into the pursuits and problems of a European circuit superintendent.

Collocott at the age of twenty-three left from Sydney for Kadavu with his wife Alice in May 1881. Travelling via Ovalau and Levu, they reached Tavuki, the mission headquarters on Kadavu, in June, to find teachers from all parts of the island rethatting the mission house. Collocott occupied himself instructing the circuit training centre students from among whom were drawn his house-servants, a cow hand, cook, pantry-boy and outside-work boy. The wives of students attended to the mission laundry. Repairs to mission property took up much of Collocott's time and often he called for assistance

45 Minutes of Fiji District Meeting, 1892, MOM 24.

46 W. Moore to J. Eggleston, 16 February 1862, MOM 165; Fison to Calvert, 22 February 1884, M.148, MMS: Reminiscences of Mrs A.J. Small, MOM 136; G. Brown to H. Worrall, 11 March 1896, MOM 44.

47 The phrase was M. Wilmshurst's, quoted in A.C. Cato to W. Green, 30 November 1944, F/1/1944.

48 MOM 163, 285-87.
from the students, or *vuli*, who in effect constituted a reservoir of free labour. Most of the church activities proceeded regardless of Collocott's presence and were arranged by either of the senior Fijian ministers in the Kadavu circuit, Filikesa Kalou and Lemaki Batiri.

Collocott was beset with difficulties from the outset. Due to his wife's poor health he spent many days confined to the mission house and the limited contact with his students slowed down his efforts to learn the Fijian language. At services he was forced to read the sermons of John Hunt and it was over a year after his arrival before he attempted his first original sermon. His wife became pregnant shortly after their arrival on Kadavu and required constant attention. Two sons were born in Fiji and with both there were continual problems. Fresh food was scarce and the diet was limited; in August 1882 the Collocotts were living on salt beef and yams.

Alfred Collocott treated his domestic labour indifferently and within a short time found the students to be unco-operative in house work. The students' wives refused to continue washing mission laundry and Collocott was forced to do household chores himself. In May 1883 he went to Suva to engage 'foreign' (presumably Indian) labour but was unable to secure anyone. Eventually he was deprived of all student labour and his youngest brother, Edgar, was brought from Australia to assist. By September 1883, Collocott was in the depths of despair:

> What a lazy useless life I appear to lead. I preach twice usually on Sundays when home and hold fortnightly, monthly, quarterly and yearly meetings and that is about all outside work. And yet I can't help myself. We can't get servants to help us and when Edgar goes home I will have extra work for he milks the cows and goats, cooks the food and does a great many little things...How different is life here to life in the Colonies...There are Publicans and Street Arabs, prisoners and sick to visit and none need be idle but here all is different. I long to work but have not the opportunity.49

After the Fiji District Meeting of 1883 Alice Collocott and the two children were sent to Australia on medical advice for a change of climate. Although intending to return, Alice remained in Australia and Alfred left Fiji in mid-1884.

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49 1 September 1883, MOM 287.
Collocott's failing was not one of mediocrity but incompatibility; he was defeated by his environment. Furthermore his inability to secure a constant supply of domestic assistance could possibly be attributed to a legacy of mistrust created by his predecessor in Kadavu, John Robson.

Robson was one of a minority among the missionaries whose actions disproportionately damaged the image of the missionary among Fijians. On Kadavu between 1874 and 1878 Robson abused his position as superintendent by systematically appropriating portions of money and yams contributed quarterly by the Fijians for the support of catechists and teachers on the island. The yams he then sold to missionaries in other circuits. By 1878 rumours of Robson’s unscrupulous trading activities were rife throughout Fiji and charges made by Filikesa Kalou, one of the senior Fijian ministers on Kadavu, were investigated and upheld by Isaac Rooney, the missionary in charge of Lomaloma Circuit. Robson was suspended by the Fiji District Annual Meeting and departed for Australia where, on the strength of his vehement denials, the Mission Board exonerated him and permitted him to take up a local circuit. Rooney was disgusted:

I am sorry to see that R.[Robson] has got a Circuit. The Kadavu people will hear of it soon...They know perfectly well that if a Native Minister were to act as R. has done he would be expelled at once and when they hear that R. is continued in the Ministry they must come to the conclusion that there is one standard of morality for the White Missionary and a different one for the Native.50

Samuel Brooks was another missionary who, in the short time that he was superintendent of Cakaudrove Circuit, prejudiced the positive impact of mission work. He engineered the shift of the Cakaudrove mission headquarters from a central site at Waikava to Vuna on the southern extremity of Taveuni and once established there neglected his responsibilities over a large part of the circuit and exceeded his

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50 Rooney to B. Chapman, 12 March 1879, NOM 165; on this case see also letters of Robson to Langham, 25 October 1878, 18 and 19 February 1879; Langham to Chapman, 8 August 1878 and 3 February 1879, NOM 165; also Chapman to Langham, 15 April 1879, A.2818 ML; Minutes of Special Fiji District Meeting held in Sydney Mission Office, 24 March 1879, F/3/(b), MF.
authority over the Fijian ministers in the circuit by compelling each in turn to reside at Vuna for periods of up to three months and attend to personal missionary duties. Brooks was alleged to have illicit relationships with the wives of both planters and mission teachers and the scandal was climaxed, according to the account of one missionary, by 'the smashing of every inch and glass and of every stick of furniture in the Mission house by the injured husband of a white woman'.

In the late 1890s the misdemeanours of William Allen, missionary in Fiji from 1881 to 1892, were widely publicised among the Fijians of Navuola and beyond, after a daughter of William Lindsay, the Navuola College principal, gave birth to an illegitimate child whose father was a student at the Institution. Having been expelled, the student proceeded to divulge what Lindsay's daughter had told him of a secret relationship between her and William Allen ten years previously. Allen was brought before the Victorian church courts where, in view of his penitent attitude, the affair in Fiji was considered a closed case. However, in the opinion of the missionaries in Fiji, who were greatly embarrassed by the incident, Allen, like Robson, had been treated leniently. Missionaries felt that sympathy from Australian ministers would be interpreted by Fijians as evidence of a devious 'cover-up' campaign. William Heighway noted that Allen's case was 'in the mouths of natives who of course will draw all sorts of conclusions from it that we are all alike, only in our case it is passed over and hidden'.

Apart from instances of sexual impropriety on the part of missionaries, which continued into the twentieth century, Fijians were equally dismayed by missionaries who appropriated mission funds to their own use, overstepped their authority, grossly offended Fijian

51 J. Nettleton to J. Calvert, 24 August 1875, M.156, HNS; see also L. Fison to B. Chapman, 13 August 1875 and 27 October 1875, MOM 104.

52 W.A. Heighway to H. Worrall, 14 August 1897, MOM 295; see also the letters of H. Nolan, W.A. Heighway and A.J. Small to Worrall, 1897, MOM 295.
etiquette or were plainly incompetent. In most of these cases, the missionaries in question, none of whom were highly regarded by their brethren, were quickly dispatched to Australia. The one exception was William Poole whose continued presence in the Lomaiviti Circuit, despite petitions from Fijians for his removal on account of the deplorable state of the circuit training institution and the resultant lack of village pastors, eventually exhausted even Fijian patience and convention. Two church employees, Simioni Tamani and Eapi Nabou requested permission to go to Synod and ask for Poole’s removal:

The Fijian custom is to drop a hint and leave it to the hearer’s imagination to follow it up. Simioni and I know Europeans better than that. We know that we must tell everything straight out and leave nothing to the imagination. Therefore we want to make allowance for the way the Europeans’ minds work.54

Mediocrity, instability and incompetence were characteristics found among the missionaries of Fiji as much as they were present in any identifiable group of Europeans. There were times, for example in the late 1870s, when senior government officers such as John Bates Thurston, could with some justification sneer at the hypocrisy of the men of cloth—missionaries such as Brooks, Robson, Thomas Moore of Rotuma, J.D. Jory at Lakeba, and David Wylie at Ovalau who confessed it was 'a most disagreeable thing to him to have to conduct a service

53 Refer to the following correspondence: C.O. Lelean to H. Johnstone, 25 January 1938, F/1/1938; W. Green to R.S. Walker, 8 October 1940, F/1/1940; H. Chambers to R.L. McDonald, 28 April 1929, CAK/A/1(a), MF; H.H. Bock to W. Green, 24 October 1938, F/1/1938; J.C. Jennison to J. Loloma (Buli Batiki), 20 November 1907, F/1/1907; C.A. Brough to A.J. Small, 25 November 1907, F/1/1907; J. Loloma to Small, 27 November 1907 and Small to Loloma, 2 January 1908, F/1/1907 and F/1/1908.

54 Notes written by C.O. Lelean after an interview with Simioni Tamani and Eapi Nabou, 11 October 1923, encl. in Lelean to Small, 12 October 1923, Davui/A/1, MF. Poole left Fiji in 1924.


56 See Chapter 6 for Moore’s involvement in the religious wars on Rotuma in 1878.

57 Fison described Jory as 'one of the most foolish young fellows I ever saw but his folly is that of sheer ignorance'. Fison to B. Chapman, 15 October 1878, MOM 104.
Yet it was misleading to damn missionary effort because of a few failures. A close acquaintance of Thurston at Levuka was Arthur James Webb, arguably Fiji's most competent missionary after 1874. The majority of missionaries succeeded in their task in the sense that they adapted to an established routine which did not significantly alter once the pattern was set from 1880 onwards. From a historical point of view, the contribution of most missionaries appeared unremarkable because their role was subservient to that of the larger organisation. Missionaries such as William Slade (1886-1901), Arthur Amos (1912-22), Clerk Maxwell Churchward (1921-34), Robert Green (1921-42) and Harold Chambers (1922-35), represented the typically conscientious superintendent; they might have lacked the individual flair and empathy of Arthur Lelean or the intellectual stature of Lorimer Fison, or the leadership qualities of Langham and Small but their efficient management of circuits provided the leadership models which were to be imitated in the 1930s by the first Fijian superintendents.

58 Langham to B. Chapman, 19 November 1875, MON 103.

MISSIONARIES AND THE FIJIAN MINISTRY

The consolidation of Methodism in Fiji, as with other Protestant missions in the Pacific, depended to a great extent on the work of an indigenouspastorate who occupied the villages and served as the link between missionary and church adherent. Although the conscientious missionar­ies moved around their circuit frequently, many isolated villages were visited scarcely once a year. Consequently most of the regular village church activities were conducted by local teachers and, above them in the mission hierarchy, catechists and ministers.

In their relations with Fijian mission agents, missionaries were influenced to varying degrees by their attitudes towards the people amongst whom they worked. After 1874 the missionary outlook modified gradually from the fundamental doctrines expounded in earlier years; belief in the 'natural depravity' of Fijians as a race cut off from divine grace shifted, once most Fijians were nominally Christian, to judgements on the Fijian's moral worth. Reflecting on the limited 'spiritual attainments' of church members in 1883, Small wrote:

We have to bear in mind how blunted has become the moral sense of the native through generations of base living. Who can tell what an inheritance of evil his ancestors have bequeathed to him for a life-possession!1

In general agreement on the need for moral improvement among the Fijians, missionaries differed in estimates of their intellectual capacity. William Slade was, like many missionaries of the late nineteenth century, attracted to an ethnographic determinist interpretation not far removed from the Christian literalists, when he stated that the Fijians 'while not so low intellectually as the Papuans

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1 Bua Circuit, Annual Report, 1883, MNSA; see also Ovalau Circuit, Annual Report, 1896, MNSA.
are much lower than the races on their eastern side'. By contrast, Lorimer Fison, while convinced that the Fijians were a dying race, believed also that they were 'superior to the Tongans' and in his favourable estimation of their intellect he was supported by Joseph Nettleton and Arthur Webb. Another perspective was offered by Frederick Langham who, in his most pessimistic mood, resigned himself to a low achievement-level by Fijians since this was the inevitable product of a people who failed to see 'the disgusting vile filthiness of their conduct'.

Elements of race prejudice were evident among missionaries but, in the light of European attitudes to race generally at this

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2 Ra Circuit, Annual Report, 1901, MMSA. Slade's theory, widely held by missionaries in Fiji, can be compared to the view propounded by a Presbyterian missionary in the New Hebrides, John Inglis, when he divided the South Sea races into three divisions, according to the descendants of Noah's three sons, Ham, Shem and Japheth. The lowest division were the Papuans, descendants of Ham; the next division were the Malay-Polynesians, the descendants of Shem and the highest division were the Europeans, the descendants of Japheth, those 'specially called of God at the present day to colonize and evangelize the world'. J. Inglis, Bible Illustrations from the New Hebrides, London 1890, 9-10, 218. See also, Fiji District, Annual Report, 1901, MMSA; W. Deane, Fijian Society, London 1921, 9.


4 Langham to H. Worrall, 7 March 1894, MOM 295. It should be noted that much of the missionary thinking of this time was echoed by colonial administrators and writers. Basil Thomson thought the Fijian was 'some centuries behind us' while Arthur Gordon saw his subjects in a transitional state between the 'ruder stage of savage life' and 'far higher social and intellectual advancement'. Both Sir William Des Voeux in 1904 and G.C. Henderson in 1931 believed that the Tongans or Fijians with strong Tongan influence (such as the inhabitants of Ono-i-Lau) were people of 'superior quality'. David Wilkinson was closer to the ideas of Webb and Nettleton when he said the Fijians were an 'industrious race... and would certainly compare favourably with us, or the agricultural populations of more civilised and superior races'. B. Thomson, The Fijians, London 1908, 1; Fiji Records, vol.I, 198; G.W. Des Voeux, My Colonial Service, London 1903, 339; G.C. Henderson, Fiji and the Fijians, Sydney 1931, 182; D. Wilkinson to Gordon, 19 August 1877, Fiji Records, vol.II, 560.
time, ought not to be exaggerated. Small was undoubtedly reflecting the prevailing white opinion in Suva when he advised his Mission Board in 1906 not to resite the Jubilee Fijian Church in the middle of a European community: 'they [the natives] would become odious.' William Poole disapproved of Fijians - 'several dirty boys' - living in the same quarters as a European teacher; 'I wish he [the teacher] were less of a native', wrote Poole. At least two missionaries admitted to leaving Fiji because of a dislike or distrust of the Fijians among whom they worked.

The missionary view of the Fijian after 1900 indicated a particular stress on benevolent paternalism which in many respects was a logical development of earlier theories rationalising Fijian moral and intellectual immaturity. The Fijians were regarded as occupying a state of spiritual childhood in which they had not yet cast off the 'swaddling clothes of Christianity'. This argument had its most enduring impact in permitting the missionaries to justify their continued presence in the community and degree of authority - a development by no means unique to the missionary situation in Fiji. Included in the twentieth century missionary outlook was a large dose of the 'White Man's burden' well summarised by William Bennett, principal of the Navulaoa Training Institution, in 1908:

6 Small to B. Danks, 3 July 1906, F/1/1906.
7 W.R. Poole to Small, 3 January 1913, F/1/1913. See also W.O. North to Small, 6 September 1913, F/1/1913.
8 B.H. Willis to Small, 11 July 1917, F/1/1917; N.R. Greenwood to Small, 18 September 1923, F/1/1923.
9 C. Bleazard, Lakeba and Lomaloma Circuit, Annual Report, 1906, MMSA. Childhood comparisons were not confined to missionary literature and thinking. A visitor to Fiji in the 1880s, Alfred St Johnston, who was generally unsympathetic to missionary enterprise, spoke of the Fijians as 'a childlike and superstitious race', Camping Among Cannibals, London 1883, 16.
There remains the heavy task of developing in the Fijian Christian a stability of character to which he is at present comparatively a stranger. Under supervision and with careful watching, and many admonitions the native member will do faithful service but so strong are the ties of the past that we must never be surprised at lapses into sin of even our best members.\footnote{11}

Influenced by more rigorous training courses, introduced by J.W. Burton in the 1930s, which included, among other newer disciplines, anthropology lectures at Sydney University under the direction of A.P. Elkin, missionaries were made aware of the studies of social anthropologists emphasising cultural uniqueness and the intricate systems of a society's behaviour.\footnote{12} As a consequence of this and generally a more liberal theological education, missionaries were more inclined to stress the positive features of Fijian character but paternalism remained deeply embedded in their thinking. The Fijians might be 'generous, loving and sincere' but they were still 'children, unreliable, easily confused and led astray', not yet sufficiently prepared to assume control of their own affairs.\footnote{13}

On the crucial question of ministerial authority, missionary opinion, reflecting features of their attitude to the Fijian, remained inflexible for many decades. 'Who can one trust among the Fijians?' inquired a pessimistic Harold Chambers, 'I'd like to come back in 500 years time and see if the Fijians had become reliable'.\footnote{14} Judging the matter from their own experience and point of view, missionaries showed reluctance to give Fijian mission agents more than a measure of control. 'We have come here to rule', stated Charles Lelean in 1904, 'and if we don't, we will be ruled'.\footnote{15} Forty years later Lelean's

\footnote{11} ME, August 1908, 12.
\footnote{12} J.W. Burton, Modern Missions in the South Pacific, London 1949, 28, 208; F.M. Keesing, The South Seas in the Modern World, New York 1941, 244.
\footnote{13} H.H. Bock, Fiji Calling, MS in F/1/1936; W. Green to S. Albon, 2 August 1945, F/1/1945.
\footnote{14} Chambers to C.O. Lelean, 19 February 1930, CAK/A/1(a), MF.
\footnote{15} Lelean to Small, 10 April 1904, F/1/1904.
sentiments remained implicit in the relationship between missionary and Fijian minister.  

The first Tongan in Fiji to be ordained as a minister was the celebrated Tongan, Joeli Bulu, in August 1851. The rapid growth of the Wesleyan Mission in the 1850s forced the missionaries to reappraise the role of their Tongan and Fijian 'native helpers'. Those of 'superior piety, ability, diligence and faithfulness' were rewarded with ordination so that Christian rites such as communion and marriage could be celebrated in the more isolated areas. The Fijian ministry expanded to cope with the rise in church membership although after 1900, when church numbers levelled off, reflecting the general decline in Fijian population, the ordained ministry continued to grow, mainly as a result of the proliferation of traditionally-based tikina districts, used for local government administration; tikina chiefs preferred ministers since their position in the church hierarchy gave them more status than teachers and consequently enhanced a chief's prestige.  

It is probable that there would have been even larger numbers of ordained ministers in the twentieth century had not the missionaries deliberately limited the ministerial ranks. In 1876 they introduced a new middle position into the mission hierarchy, that of catechist or vakatawa, a stepping stone from the rank of teacher or village pastor to minister. Reasons of economy largely explain the creation of a vakatawa order, since the ministers, unlike teachers and catechists, were paid out of general funds. But the additional rank successfully

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16 W. Green to D.I. Telfer, 18 December 1945, F/1/1945.
18 Church adherents decreased along with the general population. Tikina statistics from T.J. Macnaught, 'Chiefly Civil Servants', Journal of Pacific History, vol.9, 1974, 16. For elaboration of the role of chiefs in the church see Chapter 3.
prevented, at least for a while, 'young inexperienced men from getting
into the Native Ministry', for the latter would now be chosen exclusively
from catechists who had occupied their position for a number of years. 19
They were older and presumed to be more mature. Thus most ministers
spent over half their working life as teachers or catechists before their
patience was rewarded with a recommendation to the ministry. 20

From the point of view of the finance-conscious missionary,
catechists were a cheap source of labour. They performed all the duties
of an ordained minister (except the dispensation of sacraments) yet
lacked status and a secure income. 21 The missionaries laid down a
minimum allowance which villages were to pay their catechists - 25/-
every three months in 1914 - but some catechists and teachers were
receiving only 5/- simply because their church members were unable to
afford any more; old clothes were being contributed in lieu of money. 22
Not surprisingly, on economic grounds alone, catechists were eager to
gain mission blessing for ordination since a probationary minister
received a fixed salary of £8 per annum. The increase in ministers
accepted on probation, from seventy-two in the quarter-century before
1900 to 160 in the twenty years after, was in part the result of a push
from the lower ranks of the church hierarchy. Recognising this inflated

19 L. Fison to B. Chapman, 21 October 1876, MOM 104.
20 'A man is rarely proposed for [the position of Native Minister]
until he has been a preacher for at least 20 years and that after
being accepted he must remain on probation for six years'. Small,
Suva Circuit, Annual Report, 1905, MMSA. Additional calculations
from brief biographies of Fijian ministerial applicants in Minutes
of Fiji District Synod, MOM 5-26, 174; F/4/B - F/4/I, MF.
21 Small to B. Danks, 7 December 1909, MOM 106. In 1876 when the
order of catechists was introduced, they were also denied the
authority to celebrate marriages and execute church discipline.
Between 1876 and 1909 however these responsibilities were extended
to them probably because Fijian ministers in some areas, for example
Lau, were unable to regularly visit parts of their sections. See
W.A. Burns to Small, 12 January 1903, F/1/1903 and Small to J.G.
Wheen, 16 June 1914, H.O./I/1914, MF.
22 R.L. McDonald to Small, 9 March 1915, F/1/1915.
growth, missionaries severely reduced ministerial recruitment after 1920.23

Unlike their missionary superiors, Fijians had no 'call' directly to the ministry; their most crucial decision came at a young age, usually in late adolescence, when their elementary education at a mission school was complete and they chose, sometimes at the parents' bidding, to attend one of the circuit mission stations for training as a village teacher. Once having received one or two years' training, the vui or students were deemed qualified to take up teaching and preaching appointments in the circuit villages. Fijians who remained church members could aspire to be local preachers or church stewards; teachers had the greater opportunity to move up the mission hierarchy eventually to become ordained ministers. Vocational opportunities in the mission tended to favour the circuits that had the strongest chiefly support, since their encouragement usually ensured a flourishing circuit training institution while, after 1895, chiefly approval was mandatory for those seeking to train for mission work. Circuits which trained large numbers of teachers inevitably produced more for the ministry. Between 1850 and 1940, two-thirds of all ministers whose birth-place is known came from the circuits of Lau, Lomaiviti, Kadavu, Rewa and Tailevu (including Bau).24 It is not coincidental that these areas were the first to adopt Christianity nominally and that successive district theological institutions were located in these circuits, at Lakeba, Rewa, Kadavu, Navuloa in the Bau tikina and Davuilevu.

23 C.O. Lelean to Small, 23 June 1911, F/1/1911; R.L. McDonald to H. Chambers, 16 June 1926, F/1/1926. Between 1921 and 1940, eighty-nine ministers were accepted on probation.

24 See Table 3. It should be noted that the southern and eastern islands of Fiji, for environmental, population and educational reasons, have also provided a large number of government employees. As far as the church is concerned patterns are now changing. Cakaudrove and Macuata for instance are today supplying far more ministers than previously; some present church leaders attribute this to the strength of the circuit training institutions at Savusavu and Naduri, a conclusion that would be supported by the early history of the mission.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DISTRICT</th>
<th>1850-75</th>
<th>1876-1900</th>
<th>1901-20</th>
<th>1921-40</th>
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<tr>
<td>Ba</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bau (incl. Viwa)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>22</td>
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<td>3</td>
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<td>8</td>
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<td>10</td>
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<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
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<tr>
<td>TOTAL (of those whose birthplace is known)</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>144</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>327</td>
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<tr>
<td>No. of ministers accepted on probation</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>384</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

* Compiled from Minutes of Fiji District Synod, F/4/A to F/4/F, MF. In mission records not all ministers' birthplaces are given but sufficiently large a proportion to calculate reliable trends. There were also eleven Tongans who were ordained while in Fiji, ten of those in the earliest period, 1850-75.
A complex range of motives brought Fijians to a training institution. A few regarded it as a way to escape communal duties. More however entered mission work for the opportunity of further education and material improvement. Josefa Ravuaka from Koro had been taught elementary subjects at his village school but while on a canoe voyage (presumably to Levuka), he was said to have been impressed by the better clothing and education of 'the boys who lived with the Missionaries'. Ravuaka's intelligence and strength of character were noted by missionaries who claimed that he achieved a 'chief-like' position even though he was not a chief by birth.25

The desire to attain 'chief-like' status in the eyes of the non-titled undoubtedly motivated Fijians into the ministry. In 1888 missionaries disapprovingly commented on 'the tendency of the native ministers to lord it over the teachers and people under them'.26 A number of ministers in the late nineteenth century were disciplined for 'exercising powers of lala' (the privilege accorded only to chiefs of commanding labour or goods from their subjects) over other mission workers.27 This became less of a problem in subsequent years, but in 1940 the first thorough survey of Fijian ministers confirmed the continuing appeal of mission work to Fijians either seeking achieved status or an escape from the constrictions of chiefly society.28 Almost all the ministers in the 1940 survey were from untitled parentage, their fathers either being commoners (lewe ni vanua) or elders (turaga ni vanua, turaga ni mataqali). However, while ministers did attain positions of some prestige, they were essentially 'pulpit chiefs' constantly reminded of their proper place by the traditional chiefly hierarchy.29

26 An Open Letter from the Fiji District Meeting to Ministers of the Australasian Wesleyan Methodist Church, November 1888 [n.p.], 2, ML.
28 See Table 4.
29 For example, see Laura Thompson's description of the minister on Kabara, Lau, in the 1930s, Fijian Frontier, New York 1940, 113. Refer also Chapter 3.
### Table 4

**FIJI METHODIST MISSION**

Fijian Ministers-1940: Fathers' rank in society and position in church

(Survey completed by 154 ministers)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank in Society (Stated by 139) (VAKAVANUA)</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Position in Church (Stated by 133) (VAKALOTU)</th>
<th>Number</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High Chiefs</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Talatala (Minister)</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Chiefs and Chiefs' Spokesmen</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>Vakatava (Catechist)</td>
<td>13</td>
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* Survey of Fijian Ministers, 1940, M/38/A MF.
Only a handful of ministers were of chiefly origin, even fewer of high chiefly rank. High chiefs had little to gain by becoming paid mission agents and much to lose. Their titles gave them no automatic status in the mission hierarchy and they no longer could take advantage of traditional personal services; indeed once removed from their home district, as was often the case with catechists and ministers, their authority was diminished though they were treated with greater respect in view of their birth. With generally wider opportunities, young men with chiefly connections faced considerable pressures in choosing a church career. Nacanieli Mataika, son of Ratu Josua Tubunavere and Adi Laisa Beci, inherited one of the highest chiefly titles in Lomaiviti, Tui Nairai. After resisting the inducements of a labour recruiter in 1902, he spent three years at Davuilevu Training Centre before experiencing a crisis over the choice of career:

My heart was heavy at this time as I went about my daily tasks for within me I heard clearly the call of God to His service, but being a Chief of my people, the Government was urging me to serve my people in the capacity of an officer of the government in connection with the survey of native lands; my own home Province was also making overtures to me to return and engage in provincial work. But I resisted these offers because of the voice of God within me.30

At least one of the earliest ordained ministers, Eliesa Takelo from Lakeba, was the son of a traditional priest, Emosi Kau, but it is impossible to determine whether other first generation ministers came from a similar background. However the hereditary characteristic of the pre-Christian priesthood has been retained in one family, the Buadromos of Mavana, Vanua Balavu. This small village in the Mualevu rikina has supplied nine ministers, including five from the priestly caste of Buadromo - Inoke, his three sons, Mosese, Wilisoni and Joni, and Mosese's eldest son, Iliasa.32 A large proportion of


31 Calvert and Williams, Fiji and the Fijians, 297.

32 Information from the Reverend Josateki Koroi, Suva 1976. The other ministers who came from Mavana were Joeli Vakalologo, Eparama Wakolo, Wilisoni Lagi (the first Fijian Medical Officer) and Josateki Koroi.
Fijian ministers in 1940 came from families where the father was employed by the mission, indicating a frequent desire by young men to 'take the place of my father'.

Until the first decade of the twentieth century Fijian ministers required no formal educational standard. As a result of their years spent in the Circuit and District Training Institutions, they were well versed in the Bible, particularly Jewish History and the Prophets from the Old Testament and Pauline doctrine from the New Testament, the sermons of John Wesley, some didactic literature such as Pilgrim's Progress (Vulagi Lako) and material written by the missionaries. John Hunt's Fijian sermons and Lorimer Fison's Ai Tukutuku kei Jisu (Life of Christ) were both printed but the bulk of material used by the missionary at the District Institution was his own notes much of which had to be laboriously copied by the students. In 1900 a ministerial deputation from the Board of Missions suggested a 'more advanced, definite and progressive' programme made up of 'Theology, Biblical Criticism, Bible Study, Homiletics, English, Arithmetic and Geography, together with a little History, Science and Bookkeeping...'

From 1905 oral examinations gave way to written in an effort to improve the educational standard of new candidates and after the transferral of the District Training Institution from Navula (where it had been since 1872) to Davuilevu in 1909, William Bennett, the principal, discouraged the admission of older and sometimes illiterate catechists and made one to three years full-time theological training a prerequisite for the ordained ministry. After 1920 some ministerial candidates had already obtained government teaching qualifications, while by the 1940s theological students were familiar with Bible criticism and Old

33 Mataiasi Vave, in H. Chambers, op.cit., 881.
34 W. Slade to G. Brown, 12 May 1900, MOM 165; Fiji District Synod, Journal of Proceedings 1913, F/4/C, MF.
35 Navula Circuit, Annual Report, 1902, MNSA.
36 C.O. Lelean to Small, 23 June 1911, F/1/1911.
Testament documents. A pass rate of sixty percent was mandatory for success in the annual examinations. In 1945, however, the rules were still being bent to allow the ordination of men who had passed the test of experience but were unable to cope with examinations. 37

Ministers were appointed by the Synod on the recommendations of each circuit but missionary opinion carried the greatest weight. Unwritten rules were followed in the stationing of ministers; normally they were not appointed to their home district since the missionaries generally believed that 'familiarity breeds contempt.' 38 There were important exceptions, however, such as Lau where in 1908 the ministers were agreed that 'a stranger in Lau has scant courtesy shown them'. 39 Furthermore in deciding Fijian stations, missionaries avoided placing a man near his wife's home 'because the temptation to frequently absent herself from her husband in favour of her relatives is too powerful to be resisted'. 40 The length of one term was usually about five years though some ministers proved so popular in certain areas that their appointment was extended indefinitely. Tomasi Mawi, a Lakeban, spent over half his ministry on the island of Gau from 1880 to 1898. On his departure 'lamentations filled the air. All who could, followed the old man to the side of the little vessel, while crowds stood knee-deep in the water sobbing out their weird good-byes.' 41

With Christianity relatively well-established and secure in Fiji after 1874, ministers were tightly constrained within the church hierarchy. Joeli Bulu's death in 1877 signalled the end of the

37 A.R. Tippett to W. Green, 9 May 1945, F/1/1945. Note that Tippett did not approve of the ordination of a candidate who had failed written tests: 'Until a man knows his A.B.C. he cannot hope to be a minister, and I think it is up to us to preserve some sort of standard'.

38 Small to R.L. McDonald, 1 April 1920, F/1/1920.

39 R.O. Cook to Small, 22 June 1908, F/1/1908.

40 Small to H.E. Weavers, 13 June 1924, F/1/1924.

41 Bau and Viwa Circuit, Annual Report, 1898, MMFA.
'pioneering' era when independence, initiative, physical strength and courage were the qualities desired of a minister. Fijian mission workers attracted to a situation where Christian confronted pagan found their outlet in New Britain after 1875 and New Guinea after 1891. The characteristics that Fijian missionaries stressed in their circuit training schools were those designed to strengthen mission organisation: reliability, diplomacy, conscientiousness, discipline and loyalty.

Eliesa Bula, teacher and minister between 1860 and 1915, was the epitome of a missionary's minister. Born in the village of Somosomo on the island of Gau in 1839, Eliesa was a first generation convert, associated with the swing to the lotu that followed Cakobau's nominal adherence in 1854. Baptised by Joseph Waterhouse in June 1856, Eliesa's ability as a village teacher was quickly recognised and, due to the shortage of ministers in the 1860s, he was nominated at the unusually young age of twenty-six; ordination followed in 1869. Among his appointments were Vuda, Nadroga and Somosomo on Taveuni but almost half his ministry was spent at Naduri in the Macuata province (1877-83, 1895-1907). A man of imposing appearance though not of high rank, Eliesa Bula earned the respect of chiefs; they utilised his reputable architectural skills in the building of council houses and chiefs' dwellings, and responded to his diplomatic approach to problems of

42 Not surprisingly it was Fiji's own missionaries to New Britain after 1875, New Guinea after 1891 and the Solomons after 1902 that captured the imagination of their Methodist compatriots throughout Fiji. The exploits of these missionaries were followed through the pages of the monthly mission magazine, Ai Tukutuku Vakalotu (Religious News). Aminio Baledrokadroka, Livai Volavola, Simioni Momoivalu, Wilisoni Lagi and Usaia Sotutu are the names more easily recalled by Fijians today. The work of the Fijians in Papua is studied by David Wetherell in Christian Missions in Eastern New Guinea, Ph.D., A.N.U. 1974, Chapter IV.

43 Gau in the 1850s, along with the outer islands of Lomaiviti, was tributary to Bau and Cakobau's conversion in 1854 brought a landslide of converts to the Wesleyans in the chief's subject states. The island of Gau in particular produced a crop of capable Fijian ministers including Eliesa and Marika Tagicakibau (minister from 1862-1906), Josefa Ratabua (1863-1911), Nafitalai Qaliqarqaro (1875-1906) and Filikesa Kalou (1874-1918).
morality, well illustrated in an incident involving an unnamed 'great chief' whose wife had recently died:

After a short time the chief sent for a native woman and church member to live with him - there was no question of marriage. Before going to the chief's house Eliesa met her but at that stage did not prevent her from going on to the chief's house. Later on he visited the chief and advised him against retaining the woman. 'Arieta is a member of class and if she stays with you she must be expelled and you will endanger her soul. If you want her have a marriage arranged.' The chief yielded.44

It is possible that Eliesa's good relationships with the chiefs of Macuata stemmed partly from his astute exploitation of the traditional tauvu connection between the people of Gau and Macuata;45 however in 1907, one year before Eliesa was due for retirement, the missionaries were obliged to re-appoint him from Naduri to Verata after his position was compromised by the alleged association of his daughter with the Roko Tui Macuata. Subsequently the chiefs of Macuata province petitioned unsuccessfully against Eliesa's removal.46

Between 1881 and 1908 Eliesa frequently represented his fellow circuit ministers at the annual district meeting. He retired to Gau in 1909 where he died in February 1915. Described by various missionaries as a man of 'undoubted piety and worth' and a 'perfect Christian gentleman', Eliesa's most laudable characteristic in their estimation was a self-effacement to the point where 'he never took liberties nor overstepped his position.'47

Fijian ministers submitted to a complicated and strict disciplinary code, parts of it stemming from Australia and applicable

44 MR, August 1915, 14-15.

45 Information from notes made during discussions with the Reverend Josateki Koroi, Suva 1976-77. The implications of traditional affinities among Fijians, such as vasu and tauvu (lit. a joking relationship stemming from contact between the two peoples at an unspecified time in the past) in assisting, or perhaps hindering, a minister in his work, are beyond the barest appreciation of the writer, but deserve further investigation.

46 Small to T.W. Butcher, 14 November 1907, F/1/1907 and 28 April 1908, F/1/1908.

47 Small to W.E. Crawford, 22 December 1902; Small to T.W. Butcher, 23 December 1902, F/1/1902; MR, August 1915, 14.
to European and Fijian alike, but in addition many district rules devised by the missionaries and imposed on the Fijians. Most ministers accepted the need for rules, abided by them, interpreted them narrowly and were more severe than missionaries in applying the general mission code throughout the community. Within the Fijian ministry, frequent discipline by missionaries ensured a high standard of conduct. Ministers who invoked personal impositions on teachers, drank yagone (the local beverage) to excess, appropriated mission funds, or bypassed mission convention such as the calling of marriage banns in church, were all either suspended or expelled from the ministry, depending on the seriousness of the charge. However missionaries found it difficult to expel persistent minor offenders and in these cases the ministers were either superannuated for a period or left without any appointment.

By their implacable attitude to questions of morality, missionaries exposed themselves to charges of a dual standard, one law for the missionary, one for the Fijian. A minister accused of adultery was immediately suspended from duty until a church court investigated the case. But in 1872, while Samuel Brooks was cleared of immorality charges, there being insufficient corroborative evidence, a Fijian minister was expelled even though 'the sin of adultery could not be proved against him'. Again in 1906 Taito Rauluni, after thirty-four years in the ministry and while suffering from a crippling illness, confessed to frequent infidelity, the last instance occurring in 1890. The missionaries in Fiji, who had at least queried the indulgent attitude

48 C.O. Lelean to Small, 15 December 1902, F/1/1902. Refer also Minutes of Fiji District Synod for the years under study.

49 For examples of mission discipline on Fijian ministers see Fiji District Synod, Minutes 1893, 1902, 1917, F/4/B, F/4/C; W. Green to H.H. Bock, 27 August 1941, F/1/1941; A.C. Cato to W. Green, 9 April 1941, F/1/1941; Minutes of the Fijian Session of Synod 1884, F/4/12(a); Fiji District Synod, Minutes 1890, 1894-95, NOM 23, 25-26.

of the Australian church to William Allen, displayed no mercy for Rauluni:

It is the worst case I have ever known. Taito was never high in my estimation, but I never dreamed of him being such a beast. I have told him to write down his confessions and go home to die.  

Many of the rules formulated within the district applied to questions of missionary authority and, by implication, to the limitation of ministerial rights. On these matters missionaries were particularly sensitive, interpreting any criticism as a direct challenge to their position. In the late 1870s Taniela Afu, a Tongan minister, became exasperated at his retention in Lau (as a convenient locum) on the personal whim of a missionary. Returning to Tonga in 1880 without permission, he found church regulations had preceded him. He was not permitted to take an appointment in Tonga and even King George was reluctant to challenge mission authority by employing him.  

Fijian ministers harboured frequent grievances towards missionaries over their place, or lack of it, in the mission hierarchy and their working conditions. For many years after 1851 Fiji's ordained ministers had no representation at the missionaries' annual meeting. Joseph Waterhouse, a missionary ahead of his time in believing that 'a Native Ministry could alone supply the wants of Heathenism', first raised the question of ministerial rights in 1863 and it was agreed, rather diffidently by most of the other missionaries, that a gathering of all ordained Fijians would be held prior to the annual meeting. Recommendations from the meeting of Fijian ministers would be considered by the missionaries. Waterhouse left Fiji in 1865 and his fellow missionaries had, by their own account, to 'struggle with the difficulties' of the new

51 Small to H.H. Nolan, 17 July 1906, F/1/1906.


53 Waterhouse to J. Eggleston, 25 November 1862, WMN, April 1863.
arrangement. In the early 1870s some missionaries were talking of quietly abolishing the ministers' meeting, their main objection being the long absence of ministers from their sections, while only a few missionaries were anxious to continue Waterhouse's plan. Meanwhile in Australia mission authorities were grappling with the 'Native Ministers question', particularly with regard to Tonga. A new constitution was prepared giving Tongan ministers a separate status which would preclude them from an automatic seat or vote at the Australian conference but entitle them to attend the Tonga District Annual Meeting on equality with the missionaries except for matters of missionary character and appointments, and finance.

Fiji, it was generally understood, would be offered the same conditions and in 1874 the energetic Waterhouse - Fijians nicknamed him laca-buka (steam engine) - decided to return to Fiji to ensure the adoption of the new plan. 'My return is not of my own', he confided to his sister, 'but evidently of the Lord whose I am and whom I seek to serve'. Waterhouse had heard suggestions of missionary opposition to the ministers' annual meeting and had received a letter from thirty-one Fijian ministers distressed that they might be precluded from the highest church court:

It is our minds that our Annual United District Meeting may be continued. We find the benefit of it and the usefulness of it to us. Some things that were not understood by us are now understood by us through our assembling together.

At first the missionaries in Fiji welcomed Waterhouse's return. Rooney felt he would make an ideal Chairman since Langham

54 I. Rooney to B. Chapman, 17 April 1876, NOM 165.
55 Langham to S. Rabone, 5 August 1872, NOM 103.
56 I. Rooney to B. Chapman, 30 October 1875, NOM 98.
57 Waterhouse to Mrs Padman, 13 February 1874, Papers of J. Waterhouse, MSS 554, ML.
58 Joeli Bulu to Waterhouse, 28 October 1874, NOM 100. Thirty other ministers signed the letter.
had been 'overworked' and needed a rest. Langham had already indicated his willingness to step down in favour of Waterhouse if the latter were so appointed by the New South Wales Wesleyan Conference. But there were influential voices from Victoria against Waterhouse even returning to Fiji let alone taking up the Chairmanship. Awkward questions were asked about his physical and mental fitness. John Watsford, a former missionary, expressed regrets at Waterhouse's reappointment: 'I do not think it is well for men who have been long away from any Mission to return - there is always danger of them returning to the point at which they left it, and of coming into collision with the brethren on the spot'.

It was a prophetic statement but only because Waterhouse found the majority of missionaries even more reactionary than they had been in 1863. Shortly after Langham's return from leave in Australia at the end of 1875, he and Waterhouse fell out. There were personal reasons: Waterhouse was proud of his position as 'the only Missionary in the District that was in Fiji before the establishment of an Australian Conference' and Fison noted his 'gall and bitterness' at not being appointed Chairman. Waterhouse also resented Langham going over his head to have him retained as the principal of Navuloa Training Institution. It was this action by the Mission Chairman which prompted Waterhouse to bring charges against him at the 1876 Annual Meeting.

But central to the clash between Waterhouse and Langham was the 'place' of Fijian ministers. Langham had defended an annual meeting

59 I. Rooney to B. Chapman, 15 June 1875, MOM 98.

60 Langham to B. Chapman, 11 December 1873, MOM 103.

61 J. Watsford to B. Chapman, 3 February 1874, MOM 167.

62 Waterhouse to B. Chapman, 13 June 1875, MOM 100; Fison to J. Calvert, (?) 1877, ML Doc. 2361, ML.

63 Langham to B. Chapman, 13 January 1876, MOM 103. Apart from a mild rebuke of Langham's methods used to retain Waterhouse at Navuloa, all the fifteen charges brought by Waterhouse at the 1876 Annual Meeting, evidence of which covered a tedious 190 pages, were dismissed. See Minutes of Fiji District Annual Meeting 1876, MOM 15, ML.
for ministers so long as it simply passed on recommendations to the missionaries who could then choose to accept, amend or ignore them.

The concept of Fijian ministers joining with missionaries in one single meeting was another matter:

The Native Ministers are not yet qualified to sit with us and vote on an equality with us - to vote on their stations and ours, on our character as well as their own; to vote on finances too!64

It appeared that Waterhouse wished to advance beyond the constitution prepared for Tonga; not only would all ministers attend and have equal voting rights with missionaries in the annual meeting but Fijians were to be made superintendents of their own sections, responsible directly to the District Meeting and not to their white superintendents. It was a revolutionary move for these times, alien to the conservative nature of respected missionaries such as Lorimer Fison and Isaac Rooney, unacceptable to the majority of chiefs, suicidal in the opinion of Langham:

I do not think the Churches including teachers etc. will consent to receive Native Ministers as their sole pastors. And if they did we should have a similar state of things as that in Ceylon and Sandwich Islands. In the latter place it has been pronounced a great mistake to appoint Native Ministers as Superintendents while in the former the Bishop told an acquaintance of mine that 'one thing might save our churches and that is to put all the native clergy on board a vessel, send her out to sea, then scuttle her'!65

In the event a compromise solution was found, probably the creation of Fison. One Fijian minister from each circuit would attend the annual meeting on an equal footing with missionaries; however they would be unable to deliberate on questions of missionary character and appointments, district finance, and the election of a representative to the New South Wales Conference. The problem of numbers marked the fundamental difference between the constitutions of Tonga and Fiji. Missionaries in Fiji argued that transportation difficulties, the provision of food, and long absences from their sections, made the

64 Langham to B. Chapman, 2 November 1875, MOM 103.
65 Langham to B. Chapman, 15 July 1876, MOM 103.
attendance of one circuit representative (twelve in all) more feasible than all ministers. But it was the prospect of the white vote being outnumbered by the non-white, of Japheth taking orders from Shem, that frightened most missionaries. They were aware that in Tonga, missionary numbers almost equalled local ministers: there the situation could be controlled since Tonga's size precluded a large indigenous ministry. Fiji, however, was a different case as Fison noted privately to Calvert:

You know how easily led the natives are and how a little underhand work could have them ready to leave liga [lift hands] for almost anything...you will perfectly understand the mischievous effect of the disproportion in numbers between the Missionaries and the Native Ministers. The missionaries would be outnumbered 5 to 1. The large majority [of Native Ministers] is made up of junior men, who know little and who, if released from authority would be dangerous tools to work with.66

Waterhouse's revolutionary scheme for broadening the responsibilities of Fijian ministers and effecting democratic church government was defeated - not without some show of dissatisfaction from the Fijian ministry; despite the influential Joeli Bulu acclaiming the revised constitution as Vola ni Kalou (God's scheme),67 of the twenty ministers who voted on it, twelve favoured the plan, one (Eliesa Takelo) voted against and seven abstained. Missionaries drew conflicting conclusions from this result. Waterhouse attached significance to Eliesa's vote - he was second only to Joeli Bulu in seniority. Waterhouse also protested that some of the ministers voted the way they did because they were 'afraid of' (rerevaka) their white superintendents.68 Fison claimed, by contrast, that Eliesa Takelo had later admitted to being wrongly advised by Waterhouse and in fact the new constitution was a 'good thing'. As for ministers' fear of missionaries, Waterhouse was mistranslating the Fijian word 'rerevaka' which meant 'delicacy of

66 See Fison to J. Calvert, n.62.
67 Langham to B. Chapman, 19 November 1875, MON 103.
68 Waterhouse to Samuel Wilkinson (President of the Australasian General Conference of the Wesleyan Methodist Church), 19 November 1875, MON 100.
n.70 (cont'd). It was not only Fijian ministers who occupied a subordinate position on the policy-making mission committees. From 1926-45 both Fijian ministers and laymen (who were represented in Synod from 1908 onwards) were excluded from direct Synod deliberations with missionaries by backward-looking alterations in the constitution. Instead of one Synod with minority Fijian representation, a three-tiered system of separate Synods (European, Fijian, Indian) gave overriding authority to the missionary body. This had the effect of throwing even greater authority into European hands. Fijians did not accept this constitutional change willingly as evidenced in their determined support of the Native Superintendent scheme in the 1930's when the Rev. Charles Lelean attempted to reduce the number of Fijian Superintendents. (See pp. 273-5).
feeling' or 'respect' rather than 'afraid'.

Far from being, in Langham's words, a 'great stride in advance', the 1875 plan proved in practice a cul-de-sac. It trapped the Fijian ministry in a subordinate position for almost seventy years; it became the unspoken creed of the missionary in relations with his ministers. For, as Jesse Carey admitted to Waterhouse in 1873, 'to make a proper Fiji church, the majority at least of the N.Ms. should be present instead of one from each Circuit, who, for the most part will be only the duplicate of his missionary'.

Fijian protest at their position of inferiority was generally subdued after 1875 but did not fade away; rather it broke out in unexpected and infrequent bursts. For instance, Waterhouse's reforming enthusiasm left its mark on at least one minister, Tomasi Naceba. He was born at Weilangi on Taveuni in 1842. Converted at the age of seventeen, missionary accounts recall, he was faced with 'bitter persecutions from heathen chiefs', a reference to the sustained opposition to Christianity from Tui Cakau and the ruling families of Somosomo. He attended the District Training Institution on Kadavu during the 1860s, was sent to take charge of the Rewa Circuit Institution at Davuilevu, and then, on Lorimer Fison's suggestion, returned to Kadavu as an assistant teacher from 1869 to 1871. Jesse Carey, principal of the District Institution at Tavuki was impressed by Tomasi: 'he is really a worthy fellow', Carey wrote to Fison, 'I have known him now for 12 years and his course like a river, though not without a few windings, has ever been onward'. Fison proposed Tomasi for the

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69 Fison to B. Chapman, 31 October 1875, MOM 104. It is worth noting that the Fijian dictionaries compiled by both D. Hazlewood and A. Capell translate 'rerevaka' as 'to be afraid of'. However Fison was well acquainted with Fijian custom and language and his translation should not be dismissed outright. A more adequate translation from his point of view might have been 'awe'.

70 J. Carey to Waterhouse, 20 September 1873, B.440, ML.

71 Fiji District Annual Meeting, Notes on candidates for the ministry 1871, MOM 11.

72 Carey to Fison, 14 January 1870 and 21 November 1870, B.440, ML.
Received on probation in 1873, Tomasi worked at the Navula Institution and then in various circuits until 1892 when he returned to the District Institution. Very little is known about his activities during these nineteen years; Thomas Williams, who met him on Viwa in 1885, noted Tomasi's ability to read English and his 'grand' preaching. Tomasi's most crucial years were those from 1874-77, when he worked as a relatively young man in the same circuit as Joseph Waterhouse, observing the missionary's struggle with Langham and others over the place of Fijian ministers. Clearly influenced by his association with Waterhouse, Tomasi Naceba attended the Fiji District Synod as one of the twelve ministerial representatives in 1883, 1886, 1888 and 1890. It is probably no coincidence that at the 1886 meeting there was a long 'tussle' between missionaries and Fijian ministers over grievances relating to salaries and general conditions but further details of this crucial confrontation are unrecorded.

By 1890 Tomasi was expressing his discontent to fellow Fijian ministers at the Synod. Frederick Langham, who in his later years was unsympathetic to the demands of Fijian ministers, left the only account of Tomasi's opinions; the Chairman's prejudices are obvious:

Apisai [Radravu] and Tomasi told us that they would vote for having an increase to their [salaries?] and the latter would like to be free 'to live by the cakacaka' - meaning to feed on ones Teacher 2 or 3 days and on another same time and so on while he was on raicakacaka - the teachers would have to spin round and find fowls...and their wives would have to go out fishing etc. etc. to prepare feasts while the Rev. T. Naceba was 'doing the Lord's work'. You may depend on

73 See note 71.
74 From 1873 to 1892 Tomasi worked at Navula (1874-75), Nakelo section (1876-77), Natewa section on Vanua Levu (1873-83), Viwa (1884-91).
75 Williams, Journal of visit to Fiji, 1885-86. Entry for 10 November 1885, B.589, NL.
76 Small to C.O. Lelean, 12 August 1904, F/1/1904.
it there is a lot of feeling on all these subjects... I would there were about ...ing souls saved... I told [Tomasi] very plainly that I would not allow other N.Ms to be rarawa [anxious] or madua [ashamed] through his stirring them up and that if he had anything to propose to do it frankly at Bose... He is the cutest N.M. we have...and has more in his head than most folks in his position.77

In May 1892 Tomasi rebelled. He had been only five months at the Nuvulou Training Institution where, as Qase ni Vuli or the senior Fijian minister, he occupied a position of considerable influence among the students, many of whom would eventually be ministers. The only account of the rebellion comes not from mission sources,78 but from the Governor, Thurston. Six young Fijians, described as 'young chiefs' were expelled from the Institution for refusing to cut wood for the Mission steam launch. The missionaries gave the remaining students - almost 200 of them - the opportunity to leave as well if they were 'hurt' by the decision against their fellows; the next morning the Institution was empty. A deputation of the aggrieved students appealed to Thurston to intervene but the Governor replied he would only offer to mediate if the students returned to Navuloa. They obeyed and at the invitation of the missionaries Thurston travelled to Navuloa where, to his well-concealed amusement and delight, he presided at the church pulpit above the seated missionaries, heard both sides of the incident and delivered judgment. By his own account he 'brought about a perfect

77 Langham to H. Worrall, 19 December 1890, MUM 295. The raicakacaka was the regular visitation of villages carried out by missionaries within their circuits and ministers within their sections. While missionaries were on raicakacaka they were generally fed by the chiefs, or ministers, sometimes teachers and catechists, with whom they stayed.

78 Mission records are strangely silent on Tomasi Naceba's rebellion. In particular there is an inexplicable absence of documents relating to a minor district meeting which recommended Tomasi's expulsion from the ministry. Minutes of all other minor district meetings during these years, which were required if ministers were to be charged with a serious offence, have survived, including the records of deliberations relating to Tomasi's supporter, Apisai Radravu.
reconciliation and there have been no rows since'. 79

It was absolutely clear from subsequent mission accounts that Tomasi was at the centre of the rebellion and a most effective leader. Thurston was probably referring to Tomasi when he wrote that the 'leading Rebel' stated the students' case with 'clearness, possession and moderation'. 80 Langham wanted to expel Tomasi immediately but George Brown, General Secretary, counselled de · since in his opinion any such action might cause 'further trouble'. 61 The missionaries were shaken by the whole affair and Langham had collapsed on hearing news of it. Tomasi's part in the rebellion was, they believed, purely a callous act of insubordination. However George Brown, with characteristic acumen, expressed his sympathy for Tomasi:

> (He) has looked at the matter from a purely Fijian standpoint and like one of the old Fijian chiefs has kept plotting and waiting for a favourable chance. What a study of Fijian character this can give us. The man to be most blamed is the man who put such thoughts into the Native Minister's mind. Nacoba's fall began 14 years ago. 82

Brown was, somewhat unfairly, placing the major blame on Joseph Waterhouse. In fact for almost fifteen years since he had last

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79 C.O. 83/61, Thurston to Fuller, c. August 1895. See also Thurston to W. Carew, 17 May 1892, Carew Papers, 1882-98, M.174(e), PacHist. The Carew Papers are in the Hocken Library, Dunedin. The Fiji Methodist Mission experienced continued revolts from its ministerial trainees in the twentieth century. William Bennett's period as principal (1900-03, 1908-13) was progressive in its achievement of higher training standards but stormy in student reaction as a result of Bennett's firm, at times harsh, leadership. Again, during the 1930s, Charles Lelean had to cope with a student strike when the mission cut back on its clothing allowance to trainees. Of course clashes between missionary and indigenous church worker occurred in most South Pacific missions; see for example, Niel Gunson, Messengers of Grace, 311-12; R.P. Gilson, Samoa: 1830-1900, 128-29; Hugh Laracy, Marists and Melanesians, Canberra 1976, 96.

80 Thurston to Fuller, ibid.

81 Brown to Langham, 21 June 1892, MOM 40.

82 Brown to Langham, 21 July 1892, MOM 40.
During the Rev. George Brown's term as General Secretary of the Wesleyan-Methodist Overseas Missions (1887-1907), a spirit of reform extended from the Australian church to the missions of the Pacific, due almost wholly to the outstanding personality of Brown himself. From a Fijian point of view, missionary policy in Fiji was seen as an extension of the views of the Australian mission headquarters; however, in a number of notable instances during Brown's term as General Secretary, change in Fiji came about through the urgings of the church in Australia rather than by the initiative of local missionaries. The best examples of this are the Lay Representation issue and the question of financial self-support at the turn of the century. (See Chapter 9 above, pp. 265-70). The machinations of District-Board relations over such issues are dealt with at length in the official history of the Methodist Mission in Fiji by A. Harold Wood, op. cit.
soon Waterhouse, Tomasi had been campaigning together with other ministers such as Apisai Radravu for improvements in ministerial place and pay. George Brown had urged Langham to raise the salaries of ministers but the Chairman resisted, arguing in 1888 that ministers were amply rewarded for their work. In short, Tomasi’s outburst in 1892 was the culmination of growing frustration with domineering mission authority.

With Langham’s departure from Fiji in 1895, ministers renewed their requests for improved conditions and remuneration. Small procrastinated on the grounds that mission funds could not sustain a salary rise but, from Sydney, Brown insisted; it was important that ministers at least have parity with Fijians in the civil service. With Langham’s departure from Fiji in 1895, ministers renewed their requests for improved conditions and remuneration. Small procrastinated on the grounds that mission funds could not sustain a salary rise but, from Sydney, Brown insisted; it was important that ministers at least have parity with Fijians in the civil service. 84 A further concession to the ministers was their inclusion in 1902 on the important financial session of Synod which decided on disbursement of mission funds. Overall, however, for many years, missionaries failed to recognise the extent to which their Fijian brethren were conscious of holding a patently inferior position. They regarded as 'puerile folly' a fourteen-page document from the Ra Circuit ministers requesting equality between missionary and minister in the mission house - to be able to sit on the chairs, eat at the table, drink from

83 The Fiji District Meeting of 1892 (MOM 24) expelled both Tomasi and Apisai Radravu. Six years later, in 1898, Tomasi was reinstated as a local preacher by a unanimous decision of the Annual Meeting. According to the record he had, since expulsion in 1892, 'acknowledged his guilt and shown a spirit of contrition' (MOM 174). In 1900 he was reinstated as a minister, eight years being taken off his standing. After serving at Navuso for four years, he died of pneumonia on Christmas Day 1904 and was buried on his own request at Navuloa. There appears to be no trace of his grave at Navuloa today nor the graves of a number of other Fijian ministers buried there, including Marika Tagicakibau. On a visit there in 1976 I was told by Meleti Saurara of Daku that there had been a large number of graves at Navuloa, many resulting from the influenza epidemic of 1918, but all the graves were subsequently covered up.

84 W. Allardyce to Brown, 2 April 1903, MOM 166.
a china cup rather than a tin mug. In their rejection of these demands, considered as extreme by even the Fijian ministerial representatives at Synod, the missionaries emphasised the 'fundamental difference' between European and Fijian; racial superiority imposed heavy responsibilities but demanded missionary primacy:

If we were all one and the same in social and general development and in ability to judge and rule, there would be no longer need of the white Missionary to remain here. But there is a vast difference between us, of which they seem to be unaware, and it is impossible to treat them as equals if we are to have the rule over them and watch on behalf of their souls, as those that must give account.

In the early decades of the twentieth century, Fijian ministers displayed a mixture of complacency and displeasure with their salary and status, an indication of the degree to which their role had been routinised as assistants to the missionary. From 1920 their real income declined and they took the brunt of decreasing mission contributions during and after the depression. Meanwhile in 1914 the missionary at Lau noted the extreme reluctance of ministers to contemplate the possibility of dispensing with their missionary and managing independently. But the desire to maintain missionaries in Fiji, while a reflection of insecurity on the part of ministers, did not mean, as some missionaries imagined, total acquiescence by ministers in the status quo. At the 1916 Synod there was unmistakeable protest by some ministers at their inferior status when they appeared at the sessions wearing the missionary and chiefly colours of black rather than their traditional white. They received an indignant response from missionaries, one of whom referred to them sneeringly as 'a set of nigger minstrels'.

85 C.O. Lelean to Small, 14 July 1904, F/1/1904; Small to Lelean, 12 August 1904, F/1/1904.
86 Ra Circuit, Annual Report, 1904, MNSA.
87 Lau Circuit, Annual Report, 1914, MNSA.
88 W. Brown to Small, 2 August 1917, F/1/1917. Missionary informants told me that ministers always wore white — up to 1940 at least. Today, with all missionaries withdrawn, most ministers wear black or at least darker colours.
Important to missionary reasoning, apart from an unshaken conviction in the rightness of their presence and rule, was the belief that chiefs would regard any improvement in the status of ministers as a threat to their own. It was in most cases an exaggerated if not mistaken argument, as much an attempt to justify their continued position of primacy as it was a true reflection of chiefly attitudes. More importantly missionary reasoning concealed deep fears of a preponderant chiefly influence over church matters. Inevitably chiefs gave scant regard to a minister's acquired church status; traditional rank was the more important; however the fact remained that, contrary to pessimistic missionary predictions, a Fijian minister left in charge of a circuit, such as Esala Seru on Rotuma (1886-1902) was accepted by the chiefs and maintained the mission in a healthy state.

The severe effect of the great depression on mission funds provided the Fijian ministry with its first opportunity to demonstrate leadership and management abilities. After a drastic reduction in the Mission Board allocation to Fiji, three European missionaries were forced to return to Australia. With encouragement from Burton and the Mission Board, Macuata and Bua Circuits were amalgamated under the general supervision of a missionary at Naduri, Macuata and Aseri Robarobalevu was appointed 'Assistant Superintendent' at Bua, responsible directly to the Chairman in Suva, Richard McDonald. Two years later Ratu Nacanieli Mataika and Esala Delana were appointed to Macuata and Nadroga respectively while Peni Tirikula replaced Robarobalevu at Bua.

McDonald's initial scepticism towards the new scheme quickly changed to sympathy when he recognised its potential and the degree of its acceptance by the chiefs and people. He travelled around the three circuits encouraging the ministers, assisting them with financial

89 For example, see Small to W. Slade, 19 July 1900, F/1/1900.
90 See Chapter 3.
91 Rotuma Circuit, Annual Reports, 1889-1902, MMSA; Small to W.E. Bennett, 21 August 1904, F/1/1904.
problems and soliciting chiefly support. Nadroga proved a difficult appointment for Delana, not because he lacked the necessary qualities of leadership but because of the counter-attraction of other religious movements in Nadogga, notably Seventh Day Adventism and the lotu ni pauna. Bua and Macuata however were particularly receptive to their ministers whose achievements McDonald described as 'outstanding':

They [Tirikula and Mataika] have been able to influence the chiefs of their district to such an extent that they are consulted on practically all matters connected with the progress of the people. The schools, the care of the children, land matters, agricultural pursuits - these all come before our Native Ministers for advice and suggestion.

When McDonald retired from Fiji in 1935 it appeared as if Fijian ministers had permanently achieved a degree of responsibility and were considered as competent administrators by their European brethren. However McDonald's successor, Charles Lelean, who had returned from Australia to assume the Chairmanship, had less faith in the leadership qualities of Fijians within the ordained ranks. He removed the Fijian Superintendent from Nadroga but Fijian opinion, especially within the Fijian session of Synod, prevented him from also placing European missionaries at Bua and Macuata. Lelean resigned himself to a situation he personally deplored:

The difficulty is that once the [Fijian Superintendent] scheme comes into operation it is difficult to abolish it. We are endeavouring to prevent the increase in the number of Native Superintendents and that is why we are sending Mr Crouch to Nadroga...I think we adopted the Native Superintendent arrangement without careful consideration. But having received the sanction of the Board and Conference and the high commendation of the General Secretary [Burton], the only thing we can do is to regulate the system.

92 McDonald to R. Smith, 29 September 1933, F/1/1933.
93 See Chapter 5; also H. Johnstone to R.L. McDonald, 16 March 1934, F/1/1934.
94 See n.92.
95 C.O. Lelean to L.E. Saville, 2 January 1937, F/1/1937.
Lelean, along with a number of missionaries, believed that greater responsibility for Fijian ministers was a premature move. Before being appointed as superintendents, Lelean argued, Fijians should be required to pass 'stiff examinations' in Book-keeping, Methodist Laws and Circuit Management. In 1939 manipulation of mission funds by Mataika saw his removal from Macuata where he was succeeded by Tirikula. Yet the inability to manage circuit money was not a failing either general among, or exclusive to, Fijians.

At the root of missionary opposition to any increase in the ranks of Fijian superintendents was a culturally-based argument. First the missionaries held strongly to the conviction that Fijians had not yet graduated to the level of skills possessed by Europeans and demanded of a superintendent; that stage, in the extreme opinion of one missionary, was more than fifty years away. Second, it was believed that only Europeans for the simple reason that they were not Fijians could resist the dominant influence of chiefs:

The trouble appears to me to be in the fact that the Superintendent is a Native...we are not fair to him in expecting him to do the job as it should be done, for the whole of his being, in spite of his training and work vakalotu [according to the church] is saturated with the spirit of things vakavanua [according to custom] and vakaturaga [according to chiefly ways]. The big chief has too much influence on him. If the chief is the right sort, it eases the matter certainly. If he is not, that Native Super hasn't a chance.

Missionaries had never tired of using the argument of chiefly influence over ministers and they had cases to prove it. What they failed to recall or recognise was the degree of influence which chiefs could exercise over missionaries. And if Fijian ministers themselves

96 Ibid.
97 See Chapter 1, pp. 33, 39.
98 H. Chambers to R.L. McDonald, 26 February 1933, F/1/1933.
100 See Chapter 3.
had believed they were entirely puppets in the hands of chiefs that feeling declined in the twentieth century. The Fijian Superintendent scheme had entrusted a degree of authority on the ministers which had been denied them for many decades and which they were not prepared to relinquish. More confident in their own ability, and convinced that missionaries if given the opportunity would procrastinate, the ministers pressed home their advantage and the 1944 Synod requested that when European missionaries were absent from their stations, Fijian ministers be appointed as 'Acting Superintendents'. Once this right was conceded, the church was advancing to independence.

101 A.C. Cato to W. Green, 17 October 1944, F/1/1944.
CHAPTER 3

CHIEFLY AUTHORITY IN THE CHURCH

The early experiences of Methodist missionaries in Fiji ensured, as in all islands of Polynesia exposed to Christianity, that chiefly influence assumed a central role in the growth of the Fijian Church. The considerable size of the Methodist following in Fiji, a relatively small number of missionaries and the low status of most Fijian ministers and teachers, precluded monopoly of leadership by the clergy. Instead their authority was circumscribed by the complex structure of traditional rule, itself supported after 1874 by a colonial administration which placed considerable governmental authority in the hands of chiefs.

At the time of missionary intrusion, Fijian society exhibited a well-ordered rank system from the highest born chief to the level of commoner. Chiefs were absolute rulers and their word was law; however, men of rank could exercise a restraining influence on the chief's power. Birth alone was important but not sufficient to command influence and leaders generally possessed superior knowledge of customs, lore and group conduct. Strict rights and obligations united the chief and his people. Those of lesser birth than the chief venerated property tribute (such as mats and cloth) and labour service to him, the goods presented often being redistributed by the chief. While a chief expected unquestioning service from his subjects so the commoners looked to their superior for leadership. The tightly woven network of Fijian society was necessary for the people's protection and development; only by intimate co-operation could enemy attacks be repelled. Social cohesion and communalism fostered a deep loyalty. 1

Mission support of chiefly power permitted greater penetration of the society's religious structure than most missionaries realised, due mainly to a chief's sacred status. Loyalty to the chief on the part of a commoner was combined with spiritual awe, an indication of the chief's close relationship with his ancestor gods, of whom he was believed to be an incarnation. Such was the reverence, devotion and supernatural regard in which chiefs were held that one anthropologist in the early twentieth century noted, 'the true religion of the Fijians is the service of the chief'. Further reinforcing the spiritual characteristics of the Fijian chief were the tabu that surrounded his person and the divine sanctions with accorded him by priests or shamans. Acting as an intermediary between the human and spirit world, priests transmitted the pleasure and anger of gods, sometimes curbing a chief's action, for instance in time of war, in most cases however responding to chiefly patronage by reporting divine approval of his policies. This particular relationship between chief and priest, crucial to the former's survival as a leader, did not survive in its traditional form the onset of Christian influences; however chiefly society was sufficiently resilient to adapt to a new and decisive role within the lotu.

Along with traditional and sacerdotal status, chiefs enhanced their authority after 1874 when, with the cession of Fiji to Great Britain, many of them took official positions under the system of British administration. The highest position given to a Fijian, Roko Tui (governor of a province), usually rested with the leading chief of the district or, if that appointment was unsuitable, with another high-ranking chief. In 1897, of the thirteen Rokos, ten were high chiefs of their provinces and of the remainder none were without status in the provinces they ruled. Furthermore, between 1900 and 1940, fifty-eight percent of the men chosen as Buli (or Fijian government officers at the district level or tikina) were hereditary chiefs of their tikina.


3 David Cargill, Diary, 26 November 1835, in A.J. Schutz (ed.), The Diaries and Correspondence of David Cargill, 1832-1843, Canberra 1977, 69. (Refer also to comment of R.R. Nayacakalou [1961] in note 14 on same page.)
while another thirty-four percent were either second ranking chiefs of the tikina or outsider chiefs.¹

In view of the undisputed authority of chiefs in Fiji, missionaries adopted a predictable policy in seeking chiefly protection and patronage. They noted in many cases the equation between the degree of interest shown by the people in Christianity and the amount of support for the lotu evidenced by the chiefs. For instance Kadavu in the late nineteenth century was spoken well of by successive missionaries; the majority of chiefs were favourable to the spread of Christianity urging the people to contribute liberally to the church.⁵ A change of leadership on the island of Vatulele, between Kadavu and Viti Levu, saw the school and chapel that had been previously neglected during the years when the chief was uninterested in Christianity, completely rebuilt under the influence of his successor, a Methodist Church member.⁶ Throughout Fiji the spread of Christianity was either enhanced or impeded by the example of chiefs.⁷

Fijians instinctively sought guidance from their leaders. When Poate Ratu, a Fijian missionary teacher, went to New Guinea in 1891, he was confused by the lack of leadership in the society he encountered. 'These people have no real chief', he remarked, 'whose word all men follow as we have in Fiji and this is a bad thing. In Fiji the chiefs helped the missionaries, and the people were obedient to their word so that the lotu went swiftly to all islands'.⁸ David Wilkinson, a senior civil servant and long-term resident of Fiji, attributed the Wesleyan's superior and more thorough system (when compared to the Roman Catholics)

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⁵ Kadavu Circuit, Annual Reports, 1870, 1883, 1893, MMSA.

⁶ WNN, January 1871, 62, and January 1873, 78.

⁷ WNN, January 1873, 76, 80. Cakaudrove Circuit, Annual Report, 1896, MMSA.

⁸ MR, March 1892, 11.
to the 'unqualified, active and continuous support of the chiefs'.

The collective nature of the communal system and the co-operative attitude of influential chiefs ensured a compliant church attendance. But there were problems in docile congregations; in the 1870s missionaries recorded, without noting the significance of their observation, that when Fijians were brought from other islands to labour on the plantations of Taveuni or in the town of Levuka, many of them ceased to attend church services. With the control of their own chief removed, they no longer felt any compunction at discontinuing the practice. The lotu flourished under the communal and chiefly system, it languished in its absence.

From 1850 to 1880 the two most powerful paramount chiefs in Fiji were Ratu (Seru) Epenisa Cakobau and Henele Ma'afu, the former holding sway over central Fiji, the latter over the eastern islands. Both were dominant figures in political affairs and equally influential in promoting the spread of Christianity. In their zeal for the church they resembled the Lutheran princes of Reformation Germany, first generation converts anxious to support the lotu and, from a personal point of view, aware of the increased prestige and material benefits that accrued from their patronage of Christian missions.

However much Cakobau and Ma'afu were united in their wish to advance Christianity in Fiji, they remained political rivals, the Tongan-born Ma'afu inclined to crusading methods during the 1860s in his determination to wrest supremacy over central Fiji from Cakobau. The competition between the two chiefs was even reflected in the choice of a missionary to superintend the circuit of Lomaloma in 1871. The appointment of Isaac Rooney there suited Ma'afu, who suspected that most of the other missionaries were 'thorough Cakobauites'.


10 Cakaudrove Circuit, Annual Report, 1874, MMSA; Ovalau Circuit, Annual Report, 1878, MMSA.

11 F. Langham to S. Rabone, 2 January 1871, MON 103; J. Leggoe to S. Rabone, 25 April 1871, MON 98.
The partnership between the chief and his missionary, in its characteristics not unlike the traditional bond between chief and priest, proved harmonious and profitable, Ma'afu always setting an example to his people with liberal donations to church funds, his absence on the days of giving, therefore, being particularly lamented by Rooney. Missionary approval of Ma'afu's universal authority came more readily because he was a loyal member and office-bearer of the church. Only years after his death did missionaries remark on the extent of Ma'afu's dominance in church affairs to the point where he was in the habit of calling a bole (thanksgiving service) on his own initiative without consulting the missionary. Ma'afu's partiality to liquor in his later years forced Rooney's successor to suspend him from church membership but the chief accepted discipline with humility and continued as a generous supporter of the church till his death in 1881. Only Wesleyan moral strictness could pronounce in its obituary to Ma'afu, 'we wish we could say that his sun went down in brightness and without a cloud'.

Cakobau, like Ma'afu, elevated missionaries to a position where they were inclined to see themselves in the ascendant. Frederick Langham lived at Bau for the last twenty years of Cakobau's life and he assumed the role of the chief's spiritual, and at times political, adviser, using Cakobau's immense authority to increase his own and the mission's influence. Cakobau tolerated Langham's frequent high-handed conduct setting a better example of stable Christian behaviour than the missionary himself. The chief preached regularly on his own island, urging his congregation to a common Christian belief and a life of sobriety. His prayers were described as 'beautiful and original' and he did not hesitate to denounce wayward high chiefs as 'backsliders'. When Langham preached, Cakobau would sit to the right of the pulpit, the principal chiefs at a little distance and the commoners furtherest.

12 I. Rooney to B. Chapman, 28 July 1875 and 12 August 1875, NOM 165.
13 J. Leggoe, Lakeba and Lomaloma Circuit, Annual Report, 1882, MNSA.
from the missionary. Social divisions outside the church were recognised within.

Despite Langham's influence, the astute and intelligent chief always maintained a degree of independent action. In 1871, Cakobau travelled to a government meeting on Sunday, ignoring the verbal protestations and usual letter of reproof from his missionary who, in typical mood, tried to deter the chief by mentioning a rumour in Melbourne that Cakobau was given to drink.15 Understandably Langham's methods were not entirely approved of by his fellow missionaries and it is little wonder that Cakobau tired of them as well. In the last few years before his death in 1883, Cakobau, by Langham's own admission, came increasingly under the influence of his wife and Ratu Josefa, his youngest son.16

The deaths of Na'afu and Cakobau in the 1880s heralded the end of an era when chiefs, some enthusiastically others passively and all for varied motives, had supported the spread of Christianity and had often sought or heeded missionary advice. There still remained Fijians in high positions, such as Ratu Tevita (Roko of Ra and subsequently Bua province), who were regarded as pillars of the church; however many of the successors to chiefly rank were equivocal, even antagonistic, in their attitudes to the men of cloth. Langham recorded Cakobau's disappointment at the lack of interest his son (Ratu Epeli) displayed in spiritual matters. Ratu Joni Colata, also of Bau, told Langham that he could not stand the missionary's sermons; they were 'too hot and too heavy'. Not a man to be put down, Langham sarcastically questioned the chief's fitness to criticise; 'was he who had broken nearly every commandment to teach me how to preach?';17 Na'afu's son, with a propensity for liquor, resented missionary counsel and once, allegedly in an inebriated state, took hold of the missionary at

15 Langham to Rabone, 23 December 1871, MOM 103.
17 Langham, Notebook, 1877-1895, B.289, ML.
Lomaloma, J.D. Jury, cursing at him and almost striking him. 18

For a number of reasons the new generation of Fijian leaders was less willing to commit itself to church membership or to foster a close relationship with the missionary. Those chiefs with government posts found that clerical sanctions (available to a minister to exercise against church members) could prejudice impartial execution of their duties. 19 Other high chiefs saw church membership as an unnecessary fetter to their authority and possibly a challenge to their position. Colonial power had displaced Wesleyan Christianity as the most effective channel by which to enhance position and prestige; chiefs neither sought nor needed church affiliation to bolster their status. The strict disciplinary code instituted by the Wesleyans and an uncompromising stand on liquor would provide a further deterrent to high chiefs, all of whom were permitted to hold a liquor licence if they wished. The Church of England, perhaps because of its connection with the ruling power and, arguably, its less restrictive moral outlook, attracted a number of high chiefs who at the same time maintained an interest in the lotu of their people. Fijian high chiefs generally distanced themselves from the Lotu Wesley without entirely severing their links. They stood midway between the Tongan aristocracy who followed Taulaahu's lead and adopted the church as their possession, and, by contrast, many chiefs of Africa who, although permitting entry to the missionary, would not identify themselves with the converted since they were people 'who were beginning to seem a race apart'. 20

After 1875 Fijian Roko Tuis and Bulis relished the exercise of independent decision-making and airing of opinions afforded them by the newly-established Council of Chiefs set up by Governor Gordon. Here

18 J.D. Jury to Chapman, 5 October 1878, NOM 165.
the chiefs could voice their frequent criticisms of missionary control and interference, particularly in regard to church marriage laws and the use of mission training institutions as tax havens. 21 Ostensibly in favour of chiefly gatherings but probably piqued at their exclusion from the Council, missionaries expressed their disapproval of the manner in which proceedings were conducted. They condemned the 1881 meeting as 'conspicuous for drunkenness and immorality' and vindicated their one-sided opinion by expelling over seventy church members who, having attended the Council, had 'made shipwreck of their faith'. 22
Sensitive to the increasingly independent position of chiefs, missionaries exaggerated chiefly exactions upon the people and damned the behaviour of an 'hereditary aristocracy whose mental and physical superiorities are too frequently dedicated to lust and avarice'. 23
The missionaries of the late nineteenth century, unlike their predecessors, chose to ignore the fact that church strength in Fiji was founded upon a stable chiefly and communal system. Growing mission support for individualistic effort among the Fijians was founded on a distrust of 'the old despotic grasp of the chiefs'. 24 Not till Small assumed chairmanship of the Fiji District after 1900 was there a change of attitude on the part of the mission towards the place of chiefs.

Increased friction between missionary and high chief was centred around the issue of supremacy: who should control church affairs, local and provincial. At times Langham may have exercised arbitrary power but if succeeding missionaries expected to assume a similar role, the chiefs had different ideas. As early as 1868 the high chief of Bua successfully demanded the removal from his dominions of Samuel Brooks for advising Fijians not to pay the poll-tax, while at

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21 For more detailed discussion of chiefly criticisms in the Council, see Chapter 7.

22 Lakeba and Nomaloma Circuit, Annual Report, 1881, MMSA.

23 H. Worrall, Rewa Circuit, Annual Report, 1896, MMSA; Langham to Worrall, 23 February 1895, MOM 295.

24 W. Slade, MR, May 1900, 7.
Lakeba in 1895 the paramount chief, Tui Nayau, threatened his missionary, William Heighway, with mass defection of his people either to the Church of England or into a separate Tongan-style Free Church if Heighway went away and allowed a 'young and inexperienced man' to replace him. Heighway was compelled to return to Lakeba. 25

The missionary experience in Lau after 1900 indicated the degree to which high-ranking chiefs could, at will, exercise control over church affairs. In 1900 the old Tui Nayau, Ratu Eroni Logainmente (the chief to whom Heighway had submitted), was stricken with brain paralysis and died soon after. Ratu Alifereti Finau, son of Ratu Tevita Uluilakeba, assumed the mantle of Tui Nayau and subsequently Roko Tui Lau. Described by one missionary as a 'fine specimen, tall, straight, strong and handsome', Finau possessed both quick temper and determined character and proved in religious matters a 'chip off the old block'. 26 In 1898 he had been received as a local preacher in the Wesleyan Church and during the early 1900s he rapidly established himself as the unofficial head of the church in Lau. In 1903 he clashed with the missionary at Lakeba, Thomas Butcher, a young minister in his first appointment. Following the completion of a new church at Waciwaci, a village on Lakeba, Butcher took offence when he learned that the Roko had been consulted on procedures for the opening of the church before Butcher himself. The missionary sought out Finau and in the presence of two other prominent chiefs admonished him. Finau described the altercation as follows:

When the message went to the Mission House [to open the church], he was very much annoyed because he was not given notice before the King had been told. After that the Talatala came to my house with a very strong temper. When he arrived I greeted him 'Good morning'. He did not reply to my greeting. I was very surprised at his very strong word to me while he was shaking with anger and said, 'Who has decided that the Church should be opened?' and I replied, 'It was our decision' (the Roko

25 J. Carey to S.W. Brooks, 20 October 1868, B.440, ML; Worrall to G. Brown, 23 April 1896, MOM 165; C.H. Hewitt to Small, 8 November [1895], F/1/1905; A.W. Amos to Small, 9 February 1922, F/1/1922.

26 A.W. Amos, MR, October 1912, 15.
and the Waciwaci people). Then he said to me, 'I will not go to it neither the assistant minister', and as we were talking, Ratu Savenaca came and tried to get the two of us to stop acting like heathens. He said our talk was not as Christian people should talk. Then I told the Talatala to go since it was the only way I could stop the argument.27

Finau, already querying the need for a missionary, asked Small, the Mission Chairman, to remove Butcher since his continued presence would, by Finau's own admission, only provoke further arguments.28 Small declined to take such drastic action. Personally unimpressed with Finau, the Chairman deplored his self-centred attitude, noting the chief's conceit when, in Suva, he had absented himself from church because a woman's chair was closer to the platform than formerly. However Small also had little sympathy for Butcher's outspoken behaviour and counselled a more tactful attitude. 'It would have been much better had you acted on the Roko's message with good grace. Why take umbrage when the expected intimation [to open the Waciwaci church] came through the chief, the people's recognised head?'29

Having temporarily absented himself from church, Finau was persuaded to a change of heart by the combined, patient efforts of the teacher at Lakeba, Josefa Soko, and the minister, Nasoni Tuisinu. Josefa was held in high regard by Finau, belonging to Levuka - adjoining village to the chiefly centre of Tubou and of Bauan origin - while Nasoni impressed Butcher with his diplomatic approach to the chief. 'He spoke to the Roko like a dutch uncle and then smoothed him down, after his object was secured in quite a masterly fashion'.30

Diplomacy, a characteristic feature of the Fijian, was not Butcher's strong point. In September 1904, on flimsy evidence, he

27 Finau to Small, 2 January 1904, F/1/1903.
28 Ibid.
29 Small to T.W. Butcher, 14 December 1903; Small to G. Brown, 5 October 1903, F/1/1903.
30 Butcher to Small, 22 June 1904, F/1/1904.
accused Finau of misusing his liquor licence. Once again the Roko asked Small to transfer Butcher. 'I have found him rather strong-willed', complained Finau, 'and I know that our relationship will one day erupt into another argument'. 31 Although not admitting the Roko's displeasure as a factor in the decision, Small acceded to his wishes and Butcher was sent to Macuata. In Lakeba the majority of Fijians were convinced that Butcher's removal was at the word of the Roko. 32

In March 1905, after being involved in a drinking bout at Tubou, Finau annoyed the mission staff by further imbibing till 5 a.m. on Sunday morning and then engaging the Nasaqalau people to sing for him from Sunday night till 6 a.m. on Monday morning. Rather than leave the matter to Richard Cook, who had taken over from Butcher, Small undertook the sea voyage to Lakeba and informed Finau personally that he was being dismissed from church membership. Clearly flattered at having brought the _gase levu_ all the way from Suva, and with due deference to a missionary who had been in Fiji as long as he could remember, Finau submitted to Small and accepted discipline. Within two days the chief was again speaking at the _bolotu_, 'so fervently that anyone who did not know him would imagine him to be one of the strongest of Christians'. 33

Cook, young and inexperienced like Butcher, fared no better in his relations with Finau. From 1907 onwards, he complained to Small about clandestine meetings being held in the church under the patronage of Buli Lakeba and the Roko. The meetings were being held to raise money with which to pay off a debt on the new Tubou church. Cook had been told that the collections were 'more like a circus than a church offering', and although his own assistant minister, Inoke Katia, knew of the meetings, he had not been able to stop them because 'they took absolutely no notice of him'. 34 Finally, in October 1908, Cook

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31 Finau to Small, 12 September 1904, F/1/1904.
32 C. Bleazard to Small, 19 April 1905, F/1/1905.
33 Small to B. Danks, 7 July 1905, F/1/1905.
34 Cook to Small, 29 July 1908, F/1/1908.
gained access to one such meeting where the Buli was in charge. The missionary was horrified: 'the noise and disorder was great - people passing in and out, exchanging money at the table, carrying on horseplay inside the church, children quarreling, laughter and noise almost continuous...'. Cook's orders to close the meeting were ignored by the Buli. Frustrated to the point of exasperation, the frantic missionary finally forced the plate out of the chief's hand and laid it face downwards on the table. His will had prevailed on this occasion yet within a week meetings were again convened secretly, the Roko officiating.35

After he again ceased attending church regularly, the Roko renewed his interest when his wife became seriously ill and one of his children died. William Brown, successor to Cook and a missionary of twelve years experience in Fiji, reported in 1912 that Finau was favourably disposed to the lotu even to the point where he was being criticised for rendering too much help to the missionary.36 However Brown soon learned his proper place in the Lakeban world. He was firmly but politely informed by the chiefs that they wanted to hold their Church committee meeting without him as they would feel freer to speak. Brown's self-image suffered immeasurably when he was passed over in a decision to enlarge the Tubou church. 'I might just as well be a schoolboy in Tubou as sit by and let them carry out their schemes as they wish...I like the Roko but I cannot conscientiously endure being snubbed'.37 Brown was mistaken in assuming that he as missionary had any rights with regard to church building matters; all churches were on mataqali land and their control was a chiefly prerogative. As one missionary remarked:

It may be humiliating to us but it is nevertheless a fact that we have no claim on our Churches, and it is

35 Cook to Small, 29 October and 8 November 1908, F/1/1908.
36 Small to W.E. Bennett, 17 January 1912, F/1/1912.
37 Brown to Small, 24 September 1912, F/1/1912.
just the spirit of 'conscientious defiance' to the Chiefs that is likely to split up our cause.\textsuperscript{38}

By 1913 Brown had lost Finau's confidence, the chief extravagantly claiming that he could manage church affairs without a missionary. Rejected by the church committee members who told him they would rather see the Roko chair the meetings, Brown left Lakeba, his long experience having been of little use.\textsuperscript{39}

Brown was replaced by an enthusiastic young missionary, Arthur Amos, who proved more accommodating in acknowledging Finau's position of hegemony in church matters. He was impressed by visible evidence of the chief's influence and status, for when Finau stood in church, worshippers entering the building would respectfully crawl the length of the aisle.\textsuperscript{40} In addition Amos astutely recognised the Roko's desire for a self-supporting and independent-minded church in Lau and encouraged Finau to take up the position of tuirara levu (senior Circuit Steward). In a co-operative mood, the Roko's influence delighted Amos particularly when Finau went in 1915 as Lay Representative for Lau to the District Synod where his active participation and influential counsel was welcomed. In Lakeba, Finau organised the building of a parsonage for the Fijian minister, Aminio Baledrokadroka, who had struck up a close relationship with the chief. The Roko collected $90 in two weeks and personally superintended construction of the house. He ordered sales of yaqona on Saturday to be stopped and appealed for $1,000 from the Lauan people in the annual vakamisoneri; almost $930 was collected, an increase of fifty percent on the previous year.\textsuperscript{41}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{38} W.E. Bennett to Small, 10 February 1913, F/1/1913. See also Small to Brown, 6 February 1913, F/1/1913.
\item \textsuperscript{39} Brown to Small, 16 January and 22 February 1913, F/1/1913.
\item \textsuperscript{40} HR, October 1912, 15.
\item \textsuperscript{41} Amos to Small, 21 December 1916, F/1/1916. Amos noted with considerable satisfaction that Lauans regarded their missionary and Roko as 'lomavata' (of like mind). Amos to Small, 29 November 1915, F/1/1916.
\end{itemize}
As collections continued to rise in 1916, Amos, with Finau's commanding support, initiated a scheme of circuit independence for Lau. As long as the Roko lent his personal influence, the scheme prospered. In 1919 however, missionary and chief fell out after Amos attempted to advise Finau on the perennial and delicate problem of his drinking habits. When the District Synod proposed that Aminio Baledrokadroka be moved from Lakeba to Nayau, Finau interpreted their decision as a personal insult and to avoid 'a very serious difficulty', Aminio remained at Lakeba. The temperamental Roko was not appeased and from July 1920 ceased to attend church. The circuit independence scheme, struggling through a slump in copra prices, lost its key supporter and was abandoned in 1922. 'The attitude of the Roko', commented Small, 'is one of absolute indifference and I fear that the effect of it will be to paralyze the whole circuit'.

Fortunately for the church in Lau, Small's worst fears did not materialise. In the last ten years of his life Finau adopted a more conciliatory attitude to the missionaries at Lakeba. In 1923 he 'electrified' the Tubou congregation by speaking in the church for the first time in years. He was reinstated as tuirara levu in 1925, having overcome his partiality to liquor. At times during church service he would sit not in his chiefly position at the front of the church but amongst the people, eliciting a perplexed inquiry from some people, 'What has come over the Roko?'. By 1929 Finau was no longer insisting on Fijian ministers being appointed according to his will but when leaving Lakeba he could still give orders to delay the vakamisoneri until, as the missionary put it, 'His Lordship' returned.

42 For further discussion of circuit independence scheme, see Chapter 9.
43 Amos to Small, 22 December 1919, F/1/1920.
44 Amos to Small, 16 December 1919, F/1/1920.
45 Small to Amos, 27 January 1922, F/1/1922.
46 A.G. Adamson to R.L. McDonald, 29 November 1926, F/1/1926.
47 R.H. Green to McDonald, 28 May 1929 and 25 September 1929, F/1/1929.
Finau died in 1934. His sceptical and chameleon attitude towards the church remained to the end when he flouted mission rules by permitting some traditional priests from Koro to come to Lakeba in an attempt to cure him of a fatal illness.48 Possibly as a consequence of the priests' failure, the Roko's death-bed wish, executed faithfully by Ratu Lala Sukuna, was that the new Centenary Church at Tubou, a memorial to Fiji's first white missionaries Cross and Cargill, be completed by October 1935.

Among the chiefs of rank in Fiji, Finau, whose experiences are the most thoroughly documented, may have been exceptional in his handling of church affairs but not atypical. In 1927 Ratu Deve Toganivalu, Roko Tui Bua, church member and lay preacher, clashed with his missionary, Robert Gibbons, over the control of Nabouwalu church. Here, as in many cases, chiefs were asserting their legitimate right, for Ratu Deve knew that the church had been paid for with provincial lease money and therefore was as much the property of the province as of the church committee. When Gibbons tried to take charge of the church committee, he was ignored and the Roko tightened his authority by drafting a statement of rights and privileges for church committee members. Lamenting his submissive position Gibbons, who had already offended Toganivalu by protesting against horse-race meetings in Bua, complained that in church matters, 'whatever the Roko suggests is carried out unquestionably'.49

Harold Chambers, successor to Gibbons in Bua, stubbornly determined to wrest control of Nabouwalu church from Toganivalu. He asked the Roko to hand over the church moneys and committee minute-book to the local Fijian minister and the tuirara, a request refused by Toganivalu. Instead the chief appointed the Bua provincial teacher, Ratu Joni Salele, as chairman of the committee and his son, Ratu Jioji Toganivalu, as treasurer. Chambers was alarmed at this attempt to place the church in the hands of what he regarded as an incompetent

48 R.H. Green, My Story, Memoirs (unpub.), 262. Copy of MS in the possession of Mr A. Weir, Suva.

49 Gibbons to McDonald, 9 February 1927, F/1/1927.
chiefly clique. In May 1928 he managed to secure a compromise by adopting an arrangement with advantages to both church and chiefly leaders. The resident Fijian minister, Luke Rokovada, was appointed chairman of the church committee and the tuirara the treasurer:

The Tuirara will count collections, record them and take the money to the Naralevu [Roko's house] and he and Ratu George will put it into the Savings Bank where the account was opened by Ratu Deve.50

The influence and power of a Roko in church matters extended beyond the church building and included the movement and appointment of teachers. This authority was usually delegated to local chiefs who were consulted by missionaries over any changes in village appointments. Some Bulis took advantage of their position to impose impossible working conditions on teachers, such as stopping their quarterly payments and refusing to provide assistance for the building of teachers' houses. Conversely some teachers ignored the requirement to consult with local chiefs before leaving their appointment.51 Where a Roko chose to intervene his power was absolute. For instance in 1908 Ratu Isikeli Kaitia, Roko Tui Nabuata, blocked the appointment of mission teachers to certain villages in his province. The most Small could do was to appeal to the Roko's good offices but the Chairman was compelled to recognise Ratu Isikeli's over-riding authority.52

Despite the superior, disdainful attitude adopted by high chiefs towards the church their influence was so extensive that missionaries could ill-afford to alienate them; indeed the support of church projects by chiefs was often crucial to success. In 1894, concerned at the low average contribution to church funds from Cakaudrove, the District Synod implored Ratu Josefa Lalabalavu, Roko Tui Cakaudrove, to adopt what 'has always been customary in Fiji' and encourage his people in their contributions, a request that brought a doubling in

50 Chambers to McDonald, 8 May and 31 March 1928, F/1/1928.
51 Small to W. Sutherland, 18 August 1903, F/1/1903; C.O. Lelean to Small, 7 July 1905, F/1/1905.
52 Small to Ratu Isikeli Kaitia, 8 September 1908, F/1/1908; Small to P.C. Nye, 9 September 1908, F/1/1908.
Ratu Josefa's personal gift of £100 towards the Cross Memorial Church at Somosomo inspired his people to complete the project. When the Roko died in 1905 the Wesleyans engaged in an unseemly battle with the Roman Catholics and Anglicans to lay claim to his soul:

For many years Lala conducted himself as an Episcopalian... But the Wesleyans say that he was born and bred a Wesleyan and that as he never distinctly abjured that church he must have died within its fold... The matter is further complicated by the fact that the Roman Catholics have privately assured me that Lala on his death bed became a member of that church... However as I find that most of the Fijian Chiefs who are within easy reach for consultation...say that they have no doubt Lala professed himself Church of England, the service is to be read by the Anglican clergyman. But I have consented to Mr Small delivering an address of a non-controversial character over the grave.

The Cakaudrove high chiefs vacillated in their support of Wesleyanism. For many years mission school numbers on Taveuni declined because one injudicious missionary, William Poole, chose to humiliate Ratu Rabici, son of Ratu Josefa, 'in front of his boatful of people'. Relations between chief and missionary improved once Cakaudrove Circuit came under the sensitive supervision of Arthur Lelean and funds to support the church increased substantially. With the death of Ratu Rabici in the mid-1920s, mission fortunes again changed in the opinion of Lelean's successor:

While not a church goer Ratu Rabici commanded his people to go and because they feared him they went. Things are different today. I have frequently been

53 Secretary, Fiji District Committee of Privileges, to Ratu Josefa Lala, 14 March 1894, F/3/(c), MF.
54 Small to G. Brown, 23 September 1903, F/1/1903.
55 Governor Everard im Thurn, Diary, 11 June 1905, M. 273, Pac.Hist.
56 J.A.L. Waterhouse to W.L. Waterhouse, 25 May 1912, MSS 2792, ML.
57 A.D. Lelean to Small, 8 September 1922, F/1/1922.
The Mission Chairman, Richard McDonald, disputed this argument, attributing the difficulties at Cakaudrove to continuous inter-tribal dissensions which seemed 'an excuse to say something about the lotu', an opinion echoed ten years later by the resident missionary at Cakaudrove.\(^5^9\)

The Bauan high chiefs, among the most influential in Fiji, eschewed any close attachment to the Methodist cause as if in reaction to Cakobau's role as its unofficial champion. Ratu Kadavulevu, grandson of Cakobau and Roko Tui Tailevu, avoided attending church, though maintaining outwardly a friendly attitude to the missionaries. He displayed a keen interest in mission education and, in a burst of generosity, presented the remains of the wreck of the SS Yaralla to the Methodists in 1906, which when salvaged went to the Navuloa Training Institution. The Roman Catholics capitalised on Kadavulevu's vacillating denominational allegiance to secure a temporary foothold on Bau, the Roko having been particularly offended by Small's criticism of his moral lapses and by a subsequent announcement that the Methodists were shifting their headquarters from Bau to Suva, a move regarded by the Bauan chiefs as a 'slap in the face for their island'.\(^6^0\)

Kadavulevu, like Ratu Josefa Lalabalavu and the Toganivalus (Deve and Joiji), died an adherent of the Church of England.

Ratu Joni Madraiwiwi, one of Fiji's most capable Rokos, adopted a strictly impartial attitude to the Methodists, one which Small unfairly termed 'utterly callous'.\(^6^1\) Concerned that very few young men from his province of Ra were returning from the Methodist

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58 R.D. McKinnon to McDonald, 10 January 1927, F/1/1927.
60 Small to G. Brown, 4 November 1902, F/1/1902.
61 Small to W.A. Heighway, 8 July 1902, F/1/1902.
Circuit Institutions at Viwa and Ba to work in their own districts, Madraiwiwi refused permission to some boys to further their education both at Ba and Viwa and at Navula Methodist school. Madraiwiwi's antipathy to the Methodists may have had its roots in the mission's connection with Cakobau at the time of Ratu Mara Kapaiwal's violent death in 1859. Madraiwiwi, a few days old when Mara - his father - was hanged for rebelling against Cakobau, alleged that the Wesleyan Mission 'had connived with Cakobau in the execution'. Madraiwiwi named Langham as an 'assessor who agreed to the trial of Ratu Mara and his subsequent execution, the fact being further mentioned that Dr Langham had burnt his records to hide the fact!' Madraiwiwi allocated his children to the various denominations for their education. Ratu Tiale W.T. Vuiyasawa went to Wesley College in Melbourne, a daughter Adi Vasevaka to a Seventh Day Adventist school in New South Wales, and the eldest son, Ratu Lala Sukuna, was tutored by an Anglican priest retained as a member of the Roko's household. As a result of his early experiences and his Oxford education, Sukuna became an adherent of the Church of England, but, as a young man he often attended services at the Jubilee Methodist Church, Suva. It was his enthusiasm and influence over the Lauan people which brought to fruition the final wish of Ratu Alifereti Finau, the beautiful Cross and Cargill Memorial Church at Tubou. Sukuna has been regarded by some missionaries as a 'good friend of the Methodist Church' having

62 Ibid.

63 A.W. Amos to Small, 15 December 1920, F/1/1920. This serious allegation is useful only to explain a possible motive for Madraiwiwi's lack of sympathy with Methodism. His imputations against Langham are most probably false, because in 1859 Langham was stationed at Lakeba and had only been in Fiji for a year. The execution took place at Bau. The burning of Langham's records after his death, as directed in his will, was unfortunate, though not atypical of missionaries. (The late Reverend Dr J.W. Burton, Methodist missionary and administrator, d.1971, burnt most of his personal records.) Mara's execution was witnessed by two missionaries, Thomas Baker and John Fordham, who by their presence may unintentionally have condoned what Joseph Waterhouse described as an act of 'treachery'. D. Scarr, J, the Very Bayonet, Canberra 1973, 44-45.

64 Macnaught, From Mainstream to Millpond?..., 126.
confided to the missionary Stanley Cowled that the Lotu Wesele suited the Fijian people more than any other denomination, but Fijian church leaders today represent Sukuna as having always been remote from the Methodist Church.  

Conspicuous among the chiefly families of Bau for their consistent support of the lotu were the chiefesses, many of whom acted willingly as influential prayer and class leaders. Thomas Williams' reference to women in pre-Christian Fiji being forbidden to enter any temple raises speculation as to the extent to which Christianity provided an opportunity for women to involve themselves in religious activities although, as far as Bau was concerned, women traditionally exercised great influence and their patronage of the Christian church was in many respects a continuation of this role. Among the Bauan women of rank, Adi Arieta Kuila and Adi Lusiana, daughters of Cakobau, were noted for their 'sterling piety'; Ratu Sukuna's mother, Adi Maopa, was an able class leader, while Adi Cakobau, grand-daughter of Cakobau and Adi Torika, wife of Ratu Pope Seniloli, were both 'ardent supporters' of the lotu.

To the evident delight and relief of missionaries, Ratu Pope Seniloli, a grandson of Cakobau, actively sought out their assistance. On his installation as Roko Tui Tailevu in 1920 he requested that a special service be held 'to ask God's blessing on the province and help for himself in what he realizes is a difficult task'. Four years

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67 Small to G. Brown, 17 November 1902, F/1/1902; Small to J.E. Carruthers, 21 May 1913, F/1/1913; A.D. Lelean to Small, 8 September 1922, F/1/1922; interview with S.G.C. Cowlec, Sydney, 5 July 1976.

68 C.O. Lelean to Small, 30 December 1920, F/1/1921. After 1927 Ratu Pope changed his last name from Seniloli to Cakobau.
later he was dismissed from office, after drawing heavily on provincial funds to sustain personal commitments. Like Ratu Alifereti Finau in his time of stress, Ratu Pope requested the Fijian minister on Bau, Lemeki Tunidau, for reacceptance as a church member and began attending membership class meetings. Arthur Adamson, missionary on Bau, seized the opportunity to try and reform the penitent chief:

I had a long talk with him & stressed the need of cutting out the drink absolutely. He recognised that it was one of the strongest factors in his downfall & promised to abstain altogether from it... I told him that if he had a real Christian life, his influence would be felt for good in Bau & throughout Fiji.

For a number of years Ratu Pope leant his considerable influence behind the Methodist cause. Predictably his most active years in a church leadership role coincided with his period of exclusion from government office. Mission workers on Bau soon appreciated that channelling church affairs through Ratu Pope, even though he was often only approving their plans, gained the quickest and most effective results. Chiefly sanction secured commoner allegiance. Pope Seniloli's chiefly authority was undisputed. In one amusing incident on a Sunday morning, Pope was informed by the missionary of a cricket practice being held on the Bau rara, or village common, involving Europeans and Fijians including Sukuna. The missionary account related that Seniloli, once advised of the facts,

went to the ground and asked Joske to pull up the stumps. He [Pope] expressed himself pretty strongly to the Fijians and then went along to see Higginson and Sukuna. Sukuna had approved [of the cricket practice] and tried to argue with Pope that it was quite all right. Pope took a strong stand and said it was not done at Bau and would not be done while he was here. Ratu Pope then told the three of them [Joske, Higginson and Sukuna] they must all come to church or otherwise the wrong they had done

69 Macnaught, From Mainstream to Millpond?..., 144-45.
70 Adamson to R.L. McDonald, 23 January 1925, F/1/1925.
71 For example, see T.N. Deller to McDonald, 19 June 1928, F/1/1928.
would not be blotted out. Ratu Sukuna came unwillingly but they all three came.\textsuperscript{72}
pope's standing in missionary circles remained high. Shortly before his death in 1936 it was announced that Bau was to be given a young missionary on his first appointment out of training. Ratu Pope heard of this from his hospital bed and, when visited by Robert Green, a missionary of fifteen years' experience in Fiji, Pope said simply, 'I want you in Bau, Mr Green'. The appointment was changed.\textsuperscript{73}

The mission experience in Fiji indicated unequivocally a hierarchy of church control which evolved out of the particular circumstances in which missionaries were placed. High chiefs in nearly all parts of Fiji considered it their right, whether members of the church or not, to assume direction over church matters when they thought it necessary or, as in the case of Ratu Pope Seniloli, when they wished to be involved. In these situations their position was effectively senior to that of circuit missionary. Significantly they indicated a willingness to defer to only one particular missionary appointment, the Chairman or gase levu. To him they accorded a unique place, well above the status of circuit missionary and similar in degree of ecclesiastical authority to that of the Governor in secular affairs. This attitude on the part of high chiefs may explain the continued respect shown Langham despite his idiosyncracies, and the influence which Small exercised over chiefs such as Finau when relations with the local missionary broke down. Similarly Charles Lelean, when he returned as gase levu in 1936 and 1937, was held in awe by Fijians. His was usually the final word on any matter.\textsuperscript{74}

In keeping with the hierarchical nature of church control, circuit missionaries, while considered subordinate to high chiefs,

\textsuperscript{72} A.G. Adamson to McDonald, 27 December 1925, F/1/1925.

\textsuperscript{73} Green, My Story, \textit{op.cit.}, 302; see also C.O. Lelean to D.F. Boorman, 16 May 1936, F/1/1936.

\textsuperscript{74} Writing to Frederick Langham in 1879 the Buli Lakeba referred to the Chairman as 'Ratu Misi Lagami'. F/3/(c), MF; comments on Lelean from interviews with Setareki Tuilovoni, 19 January 1977 and Alifereti Waqabaca, 26 September 1976, Suva.
possessed authority senior to district or village chiefs. Only after years of experience did missionaries finally recognise that the appointment of a high chief to a church position such as Circuit Steward often compounded any difficulties in their organisation of church affairs.\textsuperscript{75} A man of lesser rank gave the missionary greater authority over him. Furthermore missionary influence was most often employed in support of his Fijian ministers who generally ranked lower than minor chiefs in the church hierarchy and thereby required the additional weight of missionary authority.

Willing to acknowledge missionaries as their superiors in affairs of the lotu, local chiefs were reluctant to grant that right to ministers of their own race. Chiefs resented attempts by Fijian ministers to use their acquired status against those above them in birth, and they had little confidence in them as leaders.\textsuperscript{76} As a consequence, the recurring fear of missionaries, one that partly explains their determination to maintain a missionary presence in Fiji, was that if European staff were retrenched, the Fijian ministry would be unable to withstand the preponderating influence of the chiefs. In 1888, Fijian ministers were expressing consternation about the weakness of their position:

One said, 'the chiefs hear our word but do not regard us', another 'many things we dare not say to our chiefs we refer to you [the missionary] to say'. A third, 'the chiefs will not accept our judgement', and a fourth, 'we are strong because your presence makes us strong'.\textsuperscript{77}

Any suggestion however that chiefs in Fiji wished to assume complete control of the church in Fiji is erroneous. The pressure for reduced numbers of missionaries in Fiji was not coming from Fijians. It is doubtful whether even Ratu Alifereti Finau was serious in wanting the missionary out of Lau; what he desired was a missionary prepared to

\textsuperscript{75} See H. Chambers to McDonald, 19 June 1927 and McDonald to Chambers, 7 July 1927, F/1/1927.

\textsuperscript{76} Small to J.G. Wheen, 10 August 1922, MOM Uncat. 1905-53; Small to W. Sutherland, 9 June 1909 and Sutherland to Small, 4 June 1909, MOM 106.

\textsuperscript{77} An Open Letter from the Fiji District Meeting to Ministers of the Australasian Wesleyan Methodist Church, n.p., November 1882, 2, ML.
recognise the respective rights of chief and clergy in the lotu. An appointment agreeable to chiefs was a matter of prestige and places such as Rotuma, which were often left without a missionary, repeatedly complained of the neglect with which they were treated. In a similar manner Fijian ministers, most of whom understood the limitations to their authority, were sought after by local chiefs anxious to improve their status, and faced with an increasing demand, the mission was compelled to prepare more men for ordination. By the 1920s there were too many Fijian ministers to give each an adequate allowance but ministerial appointments could not be left vacant without trouble from the chiefs.78

As a result of the chiefs' interest in the acquisition of Fijian ministers, the most formidable problem for the missionaries was to try to persuade chiefs of all rank to accept with equanimity the ministerial appointments made annually by the Synod. Despite lay participation at Synod meetings from 1908 onwards, chiefs were reluctant to countenance decisions of Synod as representing their particular wishes. In 1916 the missionary on Kadavu, Stanley Jarvis, was informed by the Buli on the island of Ono, off the east coast of Kadavu, that his people would not accept the appointment of a new minister but instead wanted their existing minister, Ponipate Vula, to remain. On investigation Jarvis found that the Methodist cause on Ono was controlled by the Buli, the retired Buli and the tuirara, the 'rank and file following their lead', being 'distinctly afraid of offending the chiefs'. Under threat from the Buli of taking his people to Roman Catholicism if he did not get his way, Jarvis capitulated and allowed Ponipate to remain. 'It was either changing the [Synod decision] or all joining the R.C. mission', explained Jarvis in defending his action '...[the chiefs] had the whip hand all the time'. Commented William Brown, Acting Chairman, who blamed Ponipate Vula for taking sides with the chiefs, 'you have had your first brush with the pigheaded Fijian... The men appointed have the rights and we should stand by them'.79

78 McDonald to J.W. Burton, 1 October 1927, MOM Uncat., 1905-53.
79 Jarvis to W. Brown, 10 April 1916; Brown to Jarvis, 12 April 1916, F/1/1916.
Threats of defection to another lotu were a popular form of blackmail employed by the chiefs in their efforts to alter resolute missionary opinion. But the Ono chiefs had also capitalised on Jarvis's relative inexperience in missionary work. When the chiefs of Namena, near Bau, objected in 1917 to their minister being appointed elsewhere and hinted they might turn Lotu Katolika, William Chambers deliberated and then took a deputation of three senior ministers, including the experienced Taniela Lotu, to Namena, settling the matter after a discussion with the chiefs. An interesting variation on the defection theme occurred in 1933 when Harold Chambers, the Cakaudrove missionary, took umbrage after the Natewa chiefs bypassed him and sent a request to the Chairman seeking retention of their minister contrary to Synod decision. Initially determined to resist the chiefs, Chambers relented when he discovered that the minister in question, Aisea Kaitu, had obtained an influential hold over the most powerful chief in Natewa Bay who was also a member of the Seventh Day Adventist Church. Scarcely concealing his delight at this improvement in Methodist fortunes Chambers noted, 'Aisea has got hold of the Vunivalu, and even if he does not get him back, he has succeeded in making him like him, to the chagrin and consequent ineffectiveness of the S.D.A. minister there'. On Chambers' recommendation the wish of the Natewa chiefs was granted.

Rivalry between chiefs often spilled over into church affairs. On Kadavu in 1923 long standing political dissension between two districts of Kadavu surfaced when Aseri Robarobalevu was appointed by Synod to Yale Section after having been nominated for Nabukulevu Section by the Kadavu Circuit annual meeting. Complaints from the chiefs of Nabukulevu that Yale had received undue consideration prompted a visit by Robert Green to the disaffected party where the tabua presented to appease them was refused. The chiefs pompously maintained

80 Chambers to Small, 15 March 1917 and 9 April 1917, F/1/1917.
81 H. Chambers to McDonald, 7 February 1933, F/1/1933.
82 Small to Green, 16 January 1923; Small to A.W. Amos, 30 January 1923, F/1/1923.
that the 'lewa [decision] of the Kadavu annual meeting was of God, but that of the Bose Levu [Synod] was of man!' upon which Small commented, with a rare touch of sarcasm, 'Thou, Lord, decide who is to be my wife, but Oh, let it be Betty'.

To reinforce their defiant mood, the Nabukulevu chiefs withheld monthly and quarterly offerings to the teachers and flirted with an itinerant Seventh Day Adventist missionary. Ratu Sitima, the leading chief of Nabukulevu, eventually relented but only after he was given a minister, Elimi Kurusiga, who possibly because of his Kadavu extraction, met with the chief's approval.

In 1925, the removal of Rupeni Rabici from Buretu in the Bau Circuit exacerbated the rivalry between two factions of the village, one following the ex-Buli, Ratu Saimoni Dobui, who was put out of office for misappropriation of money, and the other supporting his successor. Ratu Saimoni petitioned A.G. Adamson at Bau for Rupeni's return, since the minister had only been there two years, but the request for his removal had come from the rival and dominant group of chiefs who unconstitutionally by-passed the Circuit annual meeting and Adamson, making successful representations to Fijian ministers at Synod. The decision to shift Rabici had thus been taken by the chiefs alone because, so Adamson was told, 'they thought it wise to give him a move'.

One can only conjecture as to the viability of Rabici's ministry in Buretu had he been required to stay.

The withholding of church collections, or vakamisoneri, by chiefs enabled them to place considerable pressure on missionaries over decisions made at Synod. In 1906 the chiefs at Nadroga, under the leadership of Ratu Tevita Makutu, Roko Tui Nadroga, retained the vakamisoneri (an amount in excess of $200) refusing to pass it on to the missionary at Rewa because their repeated requests for a European missionary had been turned down by Synod. No longer wishing to be merely a section of the Rewa Circuit which extended from the Rewa river

83 Small to C.O. Lelean, 21 January 1923, F/1/1923.
84 Green to Small, 4 April 1923, F/1/1923.
85 Adamson to McDonald, 10 December 1925, F/1/1925.
in the south-east of Viti Levu to Nadi in the north-west, the chiefs of Nadroga desired a resident missionary who by his presence would enhance their own and the province's status. 'We have stopped sending our vakamisoneri' they explained, 'because of your refusal to send us a talatala. It is unfair to send in the yearly contributions for the benefit of other sections'. Despite the protestations of Small that the decisions of the Bose ko Viti (Synod) must be complied with, the chiefs did not relinquish the collection until they were assured by a missionary deputation that a talatala would be supplied. In 1907, William North took up residence at Cuvu. The chiefs of Rotuma continually sought a missionary presence until the 1940s but often the Synod was only able to provide temporary appointments or place a missionary at Levuka with responsibility over both Lomaiviti and Rotuma Circuits. Dissatisfied with the treatment they were receiving from a Synod 300 miles away, the four leading chiefs of Rotuma in 1934 refused to send vakamisoneri funds to Fiji because they had been informed that their respected missionary, Clerk Maxwell Churchward, was to be removed. The Mission Chairman, McDonald, was compelled to visit Rotuma and, like his predecessor Small, promise the continuance of a missionary so that the funds would be handed over.

The defiant actions of chiefs, demonstrated in the suspension of vakamisoneri payments, is a crucial indicator of the new attitudes towards self-support that were exercising Fijian minds after 1900. The concept of leadership in the church, as far as chiefs were concerned, was slowly changing from one of equality with the missionary to the idea of a church separate from the missionary. Such an idea however was not developed seriously till after the Second World War.

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86 Ratu T. Makutu to Small, 11 May 1906, F/1/1906. See also Small to G. Brown, 8 August 1904, F/1/1904.
87 McDonald to J.W. Burton, 8 May and 16 July 1934, NOM Uncat. 1905-53.
88 The growth of self-support and self-government within the church is discussed more fully in Chapter 9.
Critics of the role of missionaries in Fiji during the 100 years following 1835 have argued that Christianity by eroding the traditional divine function of the chief thereby undermined 'the very basis of his authority'. As a result, it is further alleged, with an increased emphasis on personality rather than rank, the overall power of chiefs declined. This interpretation chooses to ignore, or perhaps is unaware of, the fundamental principle on which the early Wesleyan missionaries operated, namely to preserve, as far as possible, the existing social order. Because of their support for the traditional system of position and privilege, a support that had its roots in classic Wesleyan principles of church-state relations, they secured an influential position for the new religion but simultaneously allowed the chiefs an excellent opportunity to leave their mark upon the lotu.

Furthermore, implied in the theory that chiefly power languished following the acceptance of the lotu, is the simplistic assumption that chiefs apparently did not possess ability sufficient to accommodate or adapt to a new set of circumstances. This is far from reality. Although the majority of chiefs were prepared to view the introduction of Christianity sympathetically and seek material advantage from it, they resisted unwarranted presumptions to sole authority by the missionaries and their Fijian subordinates. Rather than acquiesce in the establishment of a separate clerical hierarchy, the chiefs ensured that, in keeping with their traditional status, they were incorporated into the evolving church leadership as an essential feature of the hierarchy. Indeed such was the authority of chiefs they could remain outside the membership of the church and still retain extensive influence within it. For reasons largely beyond


90 Williams and Calvert, op.cit., 282. Note also the comment by Stuart Reay, District Commissioner in Ra, 2 September 1932. '[The Roman Catholics] do not encourage - as the Methodist do - the people to respect the chiefs or obey them'. Provincial Diary, 1932, F/22/5, Part 2, C.S.O. Records, N.A.F.
their control, the missionaries and indigenous staff of ministers, catechists and teachers became infused with the traditional patterns of leadership allowing chiefs a large degree of authority in the lotu.
PART II: THE CHURCH AND ITS PEOPLE
SHORTLY after his retirement as Chairman of the Wesleyan Mission in 1895, Frederick Langham boasted of Fiji as 'virtually a Wesleyan colony'. Few could argue with his statement when judged by numbers alone. Over ninety percent of the Fijian people attended Wesleyan services with varying degrees of regularity and a third of these were church members, communicants who pledged themselves to the rules of the Society. More difficult to substantiate, when testing Langham's claim, were the attitude and response of Fijian Wesleyans to their new faith. In the experience of a majority of Fijians their initial acceptance of Christianity was a communal act - the submission of a group of people, frequently in obedience to the will of a chief. The practice of the lotu retained that characteristic. The missionaries recognised this religious collectivity but few saw its inherent problems as clearly as Arthur Webb in 1881: 'our work has risen easily through their coming over to us in masses; is not our greatest danger also to come from the same cause, their leaving us in masses too?'.

At the heart of Wesleyan following in Fiji was the class meeting. This small gathering of church members which met at least once a week had its origins in British Methodism where it developed as an agency for bible-study, for mutual encouragement of the converts' spiritual life and for the raising of funds to support church work. Regular attendance at church was, in Wesleyan canon, insufficient

1 NR, June 1898, 4.

2 In sociological language the Fijian religious experience was mainly exogenous, i.e., a conversion of exterior origin, change being induced principally from the outside. H. Carrier, *The Sociology of Religious Belonging*, London 1965, 70.

3 A.J. Webb, *Journal 1881*, B.573 ML.
evidence of conversion. The class meeting, conducted by either a teacher, lay preacher or respected member, was open to all members, intending or accredited, and took the form of prayer, singing, exhortation and correction. In many respects it was an informal church service giving continuity to mission work throughout the week. From a theological point of view it gave the opportunity for Fijians to examine their 'repentant' state and continue to search for perfection or holiness, in the manner stressed by Wesley. 4 For a large number of members, however, the class meeting made them conscious of belonging to a common interest group, important more for its public witness, particularly on matters of morality, than its spiritual piety. As one government officer noted in 1884:

These meetings of Church Members for mutual interrogation and communion is known as 'caka siga' and is almost tantamount to the practice of the confessional in the Romish Church. A person who turns against the Wesleyan moral code is driven out of this community and is socially 'boycotted'. 5

For those wishing to become church members, attendance at class meetings was compulsory for a twelve month trial, at which time the missionary or Fijian minister would inquire into their behaviour over that time and conduct an oral examination of the applicant's acquaintance with Scripture. If satisfactory, those on trial were received into full membership. The status accorded members, who were always a minority of total adherents, ensured that church membership in the late nineteenth century was valued by most people 'even when not very spiritually minded, as a certificate of respectability'. 6 Accredited members were titled siga dina (those enlightened), a shrewd adaptation by the early missionaries of the Fijian word for daylight. 7


6 W.A. Burns, Lakeba and Lomaloma Circuit, Annual Report, 1899, MMSA, xlvii.

Equally important in giving status to membership was the requirement that only members could be eligible for positions in the church.

The nature of conversion in Fiji, where large numbers of people acknowledged the power of the lotu in a relatively short space of time, meant that the outward observance of rules and ritual became the sign of membership rather than the more individual experience of regeneration. Whereas for the first generation of Fijian converts, community revivals had often accompanied their initial religious experience, conversion for the succeeding generations displayed less public zeal, a development by no means unique to Fiji but which concerned missionaries greatly. They were most anxious that the practice of Christianity among Fijians did not decline into a meaningless formalistic act and they noted examples of this with concern. Revivals and religious enthusiasm continued into the late nineteenth century but were the more remarkable because of their infrequency; neither were they spontaneous outbreaks of emotionalism but the product of a sustained preaching campaign launched and directed by missionaries who were determined to displace the signs of unhealthy formalism.

In 1876 Joseph Waterhouse conducted special services in the Navuloa Circuit, some of them lasting a whole day, and observed excitedly that there had been a 'revival of religion' in every village visited, including Lawaqa, Nabitu, Nabogali, Nekelo and Tokatoka. In two weeks, more than 200 people became church members. One villager, even before Waterhouse arrived in his town, had experienced a vivid dream in which he had been led by someone reminding him of his deceased father to a 'place full of flame of fire'. The resulting mental anguish persuaded him to seek out Waterhouse and the man was subsequently baptised into church membership. In 1885 Rotuma experienced a 'glorious revival' after what was described as 'two years of gross immorality and other evils'. The most wide-spread revival commenced in 1897 as a

8 Niel Gunson, Messengers of Grace, 224ff.
9 A.J. Small, Bua Circuit, Annual Report, 1879, MNSA.
10 Waterhouse to Mrs Padman, 18 August 1876, MMS 554, NL.
11 Rotuma Circuit, Annual Report, 1885, MNSA.
result of 'very solemn and earnest addresses' delivered by several missionaries at the annual District Synod held on Bau. The 'spiritual awakening' spread from Bau to Navula and Rewa Circuits and further to Kadavu, Bau and Ra. While church attendance during those years was reflecting the general decline in Fijian population, membership leapt from 30,635 in 1897 to 35,244 by 1900. As if embarrassed by the success of their initiative, missionaries were careful to stress that no 'undue pressure' or 'factitious excitement' had characterised the movement. The missionary approach to evangelism was changing.

W.E. Bromilow had noted in 1887 that he held no special revival services, the most important reason being that 'conversions take place at the ordinary worship, a much more satisfactory mode of progress than spasmodic rush alternated with retrogression'.

While some missionaries placed less emphasis on conversions inspired by emotion and more on the test of long-held conviction, others noted the inadequate way in which Christian doctrine was communicated. Fijian comprehension of Christianity was severely tested by the theological complexities they were expected to master. When visiting a dying woman, Langham asked her on what grounds she felt sure of life after death to which she replied that she believed in 'Jesus Christ as the Saviour'. 'Then you feel you are a sinner?' demanded Langham to which the woman replied 'Oh no! I am not a sinner'. Part of the difficulty in communicating Christian concepts was a linguistic one. There was no word in Fijian adequate to translate the idea of forgiveness. The missionaries had to render 'Forgive us our trespasses' by 'Punish us not for our trespasses'. The Fijian word for love, loloma, was a comparatively weak word to use in the sense of Christian love. It also had to cover such concepts as pity, mercy, compassion, kindness and charity. Problems were encountered finding a local word to use for

12 MR, April 1898, June 1900.
13 WNN, April and October 1887, 7.
14 Bau Circuit, Annual Report, 1876, MMSA; see also WNN, January 1873, 77.
15 M.C. Fison to G. Brown, 2 May 1913, NSS 263/1, ML.
'sin', and a compound word, ai ‘vala ca (lit. bad habit) was chosen, an unsatisfactory substitute to many missionaries. 'When the worst you can tell a man about the most heinous offence he can commit is that it is ai valavala ca - the difficulty of bringing him to see the repulsiveness of it can be appreciated'. 16

The problem of communication, which often explained why aspiring members did not survive the first year in class, combined with the more complicated issue of motivation frequently cast doubts on the validity of Wesleyan conversion. Converts were impressed by the material and temporal benefits of Christianity - 'a good thing is the lotu for to clubbing it has put an end'. 17 At the same time Fijians responded more to the Old Testament, judgemental Jehovah. The 1875 measles epidemic was regarded in the established eastern circuits as a divine visitation; many nominal adherents attributed their survival to the presence and power of the lotu and in the Lakeba Circuit a 'general awakening' resulted in increased membership. 18 Fear of a wrathful Christian God dominated the minds of many Fijian converts. Wallace Deane, a missionary to Fiji in the early twentieth century, asked a number of church members to write down their reasons for conversion: some attributed their experience to either reading or hearing a sermon on Matthew XXV, 46, 'These shall go away into everlasting punishment'; others gave as their reason a serious illness, one was changed by the influence of a fearsome dream, a few through being put in gaol, while one unlikely individual was frightened by a policeman. 19

The less sympathetic critics of mission work in Fiji could find evidence that Wesleyan members and adherents were converts 'not to the Christian religion but to the belief that the white man's God conferred great benefits on His followers and was much to be dreaded'. 20

16 W.A. Heighway to G. Brown, 28 April 1913, MSS 263/1, NL.
17 Kadavu Circuit, Annual Report, 1870, MMSA.
18 WMN, July 1876, 66.
These factors were influential but not solely responsible for keeping Fijians to a pattern of regular church attendance; chiefly example was important, the attraction of the written word as expressed in the Bible, the enjoyment of community worship, the opportunities for learning. Fiji's most powerful leader in the nineteenth century and the patron of Wesleyanism, Cakobau, encouraged his people to regard their religion both as a means of promoting social harmony and as an avenue by which to influence individual action:

I say to all of you. Let us be in earnest. Let us be of one mind. All you ladies - all you chiefs - cleave to what is good. Strive together to stop everything that is evil. Now that we are called Christian people, let us act as such.21

Cakobau highlighted one of the major strengths of the lotu when he appreciated its capacity to complement Fijian society at its most basic level - the village. Like the pre-Christian beliefs it succeeded, Wesleyan Christianity augmented the Fijian's view of the world, it announced and maintained firm if restrictive moral values, it generally supported the social structure it encountered and it gave the opportunity for fresh religious experiences.22 Its stress on regular gatherings of its followers, its eagerness to share with Fijians the power of the written word, its immediate delegation of authority to sympathetic secular leaders and its granting of preaching rights to all who so aspired - all these factors helped to establish a strong church at the local level. Even though there were exclusive elements in the church such as the class meeting and the communion service (which for many years was restricted to members), most other church activities utilised and reinforced the communal spirit.

Church quarterly and annual meetings held in every circuit were the signal for lavish feasting, entertainment and presentations by the host villages or district. At the annual District Meeting of

21 Calvert Papers, M.154, MMS.
1876, held at Macuata, an estimated assembly of 3,000 people were fed on turtle, pigs, fish and yams while on the concluding day of the meeting, the mission dignitaries were presented with '10 pigs, 6 turtles, 4 fowls, 30 whales teeth, mats, yams, fish, dalo, native cloth and a rifle etc. etc.'\(^{23}\) The feasts and ceremonial food exchanges that became an important part of church gatherings were not pure indulgence; they emphasized the strong links that had been forged between church life and Fijian culture. In the new era of European contact, feasting symbolised village and tribal prosperity, a situation partly attributable to the lotu. In the words of a chiefly spokesman, addressing Fijians who had gathered at Nakorotubu in Ra to celebrate fifty years of Wesleyan work in Fiji:

> Look on this food and see the results of the lotu. I ask you, men of various tribes, would you have come together formerly as you are together today? Would not evil and war have grown out of you so doing? What has brought those boats and small ships to us, that float in the bay? and the comforts we enjoy? This food is the food of the Jubilee, of peace and goodwill. Come and eat of it, all are welcome. Let the out-cast come, and the widow and the orphan...let the lame and the deaf and the blind come.\(^{24}\)

In his years as Chairman of the Mission, Small was dismayed by what he regarded as the wastage of time and food and excess of presents involved in church gatherings together with the ostentatious hospitality of chiefs, using the occasion to display their powers of lala (the collection of tribute from subjects within his province). In 1906 Small instructed the Roko Tui Macuata, as the next host of the Annual Meeting, that there was to be only one meke, further pointing out that a new district rule now prevented any presentation to the missionaries; 'the spiritual side of the coming event is the most important', he insisted.\(^{25}\) To his mission colleague at Naduri, Small

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23 J.D. Jory to B. Chapman, 24 August 1876, MOM 165.

24 Thomas Williams, Journal 1885, Entry for 11 November, B.589 ML. The reference to 'Jubilee' signified the fifty years that Wesleyan missionaries had been in Fiji (1835-85).

wrote, 'I know [the Roko] will...if not prevented, empty every lololo [yam-garden] and pig-stye in the province in order to out-strip everybody else who has ever had the Synod'. During Small's term as Chairman, the annual Synod ceased to be hosted by various circuits and was held regularly in Suva; there Small was able to pursue a policy of restraint and economy when meetings were held. However his control over circuits was minimal and the aging missionary had to admit defeat in his recognition of the link between church gatherings and celebrations. When he heard from Rotuma that over 200 people (one-fifth of the island's population) were gathering for the quarterly meeting, bluntly described by the resident missionary as a 'picnic and nuisance', Small counselled tolerance: 'feasting is inseparable from assemblies of whatever nature'. Extravagant ceremonies on Kadavu in 1920 and at Bua in 1924 indicated that church meetings were vital outlets for community festivity. As one missionary, sympathetically inclined to Fijian culture, noted, 'the great presentation given on special days must not be thought of as wasteful; it was part of their economy and their economy could stand it and thrive on it.'

The most important and regular activity for Wesleyan members and adherents alike was, and still remains, the church service. One of the first effects that followed Fijian acceptance of the lotu was a strict observance of the Sabbath. The missionaries utilised the traditionally sacred tabu to enforce adherence to the fourth commandment

26 Small to T.W. Butcher, 19 January 1906, F/3(e).
27 In 1922, at the annual meeting in Suva, all ministers and lay representatives were instructed to contribute money rather than yams. Meals were provided at a local boarding house and only opening and closing feasts were held. See Small to R.H. Green, 4 October 1922, F/1/1922.
29 J.C. Lawton to Small, 5 July 1920, F/1/1920; H. Chambers to R.L. McDonald, 21 July 1924, F/1/1924.
30 R.H. Green, My Story, 131-32.
and their policy was universally successful in Fiji as elsewhere in the Pacific. Any form of work, recreation or food preparation was prohibited. Fijians were not allowed to trade with visiting vessels, buy or sell any goods, pluck a bunch of fruit or lend a hand to save property in danger of destruction. Even fishing for balolo, the rare whitebait delicacy, was banned. These creatures only appeared on the reefs once a year for one day. In two consecutive years that day was unfortunately a Sabbath.

Church services were not confined to the Sabbath but, reflecting a tradition born of evangelical enthusiasm, were held throughout the week. A visitor to Bau in the 1870s, at that time under the influence of Langham and a devout Cakobau, reported interminable church-goings:

Every morning the lali rings at sunrise for morning prayers; again about half-past five, after work is over, there is an afternoon service and a sermon; and, in the evening, family prayers in every house, and on Sunday they somehow manage to find time for another sermon and a Sunday School at which even grown-up people attend. All this goes on just the same when there is no white parson in the place.

Because of its role as a mission centre, Bau was not typical of the Fijian village. In places where there were resident teachers, worship services normally occurred twice a week, Wednesday or Thursday and on Sunday when, as expected, there was increased church activity. The day would commence with a prayer meeting at 6 a.m. or, in many of

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31 In Tonga, Samoa and Fiji, tabu observance of the Sabbath was one of the first results of mission penetration. Gilson (Samoa 1930-1900, 106) suggests that this law was adopted readily in Samoa because it required little 'strain' thereby making it easier for whole villages to accept the new Christian law.


the villages, 'when the leaf of the bauhinia opens'. The people would gather in the church between the first and second beating of the lali, the drum once used, ironically, to summon people to cannibal feasts. The men and women would sit separately in the church, on either side of the aisle, chiefs and church notables at the front on chairs while the children would be seated in twos down the aisle, or collected together at the front, with church stewards to keep them in order. Before the Sabbath was over at least another two church services would have been held as well as an all-age Sunday School.

Villages without a resident teacher were served by a system of itinerant preachers. These were often young mission students in training for a village appointment or, around the Rewa delta, older candidates preparing for the ministry at Navula and subsequently Davuilevu. The regular exchange of pulpits was also encouraged between teachers of neighbouring villages. The itinerant teacher would generally be accompanied by a retinue of friends and aspirants to the ministry who would carry the teacher's books and pulpit apparel including a white sulu and shirt, collar and black tie. At every village where a service took place, a large meal, or tali vunau was provided in return for the sermon. The remains of the tali vunau could be taken away by the teacher and his party but no money could be accepted as payment on Sunday. A government officer in the interior found that while teachers declined money on Sunday they usually requested that it be made available on the Monday.

The form of the church service, like most Fijian church ritual, resembled the Wesleyan Methodist model, combining hymn-singing, prayers, bible-reading and the sermon, with the addition of the Te Deum,


35 Missionaries had a penchant for retaining visible signs of the 'old days'. The baptismal font in the Bau church is a tourist attracton today due to its function as a killing stone in the pre-Christian era.

36 Reminiscences of Mrs A.J. Small, MOM 136.

37 Brewster, op.cit., 144.
Apostles' Creed and Wesleyan Catechism chanted in a traditional manner by women with the men sometimes joining in. The singing of hymns, translated and introduced by the early missionaries, differed only slightly from the atonal chants of traditional dances. In 1879 the Smalls arrived at Bua to find the church singing led by a 'young fellow' who 'let out a yell more like the roar of a bull than the voice of a man'. Determined to improve the melodic quality of singing, they commenced a choir at Bua, a popular innovation which soon had nearby villages requesting singing lessons. While on Bau in the 1890s Arthur Small printed a number of new hymns set to 'attractive tunes' and reported that there was an enthusiastic response, particularly from young people. One Fijian minister wrote to him from a distant corner of Bau Circuit, 'please send us a good supply of the lately-printed hymns, and if possible let two of your men come to teach the tunes to us. When the drum beats for practice not a young man or woman can be found at home; all are so eager to acquire the new melodies'.

Singing practice and choirs were among the few activities which permitted open fraternisation.

Village choirs became a feature of church life after the introduction of choir competitions. Robert Gibbons of Bua Circuit was probably the first to hold such an event, in 1927, and it proved a successful and popular innovation. Gibbons reported that the winning choir at the first competition, Lekutu, was 'ably led by a young woman of exceptional gifts and ability'. The choir contest resulted in growing membership of church choirs, intense rivalry between villages at the time of contests, a demand for people to teach new hymns and a decided improvement in church music. As interest grew missionaries

38 WNN, April and October 1877, 6.
41 Bua Circuit, Annual Report, 1927, F/6/1926-31; see also R.A. Gibbons to R.L. McDonald, 14 July 1927, and McDonald to Gibbons, 26 July 1927, F/1/1927.
42 See L.C.M. Donaldson to C.O. Lelean, 5 April 1937, F/3/p, NF.
responded to the request for hymns by making translations from the Methodist Hymn Book and other sources such as the Methodist School Hymnal, Alexander's hymns and Sankey's songs. In 1938, after years of preparation by C.M. Churchward, an enlarged Fijian hymn book was published.

It has been observed elsewhere that 'the characteristic form of worship among Fijians is not hymn-singing...but the making of prayers'. Personal invocation to an efficacious Christian God had deep links with traditional forms of worship involving the use of priests to present offerings and make supplication. As with membership of a choir, prayer meetings, which were often held independently of church services, encouraged the sense of belonging derived from a group activity with the added opportunity for participants to make individual contributions. Extempore prayers were used more frequently than structured prayers, the absence of any strict ritual producing an atmosphere of deep involvement. One sympathetic observer has left a vivid description of a twilight prayer-meeting on Bau during the time of Langham:

There was a 'dim religious light' in the great building which is used as a Church.... During a prayer by Mr Langham, I could not resist turning around and gasping at that kneeling, prostrate praying crowd... The shades of night falling around us...the earnest impassioned words of the missionary - the deep murmur that now and then ran through the crowd - showing how their attention was riveted, and how much their feelings sympathised with him.

The central feature of the Wesleyan service, often for its sheer length alone, was the sermon. Its form appealed to Fijian mission workers with their traditional community background of oratorical skill. The majority of Fijian preachers employed a narrow range of methods comprising biblical exposition illustrated with frequent analogies. Missionaries at the turn of the century stressed these

44 Richard Philip, 'Notes of a voyage to Fiji and two months residence there, 1872', NAF.
teaching methods believing that Fijians lacked 'the necessary training for deeper thought and the people were more easily instructed with that method'. Not till William Bennett introduced a more advanced course for Fijian theology students after 1909 were ministerial trainees confronted with intensive biblical criticism and theological argument.

The impact of a sermon, a highly personal form of communication, depended on the ability of a preacher to command the attention of his congregation. Joeli Nau, a Tongan minister, reportedly preached with 'fire and eloquence' from his Tavuki pulpit to the extent that the female portion of the congregation was reduced to 'violent fits of hysterical weeping, wailing as if in the very extremity of penitential woe'. Lorimer Fison's influence on Lakeba enabled him to preach successfully against disease-ridden and unsuitable European garments such as 'Trousers, coats, boots etc.' By contrast William Allen revealed his limited preaching qualities by carrying into the pulpit a bag of small, hard native fruit which would if necessary be deployed against any somnolent individual. From his experience of Wesleyan services Sir Arthur Gordon believed that the attendants were more interested in observing each other than listening to the sermon. Church services, as one of the few avenues for social interaction, were often the occasion for furtively arranged trysts. On the other hand sermons delivered on Sunday were often remembered and repeated in substance the following day, yet another church tradition preserved in Fiji.

45 W.E. Bromilow, Twenty Years Among Primitive Papuans, Epworth 1929, 33.
46 Briton, op.cit., 38.
47 Fison to B. Chapman, 5 June 1876, MON 104.
50 L. Thompson, Fijian Frontier, New York 1940, 49.
51 Gordon Cumming, At Home in Fiji, 148.
The structure of the church service changed little during the twentieth century. Some new innovations such as radio broadcasts brought added interest to services in outlying areas. But the old ways died hard. In 1915 Charles Lelean decided to abolish the time-honoured monitorial position of 'watchman', the stern individual whose job was to ensure an alert congregation by regular prodding of the less attentive. A day-school blackboard was placed at the front of the church on which were written the ominous words: 'Do not groan during the sermon. Do not shuffle your feet. Do not look about. Do not whisper. If anyone does these things he will be seized by the right ear and led outside, where he will weep and gnash his teeth'.

One missionary writing in 1923 could not conceal his amazement at the patience of his congregation:

The Fijians are a long-suffering people... At Galoa [Kadavu Circuit] on New Years Eve we had 6 sermons, 4 addresses by the Turagas [chiefs] and then the [missionary] had the nerve to preach after that.

In one area of Fiji, Lau, there developed a form of worship which assumed almost equal importance to the conventional church service as an outlet for religious expression. Called the polotu it was a form of song service that had its roots in Tongan Wesleyanism but managed to survive a reaction against Tongan religious influences that followed the years of Ma'afu's dominance in Lauan history.

52 D.F. Boorman to W. Green, 22 May 1940, F/1/1940.
53 NR, March 1915, 13. According to Brewster (op.cit., 225) the Fijian word tuirara was the old Fijian equivalent of the Master of Ceremonies which title the Wesleyan missionaries adopted for the steward who kept order in their assemblies. The word tuirara was also generalised to refer to church steward.
54 S. Alban to R.L. McDonald, 12 January 1923, F/1/1923.
55 In 1916, for instance, the Roko Tui Lau pronounced Tongan hymns as undesirable and initiated a school for choir leaders at Lakeba. (A.W. Amos to Small, 29 May 1916, F/1/1916). The Roko's action stemmed partly from his resentment of a Tongan Free Church rump on Lakeba and partly from the fact that Tongan hymns were simply no longer wanted. For many years a small Tongan community at Sawana, Lomaloma, preserved its identity by employing a Tongan minister or catechist. When the missionary Robert Green visited Sawana in 1931 he reported there was 'a good deal of real rivalry' between the Tongans and Fijians there, 'and one needs to be very careful not to offend them'. See Green, My Story, 237.
The polo tu differed from the orthodox church service in that the preacher played a minor role, the major participants being any number of groups, either families, choirs or whole villages, who rendered musical items as they approached and entered the church. One observer in 1888 was captivated by the haunting effect as each participating group drew nearer to the building, 'their wonderful music rising and falling in strong and sweet cadences'.

A missionary witnessing the polo tu forty years later was impressed by the spirit of egalitarianism which pervaded the meeting once all were gathered inside:

From now on it is a gathering of peers; there is no leader; no group has priority; age or rank or position may claim no rights... Items may include songs by individuals or groups; a reading from the Bible or a religious book or paper, exhortations, expositions, personal experiences, personal ideas.... The spirit of fellowship, competition and excitement make the wheels of time run smooth and fast even beyond the small hours of the morning and on to 4 a.m.

The polo tu owed its durability and popularity to the way in which it provided a controlled and recognised channel for religious emotionalism; also to the opportunities it provided for all ranks of the traditionally hierarchical Lauan society to participate on an equal basis, although one missionary was critical of the way in which younger church members were 'shut out by the big speeches of the old stagers'.

In function if not in form it filled the vacuum left by the decline of the 'love-feast'.

One village activity which helped to unite Fijians in their common religious experience was church building and the sectarian

56 W. Reed, Recent Wanderings in Fiji, London 1888, 48.
57 Green, My Story, 186-87.
58 T.N. Deller to Small, 23 July 1923, F/1/1923. 'A good many [at the Lomaloma polo tu] worked themselves up to a fever heat. They are very fond of them here and they are not without their good results'.
59 A.W. Amos to Small, 16 January 1913, F/1/1913.
60 The 'love-feast' was a prayer and thanksgiving meeting attended mainly by new converts at which each would relate his or her conversion experience. Introduced throughout the Pacific by the first missionaries and teachers as a means of mutual support, the love-feast declined in popularity as the church became established. In most areas of Fiji it was subsumed into the more institutionalised prayer meeting.
divisions in many villages in the late nineteenth century partly arose over disagreements relating to the erection of Wesleyan and Roman Catholic churches. The two largest and most conspicuous buildings in each village were the church and the chief's house and their condition reflected village pride. Both these buildings were accorded priority in any village construction programme sometimes to the detriment of the villagers' own dwellings. Missionary influence was less of a motivation to build a place of worship than a Fijian's traditional experience, where village temples were important not only for their religious function but often as a 'council-chamber and town-hall'. The erection of the church was a communal duty, undertaken with the chief's blessing and sometimes personal direction. In 1877, Bula Wailevu seconded forty men to assist the sixty young pastors-in-training in the construction of a 2,000 sq. ft. church at Wailevu. Every man in the district was levied 600 ft of coconut fibre towards the materials. At Ono-i-Lau in 1892 a new church, 84 ft long, was opened by the visiting missionary after only seventeen working days had been spent on it.

Where missionaries did have an influence was in their encouragement of villages that sought to build larger and more permanent churches. In 1876, captivated by the vision of St Philips in Sydney which he had seen only a year earlier, Frederick Langham gained Cakobau's support for a stone church on Bau, large enough to accommodate the 800 people that filled the existing native-style church every Sunday. From the outset the project was plagued with problems; the

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61 See Chapter 6.

62 Colonial Secretary to W.W. Lindsay, 25 September 1899, F/3/(b), MF. Such was the pride of Fijians in their church buildings that on two occasions - in 1916 at Motusa, Rotuma and in 1936 at Matanagata, Ba - church members seriously deliberated on whether to pull down the churches after they had been 'desecrated'. H.H. Roget to Small, 13 April 1915, F/1/1915 and H. Johnstone to C.O. Lelean, 8 December 1936, F/1/1936.

63 Calvert and Williams, Fiji and the Fijians, 174-75.

64 Fiji Records, vol.II, 354; [Heighway Family], 'Not as Men Build', The Story of W.A. Heighway of Fiji, 49.
supply of stone, procured from old house foundations and from the reefs, often ceased as a result of the island's commitment to government tax programmes; furthermore the stonemason was given to violent fits of drunkenness followed by long absences. In desperation Langham sought Sir Arthur Gordon's consent to the use of prisoners on Bau as paid labour while the plans of the church were altered to a simpler design, no longer the replica of St Philips which Langham desired. The Governor reluctantly permitted prison labour: 'I should do so more gladly' was his blunt remark 'were [the church] not so amazingly ugly!' The church was completed in 1882.65

After 1900, a twenty year period of intense church building took place. In the past many villages in any one year were required to repair existing churches or construct new ones, the result frequently of hurricane damage.66 What distinguished the two decades after 1900 was that Fijians were for the first time reluctant to build in traditional style, seeking instead more permanent materials for construction - weather-board, concrete or the more popular wooden walls, roofed with corrugated iron. During his years in Bau and Ra (1902-13), Charles Lelean noted that the people were no longer 'satisfied with native buildings'; there was a 'general feeling abroad' that each village should have a 'decent' church built from European materials.67 Between 1903 and 1923 over thirty new churches were opened ranging

65 Fiji Records, vol.IV, 203-04; Fison to J. Calvert, 21 July 1877 and F. Langham to J. Calvert, 30 July 1877, M.156, MMS. The church's exact date of completion or opening is uncertain but a memorial plaque in the church indicates that it was probably opened before the death of Cakobau (February 1883).

66 In 1881, twenty-one villages in Bau Circuit had to construct new churches after considerable hurricane damage. Minutes of Bau Circuit Quarterly Meeting, 11 April 1883, BAU/A/1, NF.

67 Lelean to Small, 29 December 1903. F/1/1904; Ra Circuit, Annual Report, 1907, MMSA, 57.
in cost from $200 to over $1,000 depending on size and type. Pews in the church also proved attractive, the demand for them stimulated by a spirit of emulation and satisfied by the new carpentry department of the Davuilevu Industrial Institute, a branch of the mission's educational facilities.

Commitment to a wood or concrete church involved considerable expense (although in a country plagued by hurricanes, most churches would have been regarded as useful refuges). There was no established procedure for the raising of money. Since churches were built on communally-owned land missionaries normally avoided advising or assisting the Fijians in financial matters although the enterprising Arthur Lelean invested money in government debentures on behalf of Waikava Methodists collecting for a new church. Usually a village would levy a cash sum from its adult males and if all contributed the church could open free of debt. This method was facilitated by the increase in cash income for Fijians which resulted from changes to the government tax system. There were other methods of fund raising. The church at Nabouwalu, opened in 1918, was financed by provincial lease money diverted to that purpose for at least one year. In 1907, during a

Missionaries reported new wooden churches at Gau, Dama, Tubou, Totoya, Moala, Nukunuku, Vakano, Nakaile, Verata, Vuci, Visama, Kuku, Nabukadogo, Boitaci, Daku (Kad.), Beqa (3), Lomanikoro, Narikoso, Blaugunu, Veci, Natuvu, Nabouwalu and concrete churches at Savana, Somosomo (Cross Memorial), Yanuca, Nacula, Tamasua, Waikava and Nailaga.

In 1908 William Brown tried to dissuade the people of Visama from purchasing pews 'but they must be like the Kuku and Vuci people and have seats', Brown to Small, 8 February 1908, F/1/1908. See also R.L. McDonald to Small, 3 August 1921, F/1/1921. When Ratu Rabici ordered pews for the Cross Memorial Church at Somosomo, opened in 1906, he asked that they 'be made at Davuilevu on the exact pattern of those in the Bau Church', Small to P.C. Nye, 12 February 1915, F/1/1915.

A.D. Lelean to Small, 15 July 1920, F/1/1920.


period when Fijians could dispose of their land, villagers in Ra Circuit were selling their lands to raise funds for churches, a method Charles Lelean, resident missionary, tacitly approved while admitting it was 'of doubtful benefit to the land owners and their descendants'.

With missionary counsel absent from the financial side of church building, the way was open for European entrepreneurs, the honest and the unprincipled. A few planters made exorbitant profits from contracting to build churches. Some villages, their anxiety for a new church outweighing their better judgment, accepted offers of credit from European firms, a risky policy which missionaries disapproved of but chose not to prevent. In one case a church remained unopened though completed for four years because the villages were unable to settle their debts. The Colonial Sugar Refining Company also entered into the church building business when, desirous of expansion, they managed to get a piece of river land from the people of Verata in return for a wooden church.

As European materials achieved popularity in the building of a church so too did imported ideas of design and architecture. It was inevitable that the predominantly wooden churches that sprang up throughout Fiji in the early 1900s should bear the stamp and character of the colonial chapels which the missionaries themselves had attended. (Just as the Methodists chose to make the simple but austere church, a symbol of their presence so the Roman Catholic priests, trained in France, built lavish neo-gothic structures of stone and coral to strike an indelible impression for their denomination.) Only slowly did the pendulum begin its swing back to the point where a church could express

73 Ra Circuit, Annual Report, 1907, MMSA, 57.
74 See the case of A.H. Simpson, a planter on Kadavu in 1868, and the village of Tavuki, M/5 MF; also W. Brown to Small, 15 July 1907, F/1/1907.
75 C. Bleazard to Small, 12 December 1904 and Small to Bleazard, 14 January 1905, F/1/1905; R.L. McDonald to H. Chambers, 5 December 1923, F/1/1924.
76 W. Brown to Small, 14 February 1907, F/1/1907.
120

in its form the culture that was Fijian. In 1935 the simplicity and
beauty of 'native-style' churches was splendidly married to the durability
of European building methods when the Cross and Cargill Memorial Church
was opened at Tubou at Lakeba. The church had first been conceived in
1926 by Alifereti Finau, Roko Tui Lau, but the depression held up
fund-raising efforts. By 1934 a sufficient sum of $1,500 had been
raised; in that year Finau died but his relative, Ratu Lala Sukuna,
took up the dying chief's wish to have the church completed by October
1935, exactly one hundred years after the arrival on Lakeba of Cross
and Cargill. Sukuna was eager to build a 'semi-native' style church
and he was supported by the missionary on Lakeba, Robert Green, who
had been critical of his mission's neglect of Fijian architecture
in favour of 'a fine lot of ugly barns'.

Lauan craftsmen were
summoned to Lakeba from throughout the island group and under Sukuna's
direction worked around the clock to complete the church. The memorial
church's concrete framework was camouflaged by vesi logs from southern
Lau which formed the beams of the roof and were interlaced by narrow
laths from the trunk of the coconut tree. Reeds and mugimagi covered
the bare concrete walls and the pillars were faced with wood from the
yaka tree. Pegun in September 1934 the church took eleven months to
complete and was opened in time for the centenary celebrations.

While there were features of Methodist practice that were
readily adapted to Fijian village life and while the church generally
succeeded in complementing, augmenting and even strengthening the
social structure, Methodist following suffered after 1900 as a result
of the narrow moral emphasis that predominated within the Mission once
its establishment was secure. The stress on an observable code of
behaviour derived from the class meeting where, from the 1880s onwards,
outward conformity to a set of rules rather than inward spiritual
conviction developed as the main judge of church membership.

77 R.H. Green to R.L. McDonald, 18 May 1934, F/1/1934.
78 Green, Ny Story, 299-301.
Wesleyanism had always emphasised the value of sober Christian conduct: John Wesley's General Rules indicated that the search for 'salvation' must be reflected in the 'fruits' of those who met in the class meeting. The nineteenth century Pacific was not a replica of Wesley's England although early missionaries applied his moral code as comprehensively as they were able. In Fiji the establishment of fundamental Christian laws was made easier by the existence in traditional Fijian religion of laws against which Fijians sometimes offended, for instance the Lawa Ruku (law of ancestor worship). Parts of the decalogue were based on universal sanctions—prohibitions of murder, adultery and theft did not arise solely from biblical authority. By the late 1870s these prohibitions were accepted and some reinforced by secular authority: through the exercise of discipline in their own class meetings, the Wesleyans assisted in the introduction of Western justice.

But what was initially a justifiable effort to combat by ecclesiastical laws the influence of a 'heathen' religion, developed after the 1880s into an unnecessarily rigorous, even puritanical, rule of restraint. Responsibility for this trend did not lie with the missionary alone. Fijian converts often made law out of the missionary's mouth; as one government officer noted in 1894, it was the Fijians who made a 'fetish of the Sabbath':

A Native will hesitate to work on Sunday for even the most necessary or merciful of purposes, but nine-tenths of them spend the greater part of the day in telling or listening to scandalous and filthy talk that should make the rafters drip slime.

At the same time it is difficult to accept at face value Frederick Langham's

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79 Gilson, op.cit., 102-06; Gunson, op.cit., 305-08.

80 Brewster, op.cit., 98.


82 J. Stewart, in C.S.O. 1894/1842.
protestations to Sir Arthur Gordon that the 'puritanic strictness' found in the Wesleyan rules 'was introduced by the natives themselves', the missionaries, by contrast, endeavouring to teach 'a more liberal interpretation of the law'. Actions spoke louder than words.

Langham himself, in an oft-repeated display, reproved and over-ruled a fellow missionary for permitting a man to be suspended rather than expelled. In matters of church law Fijians took their cue from the missionary and the deluge of petty district rules that engulfed Fiji in the last two decades of the nineteenth century leaves no doubt as to the 'liberality' of missionary attitudes.

Missionaries gave considerable attention to matters of morality bringing their own cultural bias to bear on the question. The concept of 'sin' became closely associated in their minds with what they saw as liberal sexual attitudes. According to Wallace Deane, factors contributing to the Fijian's 'immoral' state were climate, social environment and an 'animal nature, like his summer days, hot, passionate and over-mastering'. In their vigorous campaign to check 'immorality', missionaries prohibited tattooing, hair cutting and hair dressing between the sexes (unless married), the wearing of flowers in the hair, traditional swimming games and nocturnal dances. On Rotuma in the 1880s all the above prohibitions were enforced together with attendance at so-called 'singing-houses' and the equally popular 'native wrestling' competitions.

Expulsions from church membership for reasons of 'immorality' often made up half of the annual total in any one circuit. Sometimes it was higher. In not all of these cases was the charge proven, but

84 Langham to H. Worrall, 22 July 1886, MOM 295.
86 Minutes of Rotuma Circuit Quarterly Meetings, 1881-84, MOM 329.
'connivance at immoral intercourse' was deemed sufficient cause for expulsion. There had to be no suggestion of taint on members of the class meeting. Those expelled lost their status as member for at least a year, usually longer, and then if they requested, would be considered for re-admission to membership 'on trial'. Small's policy, one which he impressed on younger and less experienced missionaries, was to leave backsliders in the cold for considerably longer than a year. 'Our object should be to strengthen public opinion on this question of morality and one very effective way to do that is to narrow the doorway of church membership to such offenders'. The risk in Small's argument was that the door might be so narrow that 'repentant' individuals would lose interest in re-entering.

The attitude of the missionaries produced both contradiction and conflict. For instance most of them were emphatic that 'impurity' was mainly the result of the close proximity of the sexes in each house, yet early missionaries had encouraged the abandonment of separate men's accommodation in favour of a 'Christian home' where all members of the family resided together. No missionary volunteered acquaintance with the fact that half of all adultery cases which appeared before the courts were offences between concubitants, those men and women who in traditional Fijian kinship were betrothed to each other. 'No sooner is a girl married than her concubitant comes and claims her and so strong is custom that she seldom repulses him'. At this point, the inculcation of a new moral code by missionaries came dangerously close to setting Eurocentric Christian values against the social structure upon which the Mission had been reliant for its success. Fijians responded to the narrowing moral outlook of missionaries by rejecting membership and the disciplinary sanctions available to the clergy.

The irreconcilability of some mission attitudes and Fijian social constraints was again demonstrated when, as part of its campaign

87 Kadavu Circuit, Annual Report, 1897, MMSA, liii.
88 Small to C.O. Lelean, 27 March 1903, F/1/1903.
89 Thomson, The Fijians..., 187, 236; Bau and Viwa Circuit, Annual Report, 1907, MMSA, lxxx.
to stem what it saw as moral decline in the community, the Mission attempted to reduce the rate of illegitimacy. On Rotuma in the early 1880s a mission rule forbade church members from adopting an illegitimate child (gone-ni-sala), while any single woman bearing an illegitimate child was prevented from applying for church membership until the child was six months old. 90

The issue emerged in Fiji when the Bau Circuit Quarterly Meeting of September 1882, in the hope of 'strengthening public opinion against the sin of adultery', decided to adopt a traditional Fijian custom and use it for its own purposes. The meeting ordered church members on threat of expulsion not to recognise an illegitimate child with ceremonial presentations, including attendance at the solevu (feast of celebration) for the child. 91 If missionaries were guilty of selectively restoring a custom for their own ends (having rejected much in traditional Fijian society), they placed church members in an invidious position with this particular ruling. English concepts of legitimacy had little relevance to devout Fijians who were, for instance, not in a position to condemn a chief (the customary fount of law) having children out of wedlock. 92 The rule, in practice, created confusion. It was interpreted by over-zealous teachers in Lomaiviti to mean that illegitimate children 'were not to be attended to by members of Society'. 93 Within a few months the Roko Tui Lomaiviti was informing the Council of Chiefs that 'female members of the Wesleyan denomination were commanded to abstain from either suckling or giving presents'; the chiefs were irate: 'the nurture of these children is not a matter to be judged by the lotu', the council protested. 94

90 Minutes of Teacher's Meeting, 21 December 1881 and 11 January 1882, MON 329.
91 The meeting noted, 'According to Fijian custom, the birth of a legitimate child was welcomed by the kin of both parents by presentations of food and property whereas in the case of illegitimate births, though mother and child were cared for, this was done quietly no ceremonial presentations being made'. See Report of Fiji District Committee re Alleged Neglect of Mothers of Illegitimate Children, M/14 MF.
92 See Small to Colonial Secretary, 30 November 1900, F/1/1900.
93 Report re Alleged Neglect of Mothers..., M/14, MF.
Despite opposition the Mission persisted in its efforts to change community attitudes to gone-ni-sala even though the intention of their rules did not always coincide with the practice. Responding to the concern expressed by the Council of Chiefs and the Government, the Mission emphasised that no disciplinary measures were being employed against those church members who maintained communication with the mother of an illegitimate child; at the same time at least one missionary, W.A. Heighway, was advising a fellow superintendent of the district rule that 'members have nothing to do with gone-ni-sala nor help the parents in the keeping of them'. Further, Heighway refused to baptise these children till they were ten years of age, a lapse of time calculated according to mission rules, but coinciding, as one government officer cynically observed, with the age 'when they begin to give towards the va'aka missionary'.

Missionaries were not solely preoccupied with matters of sexual impropriety; they had clear-cut attitudes to the consumption of imported liquor. The 1870 District Meeting decreed that all officeholders from European missionaries to class leaders and students, were to abstain from drinking 'intoxicating liquors except when prescribed as a Medicine or when given in a religious ordinance'. Members of the church found guilty of drinking 'English grog' were expelled. Missionaries welcomed a law introduced in the years of the Cakobau Provisional Government, restricting the sale of intoxicating liquor to Fijians but deplored its abuse particularly in areas of European population. After 1874 the missionaries generally supported the

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95 W.A. Heighway to H. Worrall, 14 August 1897, MOM 295.

96 C.S.O. 1900/4642 esp. Heighway to Small, 4 December 1900 and minute by Kadavu Provincial Inspector, 18/12/1900. For 'Vaka missionary' i.e., vakamisoneri (annual church collection), see Chapter 9 below. Heighway possibly chose the age of ten in keeping with the mission rule that a person expelled for adultery could be denied membership for at least ten years. By all accounts it was a very severe church penalty taking into consideration the relative innocence of the child when compared with the alleged moral 'guilt' of the parents.

97 MOM 11.

decision of the colonial authorities to operate the sale of liquor under a permit system, since, in the words of Arthur Webb, 'only a few high-caste chiefs, by special permission can "go to the dogs"'. 99 The restrictions on liquor supply ensured a fairly subdued prohibition campaign, when compared to those in Australia and New Zealand around the turn of the century, but in 1921 following 'continuous agitation for reform' led by the mission, public bars, which had been open for three hours on Sunday, were closed on that day and business on other days of the week cut from 16 hours to 12. 100

If the consumption of 'English grog' was a relatively straightforward moral problem, as far as church members were concerned, the mission raised a far more contentious question over its yaqona (Fijian kava) and tobacco policy. In 1862, yaqona was prohibited to church members in Fiji by Joseph Waterhouse and ten years later in Rotuma by John Osborne, 101 but these teetotal movements appeared to lapse and were replaced by a system of prohibition for church office-holders and voluntary abstinence for members, extending to tobacco as well as yaqona.

The rationale for this mission policy, vigorously pursued by Frederick Langham and some of his right-hand men, including William Lindsay and William Heighway, and supported with no apparent lack of enthusiasm by many Fijian ministers, is difficult to determine accurately. 102 In his private notebook Langham revealed concern with the physical side-effects of yaqona, especially when consumed in excess and in this he was supported by the current literature of the day. Rather than allow the injudicious minority among office-holders to become 'beastly drunk'

100 Small to C.M. Gordon, 10 October 1921, F/1/1921.
or lua (vomit) and thus disgrace themselves and by association the mission, Langham preferred to ban 'that disgusting and harmful habit' altogether. In concurrence with Langham's views, Heighway was also convinced that tobacco smoking and yagona drinking were 'the beginning of familiarity which has led on from bad to worse ending in immorality'.

Other reasons for mission disapproval may have been the traditional religious significance of yagona and the desire of the Wesleyans to differentiate their membership from that of Roman Catholics who allowed both the 'pipe' and the 'bowl'.

The drive for voluntary abstinence among church members gained momentum during the 1880s. Temperance and Anti-Tobacco Societies were commenced in Kadavu, Bau, Viwa and Lau Circuits. Throughout Fiji, pledges against yagona and tobacco were recorded from church members. In Bau Circuit, extending from Lomaiviti in the east to Matailobau in the west, the pledge movement, fired by Langham's fanatical zeal, recorded an increase from 745 pledges against yagona in 1886 to over 4,000 in 1894 and from 413 against tobacco to 3,500 in the same period. One government officer reported enthusiastic support in inland Viti Levu for the pledge movement, or 'Blue Ribbon Army', so nicknamed because of the stars, medals and blue ribbons worn by the abstainers.

103 Langham to G. Brown, 18 November 1887, WAN, April 1888, 6. In his notebook (B.289 ML) Langham records a paragraph from Dr Forbes' book, Two Years in Fiji, p.194, which stated that 'if taken in excess it [yagona] causes nausea, headache and partial paralysis of the muscular system'.

104 [Heighway Family], op.cit., 123.

105 The first bowl of yagona was traditionally poured on the ground as a libation to ancestral spirits. Yagona was also used to appease angry gods, particularly the shark god, Dakawaqa. See the remarkable account of Arthur Small's encounter with this mighty fish as told by Mrs W. McHugh, Small's daughter, Memoirs, PMB 156, Pac.Hist.; see also W.R. Geddes, Deuba: A Study of a Fijian Village, Wellington 1945, 43-44. For reference to Roman Catholic use see F. Langham to H. Worrall, 20 December 1888, MOM 295.

106 Bau Circuit, Annual Report, 1889, 1894, MMSA, and Minutes of Bau Circuit Quarterly Meeting, 1887-1901, BAU/A/2, MF.

The chiefs, meeting in council, were just as worried but more discerning than the mission, about trends in yaqona consumption. They isolated the major problem as the extension of yaqona drinking to 'a class of persons who never drank yaqona before', in particular young men and women, and women who were suckling children. To these classes of people they proposed a ban on drinking. To all others they counselled moderate consumption and suggested the confinement of yaqona drinking to the houses of the mataqali heads.

While the mission judged the success of its abstinence campaign by the quantity rather than the class of people who pledged, it received strong criticism from quarters least expected. George Brown, Overseas Missions Secretary, argued the policy was encouraging hypocrisy, excessive discipline by some office-bearers and ill-feeling by Fijians towards refugee Tongan church employees who were not required to take the pledge. Brown cautioned Langham over the latter's inquisitorial examination of church officers suspected of either drinking or smoking and of the Chairman's refusal to employ Tongans who did not take the pledge:

I do wish my dear Langham you would not make so much of this matter. I am sure it will fail and I really do not believe that either of the practices amounts to such an as you think...Don't let us make religion such a hard ter to the poor natives. You ought also to see the danger there is for at any time you may have a man who smokes go down to you, and a native may surely be forgiven if he thinks the habit which Mr Fison indulged in with impunity should not be severely condemned or punished in him.109

To William Heighway, who was known to have both suspended and expelled from church membership, on the invalid grounds of 'lying',

108 Proceedings of the Council of Chiefs, Macuata, May 1883, Resolution XIV.

109 G. Brown to Langham, 14 February 1889, MOM 40, Lorimer Fison was in Fiji from 1860 to 1871 and 1875 to 1884. Fison was one among a group of missionaries (A.J. Webb was another) who do not appear to have supported the mission campaign against yaqona and tobacco. By the same token there is no evidence to suggest that they argued against pursuing the campaign. In 1895 the Fiji mission was again compromised when G.H. Hewitt, a smoker, was dispatched to Fiji as a missionary. Cf. Gunson, op.cit., 305-06 for earlier divisions between missionaries in Fiji and Tonga over smoking.
those Fijians who had broken their pledge, Brown wrote sharply:
'there is no authority either by our Laws or by our usage which will
justify you in expelling from church membership anyone who has broken
his or her pledge...I have as you know very little sympathy with the
crusade against tobacco and yaqona not because I smoke myself I assure
you but because I firmly believe that it is doing harm to us and to
many of our people'.

Brown's criticisms were echoed by David Wilkinson of Naitaga,
a retired government officer sympathetic to the general mission cause,
who exposed the hypocrisy of the pledge campaign. Fijians, he claimed,
were speaking of the frequent suspensions and expulsions of pledge-
breakers:

as cooling down - killing out the lotu - of the men, who
are good men and true, who cannot give up their weed or
res. at compulsion in such things while the cringing
sycophant retains his place + the good will of his Talatala
tho' his abuse of him and the prohibitions is the strongest
and most virulent. One may often see 'Tabu ni vaka ko
tavako kei na yaqona e na vale oqo [It is forbidden to drink
yaqona or smoke tobacco in this house] yet the inmate will
spend hours both day and night card playing with which
gambling is very frequently associated.

Wilkinson's words, harsh yet honest, would have been a bitter
blow to Langham, delivered as they were to the last meeting in Fiji
over which the Chairman would preside, and there was unconcealed irony
in Wilkinson's claim, plausible yet unsubstantiated to this day, that
the death of Adi Kuila, unerring chiefly stalwart of Wesleyanism
on Bau, was 'caused or accelerated by enforced abstinence from Tobacco'.

With Langham's departure in 1895, the abstinence movement lost
its impetus, a commentary itself on the extent to which it relied for

110 G. Brown to Heighway, 21 September 1898, NOM 46.

111 D. Wilkinson, 'Memorandum to the Chairman and members of the
Wesleyan Mission District Meeting assembled at Bua 1894', NOM 338.

112 Ibid.
its impact on the personal influence of one man. Mission policy soon changed. In 1898 the Ra Circuit Annual Meeting decided that, while the tabu on yaqona should remain, teachers and preachers should not be expelled from office for smoking. By their argument, tobacco smoking was not regarded as a 'sin'; it appears that yaqona still was. In 1903, on the initiative of Arthur Small, the District Meeting lifted the remaining restrictions and encouraged voluntary restraints for office-bearers as well as for members. Accustomed as office-holders and members were to living by the rule-book, some who had recently taken the pledge disliked being left with a free decision as to abstinence or not, while others quickly reverted to the time-honoured tradition of yaqona drinking and smoking, a trend that however much Small regretted, he realised was symptomatic of a new mission era. In a moment of self-examination and soul-searching, possibly influenced by George Brown's persuasive arguments, Small confided to Charles Lelean, the latter sceptical of a more liberal policy:

I think we missionaries are in some measure to blame for placing these unfortunate pledge-breakers in the position in which they find themselves. We made the pledge too awfully solemn. In our zeal we may sometimes bind burdens on the shoulders of the people that never should be placed there.

Small's remarks highlighted the cultural rift which separated missionary and Fijian attitudes to the nature of church membership; while the church hierarchy chose to judge the quality of its members on

113 Note the following instance in Langham to H. Worrall, 26 December 1894, MOM 295. 'We are to have a big cricket match today - and it was to be accompanied by a big yaqona drinking as well. I got hold of the lady who was to lead the young ladies in mama [the chewing of yaqona] and she at once said she would have nothing to do with it... Then I sent to the young chiefs and vakamasuta'd [pleaded with] them and told them I should rejoice if they went in for Tea and Sugar instead and I would help them. But if not I would write to the Roko and in the next Mg (Sunday) I would preach a blazing sermon on this subject - would read Na Nata [the government newsletter] with the account of the disgraceful grog affair at Lakeba'. Langham's persuasion succeeded and he concluded his letter, '...we are now cutting up 20 Loaves of Bread and Butter and Ham Sandwiches and Tea ad lib'.

114 W.W. Lindsay to H. Worrall, 2 November 1898, MOM 295.

115 Small to Lelean, 12 January 1904, F/1/1904.
largely moral grounds, the latter indicated their disillusionment with this policy by a declining commitment. The response to the Methodist campaign on moral standards was partly reflected in changing church statistics: from 1910 to 1945 the proportion of church attendants in the entire Fijian population dropped from 91% to 87% but membership as a percentage of church attendance plummeted from 44% to 23%. Unsatisfactory as statistics are in revealing change, the general characteristic of Methodist affiliation in Fiji was clear; church membership became less popular but not necessarily church adherence. This pattern, reflected neither in New South Wales, New Zealand nor in New Guinea Islands Methodism, owed its explanation to the Fijian context rather than to any broad or general secularising influence applicable to church attendance in the twentieth century.

Features of Fijian life may partly explain declining membership but are probably more accurately indicators of less regular, but not decreasing church adherence: greater individual freedom of movement between villages and provinces, challenges to the mission life-style from a variety of European influences, the more sceptical response to Christianity from a better-educated younger generation including a receptiveness to literature other than that provided by the mission.

116 According to official statistics the Fijian population rose from 87,096 in 1911 to 117,488 in 1946 while in the same period Methodist adherents rose from 78,542 to 102,567. Church statistics record that between 1910 and 1949 membership declined from 33,959 to 28,915. Figures taken from Government Census Records (Legislative Council Papers) and MOM Uncat. 1905-53, File 1950.

117 Church membership rose appreciably in each of these three areas while church adherence declined in New South Wales, rose in New Guinea and remained stationary in New Zealand. See Minutes of the General Conference of the Methodist Church of Australasia, 1907, 48; N. Threlfall, One Hundred Years in the Islands: The Methodist Church in New Guinea Islands, Papua New Guinea, 1975; E.W. Hawes, Coming of Age: New Zealand Methodism 1913-72, Auckland 1974, 9, 75, 107.

118 Macnaught, Mainstream to Millpond?, 239.

119 See, for example, S. Radomodomo to Small, n.d., F/1/1903. 'The whites do not respect Sunday – the factories are open, build boats on Sunday, play cards, drink and are lazy on Sunday'.

120 See Fiji District, Annual Report, 1914, MMSA.
and the growing strength of alternative religious denominations. 121
Undoubtedly these factors contributed to what one missionary described 
as 'the growing carelessness and neglect of public worship'. 122 Yet 
that complaint was not new. Attendance at church may have been 
ininfrequent but social pressure and obligation ensured that, like the 
circuit of Kadavu in 1935, 'there are none who at some time or other 
do not attend church'. 123

It was the severity of church rules that took the greatest 
toll of members and discouraged re-entry to the class meeting. No 
longer were missionaries able to report a healthy membership growth 
after losses through 'unworthy conduct' had been counted. 124 Instead 
in the 1920s one young missionary was attending to long-standing 
casualties of a strict church system:

In my services I have had quite a number of results 
from amongst those who once were members but have 
gone wrong and been put out... Some of them have been 
out for 10, 15 and in one case over 30 years. 125

Some church rules had outlived any usefulness or intention they originally 
had. The issue of illegitimacy was more of an embarrassment to 
missionary than to church member, signalled by the attendance of not 
only members but also all the local class leaders at the solevu to 
Ratu Tevita Ululakeba's first child. 126 Could virtually a whole 
community be expelled from membership without making mockery of the 
system? Furthermore, mission policy towards the baptism of illegitimate 
children was confused, some missionaries moderating their outlook in

121 Both Roman Catholic and Seventh Day Adventist Missions increased 
their following between 1911 and 1946, see Chapter 6.

122 C.O. Lelean to Small, 19 June 1912, F/1/1912.

123 G.S. Crouch to R.L. McDonald, 2 July 1935, F/1/1935.

124 See Kadavu Circuit, Annual Reports, 1913, 1914 and Rewa Circuit, 
Annual Report, 1913, MNSA.

125 S. Albon to R.L. McDonald, 29 March 1926, F/1/1926.

the face of Fijian pressure and agreeing to perform the ceremony but usually not in the church, others holding out in the fear that concession would be interpreted as weakness. On Rotuma in 1919 the recently appointed missionary, P.M. Waterhouse, objected to the denial of baptism for illegitimate children:

We have no such rule in N.S.W. The child is not to blame. Here is a case quite as bad. I married a couple one week, the baby was born about a week later and baptised about three weeks from the wedding day. No one objects to that.

The fall in membership reflected the increasing tension between a missionary-inspired standard of church conduct and the attitudes of a rank and file church following less inclined to accede to the dictates of an arbitrary system. From 1925 when Fijians took up with enthusiasm the taralala, a dance based on European styles, church leaders overreacted. Convinced that the mission and not the individual was still the guardian of morality, they banned the dance to church members. Inevitably expulsions followed. If the missionaries felt that Fijians 'in their stage of development' were not ready for the taralala, this attitude revealed limitations in their own thinking rather than in the Fijian character.

George Brown, despairing of the Fijian Mission in 1898, succinctly highlighted the dilemma which confronted it then:

127 R.L. McDonald to Small, 20 August 1920, F/1/1920; Small to R.H. Green, 18 April 1922, F/1/1922 and H. Chambers to H. Johnstone, 20 March 1930, CAK/A/1/(a), MF.

128 P.M. Waterhouse to Small, 30 October 1919, F/1/1920.

129 R.L. McDonald to H. Chambers, 13 April 1926, F/1/1926: 'Under certain conditions and with certain people "Tralala" might be harmless enough, but with these people in their stage of development, it is certainly a menace and our Native Ministers and other agents must be instructed to discourage it amongst their people'. See also R.H. Green to McDonald, 5 February 1925, F/1/1925; H. Chambers to McDonald, 1 April 1926, F/1/1926; R.L. Gibbons to R.L. McDonald, 22 January 1931 and 25 July 1931, F/1/1931; Chambers to McDonald, 10 June 1933, F/1/1933; G.S. Crouch to McDonald, 2 July 1935, F/1/1935. A European commentator described the taralala as a gay, playful dance, accompanied at times by a 'little rib-tickling' but essentially a 'happy and innocent function'. W.R. Geddes, Deuba: A Study of a Fijian Village, Wellington 1945, 16.
Fiji is changing and the Fijian of today is not the Fijian of days gone by who accepted everything which the talatala said. Depend upon it we must educate the conscience of the Fijians (a hard task) and he must give up certain things or abstain from certain acts not because the talatala says so or because the base [Annual Meeting] decrees it but because he feels in his heart that his spiritual life is injuriously affected.130

The task Brown outlined was given low priority by the mission hierarchy in the twentieth century. New wine continued to pour into old casks and to some extent the mission lost touch with its people. The type of commitment demanded for church membership was not the commitment Fijians were prepared to take or needed. While the communal foundations, social role and position of the church, supported by colonial policies of social preservation, ensured that most Fijians remained loyal to the faith of their fathers, the excessive restrictions and discipline practised on church members in the decades following 1874 resulted in the status of 'member' proving undesirable. A quiet revolt took place, directed against the feature of church life which, more than any other, threatened to undermine Fijian communality. The majority of Fijians continued to support the various rituals of Methodism but avoided subjecting themselves to the narrow confines of membership.

130 G. Brown to W.A. Heighway, 21 September 1898, MOM 46.
COMMENTING in 1847 on the impact of Christianity among Fijians, John Hunt remarked laconically that when they renounced paganism they were 'not so much convinced that their gods were false as that ours is true'.

Hunt's observation neatly abbreviated the religious conflict that arose from culture contact, a situation which Fijians resolved with less trauma than missionaries. Wesleyan Christianity, a powerful symbol of European intrusion, gained a following from chiefs and people for a variety of reasons but their nominal acceptance of it did not require rejection of a traditional spiritual world, with its complex relationships between the human and divine. Both on the Lau island of Vulaga and in the hilly Soloira district of Viti Levu, the first generation of Christian converts conducted solemn farewell ceremonies to their displaced deities. It was an essential propitiatory service, performed so that the old gods would not be offended and, although relegated, might be recalled if the new lotu were unsatisfactory.

From the Fijian point of view, there was latitude within Christianity to allow for accommodation with traditional beliefs. The worshippers of Degei, legendary supreme god and creator of Fiji, did not initially look upon the Christian God as a rival; 'Degei is the

* This chapter is necessarily limited to a study of continuing traditional beliefs and the nativist movements of Fiji, within a specifically Methodist or mission framework. Much more could be written on the general subject of indigenous cults on which there is a substantial literature.

1 Hunt to General Secretaries, 2 December 1847, A.2813, ML.

true God: Jehovah is the true God; Therefore Jehovah is Degei' was their logical deduction. The new theology's acceptance of good and evil spiritual forces gave scope to Fijian supernatural expression though there were features which served only to confuse. The mission labelling of all ancestral spirits in the world of the Fijian as tevoro - an introduced word for devil - was assimilated with difficulty particularly as the word for the Christian God - Kalou - had been the general traditional term for spiritual beings, including spirits of dead people.

For many Fijians, Christian beliefs threatened an inherited world view and respect for ancestral spirits was too deeply ingrained to be rejected outright. The Baki or, more correctly, Nanga ceremony of initiation and harvest celebration, performed in a number of towns on the Wainimala river, was still practised in the early 1880s. The first coastal teachers in the head town of Narokorokoyawa vigorously opposed the ceremony partly because of the free sexual associations which they believed took place during the rites and partly because of its connection with pre-Christian spirit belief. But the participants objected to outside interference and spying. They protested at attempts to suppress it claiming that 'the Baki is as important as the Lotu and that if they cease from it they will die'. Lorimer Fison confidently claimed in 1884 that the Nanga was extinct, due in his opinion to mission pressure; it is possible however that the secret ceremony survived till at least 1900.

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3 Waterhouse, op.cit., 303.
6 Fison, op.cit., 15, n.1; Lester, op.cit., 118.
While the Nanga appeared to succumb relatively quickly in the face of Christian and European influences, another more widespread traditional practice called Luve-ni-wai and the closely related rite of Kalou-rere provided greater resistance to the challenge of the lotu. These celebrations, both magical and religious in character, involved only males (mainly youths) and were performed in the hope of acquiring mana or mystical authority through spirit possession. The practice of Luve-ni-wai generally occurred near a beach to enable the participants to call up minor spirits from the ocean (luve ni wai, lit. children of the water). A magiti or feast would be prepared and meke performed in the hope of enticing spirits to enter the individuals at the ceremony. Evidence of possession was seen in the gradual progression from trembling and twitching to violent shaking after which the person would speak in jerky sentences announcing the name of the spirit and the mana which it was imparting. These powers included prophecy, healing and sometimes sorcery. Those who showed evidence of possession exercised considerable influence within the community and, except for the practitioners of sorcery, were sought after and respected for their mana.7

Mission scholars of Fijian culture such as Thomas Williams saw no appreciable difference between Luve-ni-wai and Kalou-rere and subsequent generations of missionaries mistakenly adopted this viewpoint. There were, in fact, variations. Luve-ni-wai was practised in coastal settlements; Kalou-rere in inland districts. Although the spirits involved in both rites were the same, part of the celebrations of Kalou-rere involved the use of a spirit's protective powers to withstand injury from weapons of any kind:

As they persuade themselves that the god has entered them, they present themselves to the vuninduvu [leader of the ceremony] to be struck on the top of the abdomen, believing that if the god is in them they cannot be wounded by the axe, or spear, or musket.8

This belief in spirit-bestowed immortality distinguished Kalou-rere

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7 Lester, op.cit., 128-34; Williams and Calvert, op.cit., 200-01.
8 Williams and Calvert, ibid. See also the amusing though tragic case related by Webb in a letter to Gordon, Fiji Records, vol.1, 513-16.
from Luve-ni-wai and associated it more closely with the influential syncretic cult of Tuka, a movement which was strongest in inland Viti Levu and which also claimed to bestow immortality on its followers. 9

The early missionaries tolerated Kalou-rere, regarding it as a comparatively harmless 'orgy' devoid of any 'pollution or licentiousness'. 10  The more pressing tasks of Christian evangelism preoccupied the minds of Williams and his contemporaries though they criticised the tendency of Kalou-rere practices to encourage idleness (the ceremony sometimes extending over two weeks), debilitate the participants (who often deprived themselves of proper food) and permit the risk of injury. 11  With the spread of nominal Christian belief among Fijians after 1874, missionary attitudes to Kalou-rere and Luve-ni-wai changed. Their disapproval stemmed from the traditional spirit links of the ceremonies, together with possible effects among the people in the light of Maori extremist movements in New Zealand, such as Hauhauism. During a virtual campaign of repression, the missionaries expelled church members who participated in the practices, blaming them for a wide range of ill-effects including crime, 'lust', deteriorating churches, poorly-treated teachers and even impending revolt. 'In this seemingly harmless craze', declared William Lindsay, 'is the germ of future evil, not only to the Church but also to the State'. 12  The major effect of mission opposition was to drive their adversaries underground.

Those mission agents in the most invidious position were the village teachers. Dependent on the village for their sustenance, visited infrequently by missionaries, inadequately trained in refuting such practices and often sympathetic with them in view of their own

9  Lester, op. cit., 117 and see below 150ff.
10  Williams and Calvert, op. cit., 201.
11  Ibid.
12  Viwa Circuit, Annual Report, 1882. See also Viwa Circuit, Annual Report, 1886, 1889 and Rewa Circuit, Annual Report, 1889, 1890, HMSA; W. E. Bromilow, Twenty Years Among Primitive Papuans, Epworth 1929, 37; L. Fison to J. Calvert, 22 February 1884, N/140, HMS.
background, they chose the only way out by reconciling themselves to the old and the new. It is not surprising that in 1908 the headmaster of the government school for sons of chiefs reported that the majority of the young men believed in Luve-ni-wai. Furthermore he had been told that:

natives say Luve-ni-wai get their powers from the God that the Missionaries taught them to believe in... They have also told me that there are native teachers who teach them this doctrine. 13

Sometimes when zealous mission agents strongly denounced Kalou-rere ceremonies, annoyed villagers demonstrated their anger at being informed on to government authorities by seceding from Methodism. 14

Government officers appreciated any information on Kalou-rere from mission teachers. The colonial authorities generally regarded it as a harmless pastime - 'youths looking for excitement' was Thurston’s summation 15 - but occasionally firm prohibitive action was required. In the mid-1880s the elders of the Soloira tribe told A.B. Joske, government commissioner for the interior, that Luve-ni-wai practices had got out of hand among all the young men and boys. The acceptable activity of 'intriguing against and annoying those in office', clearly an important outlet for those too young to be accorded a voice in tribal matters, had reached a level where the chiefs were losing considerable prestige. They asked for Joske's assistance and received it; forty-four youths were flogged. 16

In 1894 Kalou-rere ceremonies were openly practised for over two months in sections of Senaqqa district on Vanua Levu as part of a protest by the people against their payment of taxes through Macuata province rather than Cakaudrove. Their reaction against the lotu resulted from a primarily political grievance and Governor Thurston

13 J.V. Thompson to J.H. Ritson, 4 July 1908, F/1/1908.
14 Small to G. Brown, 1 December 1903, F/1/1903 and 31 March 1904, F/1/1904; W. Brown to G. Brown, 8 March 1905, MOM Uncat., 1905-53.
16 A.B. Brewster, The Hill Tribes of Fiji, London 1922, 222, 226. In 1910, some years after his departure from Fiji, Joske changed his name to Brewster. The text of this thesis retains his original surname.
responded promptly after the killing and eating of two men in a
government reconnaissance party; the rebellion was effectively quelled. 17
For over a decade after 1894 government officers, working closely
with missionaries and teachers, maintained a strict watch for evidence
of Kalou-rere. In 1903 Joske convicted fourteen people of practising
the belief and sought Small's assistance:

If you should hear anything more from your teachers
of the matter, I should be much obliged if you pass
on the news to me. I am anxious to keep the affair
from spreading. It is now twelve years since the last
cases. Then I received very valuable assistance from
your teachers. 18

Throughout the twentieth century government and mission were
united in attempts to stamp out Kalou-rere and Luve-ni-wai even though
the two institutions had different reasons for their attitude, the one
acting out of the desire for political stability, the other from fear
of church malaise. The ceremonies were remarkably resilient and as
secret societies remained difficult to detect. 19 On Lakeba in 1905,
a place where one missionary swore such 'foolish ideas' could never
take hold, Luve-ni-wai rites were performed, the teachers and old
people being in complete ignorance. 20 Eight years later, on the same
island, the Roko Tui Lau, Alifereti Finau, was heard lecturing some of
the young men for practising Luve-ni-wai. 'He knows that it goes on',
complained William Brown the missionary, 'and does not take a firm
stand against it'. 21

Accounts of Kalou-rere and Luve-ni-wai practices occurred
less frequently in mission records after 1920 but this did not
necessarily signify a decline in their popularity. More rigorous

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17 Scarr, op.cit., 385-87; see also missionary accounts in MR,
September 1894, 2-5.
18 A.B. Joske to Small, 13 December 1903, F/1/1903.
19 Brewster, op.cit., 231. The prohibition of these ceremonies under
Native Regulations, still operative in 1940, ensured a cloak of
secrecy around them, Lester, op.cit., 134.
20 William Slade, MR, September 1894, 3; R.O. Cook to Small, 17
March 1905 and 27 March 1905, F/1/1905.
21 Brown to Small, 11 November 1913, F/1/1913.
surveillance resulted in greater difficulty of detection. Joske was still aware of the continuation of the rites in the hills of Viti Levu. In 1936 the resident missionary at Cakaudrove, L.E. Saville, reported that parts of Macuata and Bua provinces were 'overflowing with ancient witchcraft practices', including Luve-ni-wai. Saville noted that although Ratu Lela, Tui Cakau, was striving to quell the movement which threatened to invade Cakaudrove territory, 'the Bulis and Native Magistrates are remaining passive, I think because they fear unpopularity'. These comments succinctly highlighted the reactionary nature of these movements: the people harking back to pre-Christian practices in their search for meaning and security in a strange new world dominated by what appeared to be an alliance of church and government institutions.

Sympathetic in his comments on Kalou-rere, Thomas Williams was more terse when noting Fijian fear of sorcery. 'Those who become Christians', he wrote 'lose this fear last of all the relics of their heathenism'. Williams underestimated its staying power. The shaman's spell is still strong today.

The most common method of priestcraft as observed by Williams was draunikau - the secret use of certain potent leaves alleged to possess magical powers - and this term became synonymous with all forms of priestcraft. Later missionaries wrongly applied the term a ka vakatevoro (a thing of the devil) to priestcraft in their attempts to combat it but by so doing they only confused the Fijians by blunting the distinction between moral conduct and spiritual belief. Fijians today distinguish clearly between tiko vakatevoro (immorality) and draunikau (priestcraft).

22 Brewster, op.cit., 231.
23 L.E. Saville to C.O. Lelean, 26 December 1936, F/1/1936.
24 Williams and Calvert, op.cit., 194-95.
25 See for example, Pacific Islands Monthly, September 1973, 21-25.
26 C.O. Lelean to Small, 14 September 1905, F/1/1905.
While possession of Kalou-rere spirits was available to virtually any person who wished to engage in the rites, draunikau was the preserve of certain practitioners, many of whom were the hereditary tribal priests. Having been deprived by the onset of Christianity of their influential and unique mediatory relationship between chief and people, priests increasingly devoted their attention to the control and deployment of powers inherent in ancestral spirits or the vu, such facility being an essential ingredient for the practice of draunikau. Hence Methodism was faced with a formidable institution, its potency derived from traditional links rather than imported beliefs.

Those priests or shamans, called in Fijian dau vakadraunikau and by the mission 'wizards' or 'sorcerers', exercised in their role of spirit-anchors or mediums the power of life and death. They capitalised on a deeply-embedded fear within the Fijian. Fison found it impossible to argue logically with the victims of draunikau as in the reply of a chief who was dying from disease, the result of a 'spell' cast upon him by a priest named Pela:

True perhaps are your words...but go now I beseech you to Totoya, and bring Pela hither to me that he may be clubbed before my eyes. Then I shall be at rest.28

When a Lakeba man died suddenly in 1894, the practice of draunikau was suspected and four young men, in accordance with traditional ritual, paid nightly visits to the grave, calling the dead man to answer certain questions as to the nature of his death, and watching for the appearance of the shaman who was required to puncture the grave in order to avert his own demise.29 During one missionary's three year term in Lau, he observed such a deep belief in draunikau that a quarter of all his sermons 'touched more or less on this point'.30 This experience was not isolated. Arthur Amos claimed while he was the Lau missionary that a 'spiritual war' was going on between priest and

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28 Lorimer Fison, Tales from Old Fiji, London 1907, xxxii.
29 [Heighway Family], 'Not as Men Build'..., 77.
30 W.A. Burns to Small, 2 March 1903, F/1/1903.
minister 'and our casualties are too numerous'.

The powers of a draunikau specialist sometimes included healing and were respected by Fijians who displayed little faith in conventional western medicine. On Lakeba in 1906 a man called Tevita from Kavuca in northern Lau, having observed the prevalence of sickness, convinced the people of Lakeba that he was the shrine of the celebrated shark-god, Dakuwaqa, consequently granting him powers of healing.

On request from the sick he would make visits to their home:

His methods were to exorcise the unbelieving spirit in the sufferer, to severely reprove for want of faith in Dakuwaqa, to censure and condemn all speaking against his patron god and to lay the blame for the sickness to the sufferer's having derided or spoken evil of the deity. The preliminaries being fulfilled Tevita then called for yaqona to be brewed that the god might drink, that burning charcoal might be brought for the god to eat. These ceremonies being concluded, he, Tevita, was free to dispense the medicine to the sufferer.

The Roko Tui Lau reported declining evening church attendances and many 'flocking' to Tevita. Mission teachers remained silent on the man's activities; some availed themselves of his services. The young missionaries in Lau, Bleazard and Cook, reacted with a solid dose of church discipline for those involved in the activities though Small, with the benefit of experience, counselled leniency: 'What is called "devil-worship" is not always so vile a thing as the term leads one to suppose'. Small was obsessed with the large number of adulteries at Lakeba, a state of affairs more 'painful and humiliating than the lapse into devil-worship'.

Recorded instances of shamans claiming the arts of healing were noted by missionaries at Nadi in 1907, Sabeto in 1912, Oneata in

31 MR, June 1916, 18.
32 W.A. Heighway, A short account of the Practices of Tevita, the medicine man. MS in F/1/1906.
33 Macnaught, Mainstream to Millpond?..., 187-88.
34 C. Bleazard to Small, 22 April 1906; Small to Bleazard, 4 May 1906; R.O. Cook to Small, 11 June 1906, F/1/1906.
35 Small to Bleazard, ibid.
1924 and Kadavu in the 1940s. On the latter occasion the highest ranking chief, Roko Tui Kadavu, was reputedly rescued from a spell of draunikau by the ministrations of the 'witch-doctor' whose prestige increased considerably as a result. The resident missionary's wife observed that:

"even Fijian Christians of long standing found themselves persuaded in varying degrees to the mysterious efficacy of the witch-doctor's charms and prescriptions, particularly as he was intelligent enough to conduct worship according to the Christian mode previous to setting to work on his own ceremonies and spells."

Syncretic forms of worship often crept into draunikau practices. On the island of Yadua in 1904, the villagers were reported to be drinking some magical potions and also rubbing it on three stones before burying them in the earth with the invocation, 'These be thy God O Israel - These will keep off sickness and death'.

In this case the dedicated teacher at Yadua promptly dug up the three stones and threw them away to the annoyance of the people who insisted on his removal from the island.

A number of teachers and ministers displayed zeal similar to the incumbent on Yadua. Brewster claimed that all of the Fijian Wesleyan ministers were 'trained to show contempt for...the old superstitions' and he cited Ratu Joni Uluinaceva who took advantage of the custom of kerekere to confiscate a stone of religious significance while making a journey through inland Fiji. Ministers would doubtlessly have seen their function as breaking down irrational beliefs inconsistent with Christianity. Thus Mataiasi Vave, the revered tutor at Davuilevu Theological Institution for twenty years, visited one town where the people were terrified by the old foundations of a dead 'wizard's' house; to approach them meant certain death. 'Mataiasi showed his complete emancipation from the ancient dread by

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37 C.O. Lelean to Small, 14 March 1904, F/1/1904.

38 Brewster, *op.cit.*, 89.
deliberately climbing on to the site'. In 1933 Vave persuaded teachers on Lakeba to ignore a tabu that had been placed on the movement of people by some Koro draunikau practitioners who had warned of death within a month if the tabu was broken.

In fact, contrary to Brewster's sweeping statement, some ordained ministers and a greater proportion of teachers were influenced by their environment to such a degree as to make detachment from the ancestral spirit world an impossibility. Occasionally their involvement reached the ears of the highest church court. One minister, Apaijia Tuilomanikoro, was accused of acquiring medicine from a draunikau priest in order to release himself from a spell. In his own words, 'the sickness which has taken me is from the land belonging to the work, and I think it is draunikau'. Although expelled from the ministry, Tuilomanikoro was defended by at least one missionary who claimed the minister's main sin was honesty:

You may be sure Apaijia does to some extent 'believe in vakadraunikau spells' so I am sure does Taito Rauluni [one of the ministers to whom Tuilomanikoro admitted his activities], so do 999 out of 1000 natives of their generation.

Significantly, three years later, the Synod imposed less severe discipline upon a minister who had been implicated in draunikau practices on Koro. Most missionaries took their lead from a sympathetic Arthur Small but it was futile to suggest, as Wallace Deane did with misguided almost arrogant boldness, that 'sorcerers' try their devices on them. Fijians predictably replied that white men were different. In the words of one mission student, 'the native mind cannot resist it'.

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41 Quoted in Small to W.A. Burns, 4 March 1903, F/1/1903.
42 Burns to Small, 2 March 1903, F/1/1903.
43 Small to C. Bleazard, 11 July 1906, F/1/1906.
44 Deane, *op.cit.*, 163.
Rather than face the disapprobation of the missionary and possible church discipline, teachers often remained tight-lipped when instances of draunikau were known to have occurred. Thus, in 1907, when such ceremonies were celebrated in parts of the Macuata province, singled out unfairly by the mission as a 'backward' area, church members and teachers disclosed nothing of the affair:

It is practically a case of European versus Fijian, with the usual result. Blood is thicker than water and the natives will not declare the names of wrong-doers.45

While the traditional priest sustained his spiritual role in Fijian society through the practice of draunikau and, to a lesser extent, Kalou-rere and Luve-ni-wai, Methodism did not appreciably suffer. The exclusion of women from some of the pagan rites contrasted less favourably with the universal appeal of Christianity which, as far as women were concerned, provided leadership functions for them (in the class meeting and choir) that had been denied under the old dispensation. Whereas the practice of traditional beliefs was spasmodic, the lotu demonstrated resilience, even strength, through continuity and perseverance. Government principles of religious toleration, emphasised so definitely to the pacified tribes of inland Viti Levu in the 1870s, narrowed during the twentieth century, a trend that benefitted Christianity and prejudiced paganism. Above all, Fijians, with no psychological or religious barriers to polytheism, appeared able to satisfactorily synchronise 'the Old and the New'.46

A stronger threat to Methodism came from the prophetic and syncretic tradition which emerged from the fusion of traditional beliefs and imported Christian, biblical ideas. Sometimes led by descendants of a priestly caste and revealing considerable social distress or dissatisfaction, these cult movements all, either manifestly

45 Macuata Circuit, Annual Report, 1907, MMSA.

or by implication, rejected the centrality of Christ and, in some cases, the lotu in entirety.

The first recorded example of these cults was in 1859 when a man at Mataisuva, Rewa, referred to as 'Bruwei' and with traditional priestly connections, informed the local mission teacher that 'he was sent from God to comfort him and help him in his work'. Claiming to be the Son of God, he asked for the New Testament with which to preach to a house now crowded with people 'believing that the god had entered the man'. After speaking for some time 'like a saint', the man opened the Testament but was unable to read a word whereupon the teacher declared him an imposter and took advantage of the large audience by preaching himself.47 A significant feature of this incident is the large number of people that quickly gathered once it was thought that the man was possessed. Physical evidence of this would have convinced them that the priest was the 'actual mouthpiece of the god';48 from that point the villagers would have had difficulty resisting obedience to the priest's word.49

On Matuku in 1876 two men and a woman from the town of Natokalau proclaimed themselves to be angels sent from Heaven. The resident Fijian minister, Kelepi Tuvuniwai, described his first encounter with the woman:

On return from Lakemba...I heard a report which was being noised abroad at Matuku. A voice was heard speaking, and there was a woman who interpreted its meaning. She said it was the voice of a Spirit. I went to her house that I might hear it. I was told to go within a mosquito screen made of Fijian cloth, while the woman sat down outside the curtain and the wall. Then the voice sounded in my ears. It was like the voice of one speaking, but I could not distinguish the words. The woman interpreted its meaning to me, and when I heard it I straightway believed that it was from God. I said to the people in the house and they were many, 'We must not disbelieve this thing. It is a great thing, and true in very deed'.49

47 William Moore to J. Eggleston, 22 February 1859, WNN, January 1860, 166 ff.

48 Fison, op.cit., 166.

49 Fiji District Synod, Minutes, 1876, F/4/A, MF.
Tuvuniwai allowed the self-proclaimed angels to preach in all the Wesleyan chapels on Matuku (an action for which he was subsequently expelled from the ministry). Virtually the entire population of the island was converted to the cult and it spread to the neighbouring island of Totoya. Other angels were appointed, some as teachers, one as a minister. Tuvuniwai submitted himself to baptism by Eremasi, one of the original angels, who sprinkled water on him and said, 'I baptise you in the name of the great God'.

Reports of miracles reached Moala and young men experienced fits and convulsions. The angels issued various orders to the islanders, extorted money from them and threatened unbelievers with death.

Outside authorities regarded the economic and political decisions of the cult leaders as a serious threat to stability on the island. Eremasi and Aminio, the co-founders, raised the price of fowls and copra in trading with white men and withheld the payment of taxes to the government. In a move directed against the leading chief of Natuku who had spoken derisively of the cult when its angels claimed to have received a 'letter from Heaven', it was announced 'that Yaroi was to be no longer the chief town of Matuku, the chieftainship having been transferred to Natokalau'.

A Tongan government officer, dispatched from Moala to investigate the affair, finally managed to persuade Tuvuniwai to denounce the movement. The angels were furious at his defection:

They sent a message to the chief town where he resides informing the inhabitants that it would be destroyed by fire from Heaven. All the townsfolk fled to Natokalau leaving Caleb to his fate and during the night a number of young men in that town were seized by what seems to have been some sort of madness, impelling them to frantic howlings and leapings and all manner of violent gymnastics.

Despite the failure of the angels' prophecy, the affair was only terminated by the visit to Matuku of Ma'afu and Lorimer Fison.

50 Ibid.


52 Fison to Chapman, Ibid.
The former exercised swift justice at a local inquiry. One of the
angels was a married woman with a child. Ma'afu ridiculed her claim
to be an angel by telling her to go home with her child and read the
22nd chapter of St Matthew's Gospel. 'You will see there that angels
neither marry nor are given in marriage. You can't be an angel!'\textsuperscript{53}

When Fison met both Eremasi and Aminio, who subsequently
were removed on Ma'afu's orders to Lomaloma for hard labour, he
observed a 'peculiar twitching and quivering of the muscles' similar
to the movement of an inspired priest and he concluded they were
'fraudulent madmen' who had mistaken hallucinations for 'Divine
promptings'. Fison compared the convulsions of the young men to
phenomena observed among the New Zealand Hauhaus and recorded also in
the Middle Ages.\textsuperscript{54} Despite the religious manifestations of the
movement Ma'afu believed that socio-political grievances had been its
primary cause and motivation. Reporting to the Council of Chiefs he
argued that 'this affair has been brought about by reason of the
neglect with which these islands have been treated, the native magistrates
not usually performing their duty as they should do'.\textsuperscript{55}

The link between social unrest and religious revolt, a cause
common to the rise of many cults, appeared once again in 1877, only
a year after the Matuku disturbances, but this time in the interior
of Viti Levu where the people had, under duress, only recently submitted
to government control and the lotu. In the hill country surrounding
the Wainimala river, villages heard the news of the imminent return of
their ancestral spirits, a rallying call which implied the overthrow
of colonial rulers. The day fixed was 23 December on which would
commence a four days' darkness. 'Before that time all pigs were to be
killed as any left would be turned into stone by the spirits'. A
state of urgency and excitement gripped the district. Pigs were

\textsuperscript{53} Gordon, Fiji Records, vol.II, 208, n.2.

\textsuperscript{54} Fison to B. Chapman, 21 August 1876, MOM 103.

\textsuperscript{55} Proceedings of the Council of Chiefs, 1876, 3. See also Fison
to J. Calvert, 22 February 1884, N/148, MMS and Deryck Scarr,
killed off and ordinary work was suspended. Before the prediction could be tested the Governor, Sir Arthur Gordon, moved quickly to suppress it; it was discovered that the chiefs through their mata-ni-vanua (official spokesmen) had distributed whales' teeth along with the messages of spirit intervention. Lobbying for support by this means suggested a movement more political than religious in character and the government was concerned to maintain their tenuous hold in the interior. 56

Social protest lay at the root of Fiji's most enduring and influential syncretic cult - the Tuka movement. 57 It originated in the country around the Nakauvadra mountains of north-eastern Viti Levu, the legendary dwelling-place of Fiji's first settlers. With its roots possibly stretching far back into pre-Christian Fiji, the Tuka cult emerged prominently in the late 1870s when a hereditary priest, Dugumoi, led some Rakiraki chiefs in an outbreak of pagan practices which may have had some influence in sparking the nascent revolt in the Wainimala river. Considered a threat to the peace of the Ra district, Dugumoi was deported to Lau while those who had avoided detection continued with the observance of secret rites.

Shortly before Dugumoi returned to Ra from exile in 1882, a resident of Tavua and commoner, Sakiusa Naware, in an action interpreted by the local Buli as a recrudescence of Dugumoi's cult, claimed he was the medium of the Fijian god Basoganabula and had power to cure disease and give life to the dead. Naware warned that 'the god wd. soon come and bring those dead friends from the grave again who had died under the matanitu', 58 (a reference to the Fijians mainly of inland Viti Levu who had died in the wars of the early 1870s

56 Webb, 'Fijian Superstitions...', 415-16.


58 Notes of Tavua Affair, 6.7.1882. MS in Stanmore Papers, 1881-83, FM 4/2721, NL.
against the government). Naware required certain ceremonies to be performed in order to resurrect the dead such as stamping on the graves and chanting incantations by night in the forest. Young women were kept busy in Naware's personal service fishing for him and preparing masi;

The husbands of the married women and the elders complained and remonstrated in vain... Not until four or five towns had given their belief and adherence to the new worship... did the 'ili rouse himself to take the matter in hand...59

Even though the movement was abruptly arrested - most men involved being whipped - the climate was favourable for a triumphal return of Dugumoi who either adopted or was given the new name of Navosavakadua (lit. 'he who speaks once' - the title originally applied to the Chief Justice of Fiji) and announced himself as a prophet of the tribal ancestors, in particular the two sons of the carpenter-god Rokola, who were imminently to establish Tuka as it had supposedly existed in pre-Christian times. The Bible was true but Jehovah and Jesus Christ were imposters - merely the reincarnation of Rokola's two sons, Nacirikaumoli and Nakausabaria, who were returning to 'bruise the head' of Degei, the snake-god, from whose wrath they had originally fled. The prophet promised eternal life to his followers, the restoration of youth to the aged and perpetual pleasure on the day, near at hand, when the world would be turned upside down. Those who adhered to the lotu or remained loyal to the government would die or at best become slaves and servants of the Tuka disciples. Like the angels of Matuku, Navosavakadua dealt with practical matters as well, demanding an increased tariff for the market prices of produce. No work was to be done for the government nor taxes paid. The words of the prophet captured the feelings of a proud inland people:

What Dugumoi offered... appealed to their inmost hopes in the resurrection of their godlike chiefs and ancestors, the destruction of their tribal enemies and the annihilation of the dominant 'papilangi'.60

Millenial hopes carried the desire for freedom from coastal

59 Ibid.
60 [A.B. Joske], 'Superstitions in Fiji', The Australasian, 17 October 1891; Webb, 'Fijian Superstitions... ', 407.
domination and the expulsion of whites, or at least their servitude to Fijians, Western material goods flowing accordingly to the ruling natives. With its confused but compelling mixture of pre-Christian, biblical and patriotic ideas - a 'farrago of nonsense' Joske derided - the Tuka cult rapidly spread inland from Rakiraki along the upper tributaries of the Rewa river to be recorded at Matailobau by 1884.

Lorimer Fison reported that the more zealous followers of Navosavakadua, called destroying angels, set houses on fire and fired muskets into the flames. Troops were drilled in a British military style while the rudimentary organisation that Navosavakadua developed showed an ingenious syncretic flavour:

With their own old legend they blend Biblical tradition, and upon their own ceremonies they, from the Wesleyans, engraft something like the singing of hymns (vaka malolo). From the Roman Catholic Church they obtain the idea of nuns or sacred women (a leba). The appointment of lieutenants by Navosavakadua and his crude idea of organisation was probably founded upon some half understood account of the 'Salvation Army'.

The Chairman of the Methodist Mission, Frederick Langham, predictably blamed government policies for the outbreak of Tuka, particularly what he regarded as the oppressive system of tax levies. There is little doubt that inland Fijian tribes, who had been pacified but never defeated by government forces, saw participation in the Tuka movement as an opportunity to avenge themselves through politically sensitive protest. On the other hand, Thurston, an astute observer of Fijian affairs, argued that Tuka was as much a religious as political reaction, arising from the neglect of the 'spiritual welfare' of the people by the Wesleyan missionaries who he alleged clung to the coast and rarely if ever ventured inland to supervise the hundreds of self-sacrificing but poorly trained teachers. Thurston correctly surmised that local teachers, with their inadequate Christian knowledge and from their own 'inclination and early training', would in the face of

61 Brewster, op.cit., 241; Fison to J. Calvert, 22 February 1884, N/148, HMS.

62 Thurston to Colonial Office, Confidential Despatch, 18 August 1891, NAF.
the Tuka challenge 'accommodate themselves to their surroundings'. His criticism of missionaries contained a degree of truth. Although those responsible for Viti Levu in the 1880s (Langham, Lindsay, Small, Bromilow and Worrall) all kept in close touch with their circuit ministers and made regular journeys inland, their circuit headquarters were situated in the south-eastern regions of the main island.

Methodist influence was most fragile in areas of Tuka strength (Ra, Nadrau, Navosa) and the equation was, as Thurston suggested, more than coincidental. Not till 1890 was a Methodist missionary posted on the western side of Viti Levu. As for understanding the forces behind Tuka, Arthur Webb, who unlike Langham had no political axe to grind, probably made as good an analysis as any European:

In my opinion it simply means Radicalism... for it goes behind all that now occupies the foreground in the scene of religion and politics, and below all that has been superinduced since the heathen era and whatever has come from the white man's land. It is a movement that goes behind the Government and is inimical to it and goes behind the Lotu and in some instances aims directly at its subversion... There has been...far more of political aim than of religious departure in these disturbances... They most frequently occur in seasons of general distress... and at seasons when the native mind is, from some causes or other, in a state of unrest or dissatisfaction.64

The popularity of the Tuka movement in inland Viti Levu - Joske was convinced of its dominance in many areas - demanded some reaction from Methodism. In an effort to combat the prophet's doctrines, an army of native agents mainly from training institutions on the coast, was dispatched up the rivers and through the mountains 'to reason the misguided back to their allegiance'.65 The success the mission claimed for this operation was probably as much the result of government action as any Methodist initiative, for the Tuka followers, imbued with dangerous confidence, were more a threat to state than church.

Navosavakadua was apprehended and banished to Rotuma for ten years and

63 Ibid.
64 Webb, op.cit., 411.
65 Small to J.G. Wheen, 15 April 1918, MOM Uncat., 1905-53.
the movement temporarily lost its impetus although its anti-white millenarian features maintained a strong appeal. 66

The deportation of Navosavakadua did not result in Tuka's total demise; its promise to re-establish the old order appealed to the hereditary priests who saw Tuka as a means of regaining their power and privilege. One of the prophet's lieutenants claimed to have received letters from the sky (even though Navosavakadua could not write). 67 The sale of holy water (wai ni tuka) recommenced.

Thurston, the Governor, sceptical as always of the Christianity of a great many of the tribes, responded swiftly to the fresh outbreak by burning Navosavakadua's village, Drau-ni-ivi, to the ground and deporting 250 people from four villages of Ra to Kadavu, considered a safe, Christian environment where Tuka ideas would receive scant hearing. The missionaries supported Thurston's action and thereby unwittingly revealed their reservations about the ability of Methodism to completely win back the people's allegiance. 'A severe lesson' wrote Small of the village destruction and deportation, 'but it was needed' and the Kadavu Circuit missionary commented optimistically on the apparent change of heart among the Ra deportees:

They are now living together here on Government land.
We have appointed one of our best men to be their teacher. They have already built him a small temporary house, and are now busy building a large church for themselves. 68

Navosavakadua died in Rotuma in 1897, shortly before he was due to be released from exile. News of his death was disbelieved by his more ardent followers, who kept the Tuka promise of immortality alive by claiming that Navosavakadua had conquered death by escaping from an anchor and chain that had been tied around his neck, after which he was thrown into the ocean from a ship bound to Fiji from Rotuma.

66 Brewster, op.cit., 247.
After a brief recrudescence of Tuka in 1904, elements of the cult reappeared in 1918 with the emergence of the 'No. 8' religion - so called because the last religion to come to Fiji before 1918 had been Seventh Day Adventism. The leader of the new cult, Sailosi Nasogulevu (alias Ratu), had been one of Navosavakadua's principal disciples and regarded himself as a woula or seer. At a meeting at Tavua on 25 March 1918, he announced his 'No. 8' religion, linking it specifically with Navosavakadua and more topically associating it with the ideas of the Fiji Company, a patriotic organisation formed in 1913 by Apolosi Nawai to give Fijians the benefits of direct involvement in the Fiji economy. The Mission Chairman, Small, received a report of Sailosi's Tavua meeting from a mission teacher, Anitipasa Tova:

First of all yaqona was presented to Sailose after the manner of chiefs. Prayer was then offered. Sailose then read an account of the life of our Saviour making special reference to his death and resurrection. He then referred to Navosa (Navosavakadua), his deportation to Rotuma, his death and resurrection. How he proceeded to Nadarivatu, thence to England for the purpose of killing the Queen (Victoria). When that event took place the world was shaken. Sailose then referred to the real purpose of the meeting which was to tell them what had been revealed to him, viz:

(a) That Britain had surrendered to Germany
(b) That the Governor is deposed from office, also all the Rokos, the Bulis and Turaga ni koro
(c) That the officers of the Viti Company are appointed to fill their places...
(d) That all Government taxes are to cease
(e) That Saturday is to be observed as Sunday
(f) That all mission collections are to cease.

More than once Sailose declared himself to be Jesus Christ.71

Despite Sailosi's sworn intention to commit suicide rather than allow himself to be arrested, he was quickly apprehended for his...

69 Everard im Thurn, Diary, 7 November 1904, M/273, Pac.Hist., (Diary original in the Royal Anthropological Institute, London).

70 For an account of the fortunes of the Fiji Company, see Macnaught, Mainstream to Millpond?..., 204 ff.

71 Statement encl. Small to Colonial Secretary, 18 April 1918, F/2/Vol.1, MF.
seditious statements. He was a fanatic, bordering on madness, yet his unique concoction of ideas, some original, the rest a repetition either of Tuka beliefs or Fiji Company propaganda, survived at least till 1922 in western Viti Levu. The 'No.8' religion lost support rapidly but hundreds of its followers, taking the sabbath pronouncement to heart or unwilling to face the humiliation of Methodist discipline, turned to Seventh Day Adventism. Sailosi had capitalised on a continuing Tuka tradition, the strength of which survived the exit of 'No.8'. Arthur Lelean, always in close touch with the Fijians, reported that for years after Sailosi's time, the districts of Viti Levu from Nakauvadra to Sigatoka remained a 'hot-bed of the old Tuka religion'. It was this area, west of the dividing range on Viti Levu that became the centre of Apolosi Nawai's religious enterprise.

Apolosi's main thrust of activity in Fiji since 1913 had been economic. Most missionaries were hostile to the trading company he formed because Apolosi's activities interfered with settled church programmes such as the vakamisioneri, 'dulled [the people's] spirituality & blunted their affection for the Lotu'. Although sympathetic to Apolosi's social aims, especially improved educational standards for Fijians, missionaries refused to assist him, arguing that to do so would be to condone a movement which, they alleged, drew many of its followers from Methodists who were under discipline.

The Methodist Mission would have tacitly approved of the action of the government which, doubting Apolosi's loyalty to the crown, managed to exile him to Rotu. in 1917 but, on his return in 1924, Apolosi's mission of economic self-sufficiency for Fijians was combined with marks of messianism. It is possible that Apolosi was seeking

72 A.W. Amos to Small, 6 November 1922, F/1/1922.
73 See Chapter 6.
74 Lelean to R.L. McDonald, 31 March 1930, F/1/1930.
75 W.J. Chambers to Small, 1 August 1917, F/1/1917.
76 C.O. Lelean to Small, 16 November 1916, F/1/1916.
77 Macnaught, Mainstream to Millpond?..., 226-30.
fresh sanctions for his continued influence among Fijians throughout Viti Levu. If so, he succeeded. In 1929 he announced the establishment of the *lotu ni gauna* (religion of the time) a title which echoed the strongly millenarian features of earlier syncretic cults. In many of its characteristics the *lotu ni gauna* revealed unmistakable links with Tuka. Lelean noted some of its practices:

[Apolosi's] 'lotu' consists of Methodism plus prayers for Dengei, Lutunasobosobo, Salusalu and Vosavukadua. A bowl of grog is used for prayers and then thrown outside along with their 'Duka' or sins. Baptism is by a bowl of grog down the neck and promising to obey when the command is given.78

The *lotu ni gauna* captured the imagination of the people. Three high chiefs on the west and north-west coast of Viti Levu gave the ultimate form of submission by kissing Apolosi's feet. On one particular Sunday, a thousand Methodist church members and adherents stayed away from church in order to attend a religious service in connection with the new movement.79 The missionaries were powerless to prevent the spread of the new *lotu* though they objected to it as 'clear devil worship'.80 Arthur Lelean, the only missionary supportive of Apolosi's movement to advance the Fijian people, was suspected of secretly condoning *lotu ni gauna* ceremonies on mission premises. The evidence is confusing. Lelean vehemently denied connections with any secret society but it was difficult for McDonald, the Mission Chairman, to believe him, particularly when Lelean wrote blandly that he had yet to find a Fijian practising 'Devil Worship' on the north-western coast of Viti Levu'.81

78 A.D. Lelean to McDonald, 31 March 1930, F/1/1930.
79 C.O. Lelean to J.W. Burton, 3 February 1930, F/1/1930.
80 McDonald to A.D. Lelean, 10 March 1932, F/1/1932.
81 Miss P. Brokenshire: Private and Confidential Notes on the *Lotu ni Gauna*, MS, 1932, Davui/A/2, MF. A.D. Lelean to McDonald, 12 February 1932 and McDonald to Lelean, 1 March 1932, F/1/1932. Mission sources are inconclusive about Lelean's activities but it appears he may have belonged to a Fijian secret association. This would be in keeping with the missionary's intense desire to show his support for Fijian aspirations, social and economic.
Predictably, Apolosi was arrested by an alert administration early in 1930. According to Lelean, over 1,000 men were ready to take up arms under Apolosi but the climactic moment was frustrated. Apolosi was exiled yet again to Rotuma. Fijians gradually returned to the Methodist fold, this time encouraged by reassurances of minimal church discipline, but the districts of Nadi, Sabeto, Nawaka and Nadrau remained unsettled. The lotu ni gau na survived Apolosi's exile; in 1935 it had an active following as far east as Nasau and Naveikovatu on the Wainihuka river, an indication of its filtration ability and resilience.82

On Rotuma Apolosi vigorously propagated his new faith to the extreme annoyance of C.M. Churchward, the resident Methodist missionary. The charismatic Fijian appears to have enjoyed some success but once again he aroused the displeasure of the authorities and was imprisoned by the Resident Commissioner allowing Rotuma to settle back to its carefully preserved balance of Methodist and Catholic. In a state of restraint Apolosi proved more acceptable to Churchward who asked him to revise new hymns that the missionary was writing.83 Perhaps the final irony about Apolosi's colourful career, at least from a Methodist point of view, is that while he was writing regularly to his followers in Fiji urging them to continue their support of his lotu, he assisted, however indirectly, in the production of a hymn book used universally today in the very Church he at one time rejected and for many years successfully undermined.84

82 Lelean to McDonald, 31 March 1930, F/1/1930. T.N. Deller to McDonald, 27 February 1935, F/1/1935. Deller added that both these towns had become Roman Catholic in 1931.

83 Churchward to McDonald, 25 October 1936, F/1/1936.

84 In 1924, during his first period of exile in Rotuma, Apolosi turned Roman Catholic having been rebuffed by the elders of the Methodist Church for sitting in the 'chiefly' area of the church. Although undertaking to proselytise Ra Circuit for the Roman Catholics, this scheme lapsed and Apolosi remained barely a nominal Catholic. He still attended Methodist services and sometimes spoke in them. A.D. Lelean to McDonald, 20 September 1924 and McDonald to Lelean, 4 October 1924, F/1/1924.
Apolosi died in 1946 but the spirit of Tuka, evident in the lotu ni gauna, did not die with him. The Methodist missionary on Kadavu in the 1940s, A.C. Cato, located a village on the south coast of the island whose people had quit the Methodist church to follow a 'new' lotu under the leadership of one Kelevi Nawai (no relation to Apolosi). This self-proclaimed 'Minister of Christ' spoke to Cato:

You see Kelevi, sir, but Kelevi is just the waqawaqa (envelope, vessel, container). It is really Jesus Christ who is speaking to you. I have a tabua here and I wish to make a request. I want permission to preach in Methodist churches in Kadavu.

The tabu was declined. Unlike the hapless Kelepi Tuvuniwai who had succumbed in a similar situation on Matuku seventy years before, Cato recognised that, despite Kelevi's claim to a biblical basis for every single law in his lotu, there was much that suggested opposition to Christianity. In his sermons he had stated that the Methodist Church was 'not a true Church... It is a religious business. [The] Methodist god is a snake'. Kelevi's denigration of the snake, a powerful symbol in Fijian mythology, suggests a tempting parallel to the original ideas of Navosavakadua: he had prophesied as part of Tuka belief the imminent return of the carpenter-god's two sons, who would destroy Degel, the snake-god, and turn the world upside down. One of Kelevi's prayers exalted Nacirikaumoli and Nakausabaria and predicted a new order in which 'old things' would pass away though the disciples of Kelevi would have immortal life.

Like Navosavakadua, Kelevi claimed the power to perform miracles such as bringing the dead to life, and, to aid him in his work, Kelevi gathered around him a retinue of young girls, as also did the Tuka prophet. In Kelevi's case, these female assistants - called the Roses of Life - existed to succour him alone, the Source of Life; they were chosen in the following manner:

86 Ibid., 148.
Kelevi says that God speaks to him and he hears him. When all the Roses are present [most of the young girls of the village], Kelevi stands on the table and chooses the roses whilst they are seated. Kelevi wears long trousers and shoes, whereas the normal Fijian dress is the sulu worn over short trousers without shoes. He spits into the middle of the vale and before the girls may be admitted as true Roses, they must wipe up his spittle with their hands. If they use a paper or a piece of cloth they will not be admitted. He said the village of the Roses was to be with him. The house was built at Utonigau (Kelevi's place of residence) and the Roses lived with Kelevi. While they were there one girl became pregnant.

It is difficult to conclude to what extent the cults that have followed Tuka have flourished because of their links with it as a historical movement or because the message of Tuka, as propounded by Navosavakadua, is universally known and of deep emotional appeal to Fijians. Tuka will persist as long as oral traditions endure. As recently as the early 1960s an anthropologist observed a well-organised faith-healing church at Vunqoru in Nadroga, which probably owed its existence to Tuka beliefs:

The Church combines Christian prayer, the performance of yaqona ritual for the ancestors, and spirit possession. The prophet of Vunqoru does not advertise his movement, because historically it was once linked with a movement interpreted by the Government as subversive. The prophet has a network of agents throughout Nadroga and Navosa... with whom he communicates supernaturally, and a body of young aides known as soldiers.

The various quasi-religious practices and movements that existed outside of Methodism gained the allegiance of Fijians for a number of reasons. First, the Christian message did not, or could not, entirely displace pagan beliefs: as in Ghana and Nigeria, for example, so in Fiji church men and women were faithful to two worlds, most noticeably in times of stress - 'the world of a personal God

87 Ibid., 154.
88 C. Belshaw, Under the Ivi Tree, London 1964, 158.
and the world of the protecting influence of ancestral spirits'.

What missionaries unquestionably believed to be an adequate philosophy to offer to a different culture as a replacement for the latter's pagan ideology, did not entirely satisfy personal needs. The effect of sustained mission endeavour to shame Methodist followers into a rejection of all links with the past produced a profound silence on spiritual matters not considered in conformity with the orthodox. Second, Methodism's close identification with European government on the one hand and the chiefly system on the other, resulted in its failure to accommodate movements of protests and thus act as a spokesman for the disaffected. Those districts of Fiji dissatisfied with economic, political and social conditions moved out of the church to highlight their predicament and sought instead the gods with whom they were better able to identify. At these times Methodism offered very little to prevent defection from its ranks, no matter how temporary that desertion was. Finally, perhaps paradoxically, Methodism rarely suffered permanent setbacks as a result of episodic outbreaks of enthusiasm for priestcraft and syncretic cults. Though sometimes failing to capture the deep spiritual loyalty of Fijians, Methodism retained a large nominal following and continued to grow alongside a powerful tradition of pre-Christian and eclectic beliefs, indicative of the resilience of traditional culture.

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90 R.H. Green, My Story, 128; Cato, 'A new Religious Cult in Fiji...', 156.
PART III: FROM CONFLICT TO CO-OPERATION
CHAPTER 6

CHALLENGES TO METHODIST HEGEMONY

In history we inherit the grievances of disunity in the European churches.

Sione A. Havaea, MR. December 1977, 4

IN the formative years of Protestant evangelisation among South Pacific islands, Fiji was fortunate to escape bitter controversy and division such as occurred in Samoa when the London Missionary Society and the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society clashed over the control of mission work there. John Williams' informal comity agreement with the Wesleyans in Tonga in 1830, assigning missionary enterprise in Samoa to the London Missionary Society and in Fiji to the Wesleyans, was inadequately formulated and subsequently worked more to the advantage of the Wesleyans. Supported by the influential patronage of Tonga's imperialistic leader, Tāufa'āhau, they entered Fiji alone; the London Missionary Society was unable to do the same in Samoa. With no challenge to their Protestant monopoly in Fiji, the Wesleyans maintained their exclusive position for nine years until, in 1844, James Calvert and R.B. Lyth returned from the Annual District Meeting at Viwa to find two Roman Catholic (hereinafter Catholic) missionaries residing at Lakeba.

Catholic missionary endeavour, revitalised after the French Restoration by Pius VII and later Gregory XVI, directed its attention to most islands of the Pacific well after the Protestant Missions had made the initial Christian impact. The Picpus Fathers, who had been entrusted with proselytising the islands of Eastern Oceania, attempted to establish themselves on Hawaii (1827) and Tahiti (1836). In both these island groups the priests were expelled, to return later supported

by French naval power. They were permitted to preach but only under severe restrictions. Although native leaders were responsible for the expulsions and proscriptive edicts, they acted with the 'tacit approval of the Protestant missionaries'.

The atmosphere of suspicion and distrust engendered by the Hawaii and Tahiti episodes spread to Tonga and Samoa. In 1836 the Society of Mary (Marists) had been approved to undertake Catholic evangelisation of the western Pacific. Marist priests established missions in New Zealand and on the tiny islands of Wallis and Futuna, to the east of the Samoan group. However in the latter islands, in 1844, the chiefs of Manono agreed to banish any person who received Catholic priests, while up till 1842, Tāufa'āhau prevented Marist priests from commencing a mission in Tonga, at one stage resisting a French warship ultimatum; the priests were finally made welcome by the non-Christian chiefs of Pea.

It was within the general context of this explosive, non-compromising situation that Marist missionaries made their bid for Fiji. From their point of view some attempt had to be made to correct the distortions of the Christian faith that were being preached by the followers of Wesley, 'one of the innovators that invented the sect of the Methodists'. The translation of the Bible into the vernacular tongue was introducing 'Error...with remarkable bad faith' while the sacrilegious use of bread and water by the Wesleyans in communion was a distortion of 'the most sacred mysteries'. The Wesleyan missionaries were equally dogmatic in their campaign of propaganda against the Marists, though they possessed the advantage of chiefly support and a degree of security in their position. The papal emissaries

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were no less than representatives of the 'anti-christ', while their
association with re-invigorated French power brought a political dimension
to the issue of Catholic missionary work, a factor exploited by the
Protestant missionaries in their role as advisers to prominent chiefs. 5

Contrary to expectations, the intrusion of Catholics into
Fiji was a fairly subdued process, devoid of the excesses that had
occurred in Hawaii and Tahiti. The main explanation for the difference
lay in the relatively fragile hold of the Wesleyans in Fiji: in 1844
the missionaries lacked effective influence over any chief. Nevertheless
the two priests from the Marist order, Fathers J.B. Bréhéret and
F. Roulleaux, still received a cool reception when they were brought
to Lakeba by Bishop Pierre Bataillon. Unlike the Wesleyans, the Marists
did not carry with them the might of Tonga in the form of an introductory
note from Tūfā'āhau; 6 Tu'i Nayau, high chief of Lakeba, complained
that he already had one lot of priests and wanted no others. So the
Marist missionaries were settled on Namuka, an island to the south,
but short of food and supplies they quickly found it necessary to
return to Lakeba. Here they struggled for eleven years where, apart
from physical deprivation, they were subject to 'ignominy and
persecution' from the local residents. 7 Such was their plight they
were compelled to accept food and medical assistance from the Wesleyan
missionaries. Commented Lyth, 'the Bishop committed an oversight in
leaving his priests so destitute. A Fijian hates poverty and charity
is as cold here as in civilized lands'. 8

With the Wesleyans already established on Lakeba, the Catholics
could expect little success. Bataillon, the leader of the first Marist
party to Fiji, was eager to venture into the relatively unknown westward
islands of Fiji but was unable to persuade the captain of the vessel

5 Gunson, op.cit., 174-75.
6 The most influential Tongan neophyte - the Tu'i Tonga - was
not converted till 1851.
7 Derrick, op.cit., 99.
8 Ibid., 100. See also Father Roulleaux to Father Colin, 12
November 1845, Annals..., vol.VIII, 1847, 381-95.
they were on to navigate the uncharted reefs. At the same time, however, the Marists declined Tui Nayau's offer to take them to Taveuni where Tui Cakau was prepared to receive them. It is possible they had heard of the difficulties the Wesleyans, Thomas Williams and David Roulleaux, were experiencing. At least on Taveuni there was more space for two missionary societies to co-exist than on Lakeba. At the height of their fortunes in 1848, the Marists had a following of about 100 people. After Tui Nayau's profession of Wesleyanism in 1849, the Catholic cause on Lakeba was lost. By 1855, as the Wesleyans secured the support of Cakobau in central Fiji and benefitted from Tongan initiatives in the north-eastern islands, the Marists were withdrawing from Lakeba and from Rewa where missionaries had been since 1852. A mission on Taveuni commenced in 1851 had been closed a year later. While the priests gathered their shattered forces together at Levuka, the Wesleyan Mission, with its well-oiled machinery of Tongan teachers and local agents, expanded throughout Fiji.

Over the next two decades the Marists showed that they had learned from their early mistakes. In 1858 they consolidated their position in Fiji when, in a further example of Catholic church-gunboat diplomacy, the Marists were granted freedom of worship by Cakobau in areas subject to his influence, an agreement the Fijian chief signed with Le Bris Durumain, commander of the French corvette Bayonnaise. During the 1860s they avoided areas of obvious Wesleyan strength and found that they could gain a foothold in places that had either been past enemies of Bau or resented the growing Tongan influence in Fiji. Thus the Marists increased their facilities on Ovalau by establishing a training centre there and, to the north, found an influential patron in the paramount chief of the Cakaudrove confederation, Tui Cakau (Ratu Golea), who had originally resented the intrusion of both missions but finally settled for the Catholic faith as a sign of

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9 Father Roulleaux, *ibid.*, 381
10 Agreement between Cakobau and Commander Le Bris Durumain, 1858; MS in Roman Catholic Archives, Nicolas House, Suva. My attention was drawn to this document by Mrs Margaret Knox, Suva.
displeasure with the activities of Ma'afu's Wesleyan army within his borders. Later the Catholics returned to Rewa, at one time the bitterest enemy of Bau, and opened stations at Verata and Solevu, areas whose power had diminished as a result of Bauan intrigue and expansion.

The Wesleyan missionaries were not unconcerned by the resurrection of Catholicism after its early setback. However, during the 1860s and 1870s, the principal task of the Missions - nominal conversion of the entire island group - was still incomplete and in any case the drastic shortage of teachers in areas of Wesleyan influence meant that the Marist priests were left unmolested to carry on their work. James Calvert was grossly exaggerating when he declared in 1862 that 'Papery goes wherever we go and if we do not supply the antidote in good, these priests will do immense injury in the dark'. The fact was that at this stage the Wesleyans had no cause to fear any serious threat to their dominance. By comparison with the huge Wesleyan following the Marists enjoyed little success for many years. One Catholic periodical noted that in 1858, 'after fourteen years of preaching, the missionaries, saddened but not discouraged, have to show for their efforts only a few baptisms of children and old people in danger of death'. In the early 1870s funds to the Marist Mission were cut off as a result of the Franco-Prussian war and yet the priests laboured on. In the gaining of converts one visitor to Fiji recorded that they were not quite as successful as the Wesleyans, because the latter had capital: 'without money you cannot have missionaries, native teachers, schools or churches...without money you cannot make converts'.

So long as the two Christian Missions remained relatively isolated from one another in their spheres of work, very little friction

12 Calvert to J. Eggleston, 6 May 1862, MON 165.
13 Annals..., vol.XXX, 1869, 94.
14 L. Forbes, Two Years in Fiji, London 1875, 175.
occurred. On the other hand, where missionaries of the two churches came into close proximity and directed their efforts to virtually the same community, trouble was not far away. This situation arose in the 1870s on the small, isolated island of Rotuma, 400 kms to the north of Fiji, where both the Wesleyans and Marists had representatives responsible to higher authorities in Fiji. Although Wesleyanism had preceded Catholicism on the island, the former did not become firmly established there until 1864. In 1868 the Marists returned in 1868 after an absence of fifteen years. In January 1871 rivalry between the two Missions, now protected by a powerful chief, led to strife. One hundred inhabitants from the tribe of Tauraga Toak, the leading non-Christian chief, became Wesleyans and, supported by their missionary, refused to pay the customary tribute to Toak because they were not Christians and were ordered by their missionary, John Osborne, to have nothing to do with the 'heathen'. Angry with this rebuff to his chiefly rights, Toak allied himself with the Catholics in an attempt to assert his traditional authority over the Wesleyan rebels. From this point, political factors were subsumed in a religious crusade. In the Protestant camp, 'nothing was heard save the solemn chanting of hymns and penitential psalms mingled with the fervid oratory of local preachers from Fiji and Tonga'. The Catholic warriors were administered the sacraments while the banner that was to be borne aloft on the day of battle was honoured with the special blessing of the church.

15 The Marists first came to Rotuma in 1847, eight years after London Missionary Society teachers were left on the island by John Williams. After a difficult six years the Roman Catholic priests were withdrawn. W.J.E. Eason, A Short History of Rotuma, Suva 1951, 50-51.


The Wesleyans, according to a contemporary secular report, inflicted a 'crushing defeat' on the 'combined forces of heathen and Catholics'.\(^{18}\) Accounts differ as to the extent of damage caused to Catholic property during the Wesleyan victory celebrations but Osborne, the resident Wesleyan missionary, and a declared enemy of 'Popery', admitted that the Wesleyan supporters appropriated goods in Catholic houses and stole items from at least one Catholic church. With a degree of self-satisfaction he noted that on the very same night of the battle, the 'heathens sent a request to teachers to come and lotu the whole of them on the following day'.\(^{19}\)

In July 1872 the French warship \textit{Vaudreuil}, under Captain Lefeing, called at Rotuma and the commander gave orders by letter to see the Protestant chiefs. Once again French naval power interceded at a crucial time. At Osborne's instigation the chiefs refused to obey, believing wrongly that the Marist priests had written the letter.\(^{20}\) When the captain's demand was belatedly complied with, the chiefs were fined fifty casks of oil for the damage caused to Catholic property and the disrespect shown to the captain by not coming on board the ship earlier.\(^{21}\) Osborne's successor, William Fletcher, criticised his handling of the affair; 'he [Osborne] placed our people very needlessly at disadvantage. They have right on their side but might have been more wisely handled'.\(^{22}\)

The visit of the \textit{Vaudreuil} and other naval vessels to Rotuma did little to restore equilibrium.\(^{23}\) William Fletcher, who replaced Osborne in 1873, demonstrated how a combination of tact and patience

\(^{18}\) Forbes, \textit{op.cit.}, 242.

\(^{19}\) Osborne to B. Chapman, 1 March 1873, WMN, April 1873, 97; Osborne to Chapman, 31 March 1871, WMN, July 1871, 260.

\(^{20}\) W. Fletcher to Chapman, 3 September 1873, WMN 98.

\(^{21}\) Osborne to Chapman, 4 February 1873, WMN 166.

\(^{22}\) Fletcher to Chapman, 3 September 1873, WMN 98.

\(^{23}\) The French warship \textit{Hamelin} visited Rotuma in 1871 to try to secure religious toleration on the island. British vessels also called there but did not closely identify with the Wesleyan missionaries. See Eason, \textit{op.cit.}, 54-56.
could prevent further conflict. At one time, fearing the outbreak of war, he brought the leading chiefs together, elicited their grievances and showed that there was no just cause for hostilities. 24 When Fletcher left in 1875, he was followed by the tactless and narrow-minded Thomas Moore who wrote shortly after his arrival when observing that Reimkau, the prominent Catholic chief of Faguta, was wavering in his church allegiance, 'the day may not be far distant when it will be our joyful task to chronicle Romanism (in this part of the earth at any rate) as dead and buried side by side with heathenism'. 25 Reimkau might understandably have been put off by the unattractive character of the Wesleyan missionary; certainly the latter did not appreciate the fierce loyalty of many chiefs. In 1877 Moore was compelled to admit his lack of judgement declaring that 'both Popery and heathenism die hard'. 26 A year later conflict resumed.

The cause of hostilities in 1878 is less easy to determine than in 1871. The implacable anti-Catholic attitude of Thomas Moore, similar to that of his predecessor, John Osborne (who wrote in 1873 that missionaries 'morning, noon and night...ought to wage perpetual war with Rome'), 27 must be taken into account. Moore's central role in the 1878 war was highlighted by Rotuma's official historian, an interpretation recently re-emphasised by Rotuman writers. 28 The Marist priests, although in a generally weaker position than Moore, gave encouragement to their patron, Reimkau, urging him to maintain his Catholic profession when the chief was tempted to accept Wesleyanism in order to avert conflict. Viewed from a different angle, Reimkau was engaged in a serious leadership

24 Fletcher to Chapman, 24 May 1875, MOM 98.
25 Moore to Chapman, 23 November 1875, MOM 165.
26 Ibid., 23 January 1877, MOM 165.
27 Osborne to Chapman, 1 March 1873, WNN, April 1873, 97.
28 Eason, op.cit., 57. Eason relies on the account of an anthropologist who gained his information at least two decades after the events described. An account of the conflict closer to its occurrence is given by Westbrook, see n.30. See also the recently published Rotuma: Split Island, (ed.), Christ Plant, University of the South Pacific, 1977, especially the articles by Ieli Irava and John Tanu.
struggle with the Wesleyan chief, Marafu, a situation arising from rivalry among the three eastern districts of Rotuma—Fogutu, Oinafa and Noatau. Moore exploited the differences between chiefs for his own ends but traditional goals rather than religious probably lay at the root of the conflict. 29

Whatever the general causes of the war, the occasion for its outbreak involved a trivial incident between a Wesleyan teacher and the Catholic priests:

The war started over a very foolish piece of fanaticism on the part of a Wesleyan native missionary. It appears that this man had been out shooting wild pigs, and that upon his return he had to pass several villages where the Catholics were endeavouring to establish a footing in the Wesleyan villages. The Catholics if they could get one single convert in any of the Protestant districts would immediately erect a kind of small chapel even if it consisted of a few sticks thatched with coconut leaves. The chapel would be surmounted by a wooden cross. It was these crosses the fanatical native pastor took exception to and each one he passed he took a pot shot at. This of course was reported to the priests who wrote a strong letter of protest to the Rev. Mr Moore...who responded by doing all he could to curb the zeal of the native pastor, but met with no success, and who deliberately repeated the same offence again. The priest then wrote himself to the fanatical anti-Catholic teacher remonstrating with him. The teacher in reply sent a very insulting letter to the priest. 30

Incensed by the contents of the letter the Catholics of Rotuma took up arms and in the ensuing war, which lasted for seven months, eighty-four lives were lost. Though the Wesleyan superintendent, Moore, might be relieved of some blame for the immediate cause of conflict, noting however his unfortunate and inexplicable lack of authority over the teacher in question, part of the responsibility for the protracted and unnecessary war must be apportioned between

30 G.E.L. Westbrook, Island Reminiscences. MS in Brewster Papers, Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, Cambridge. Westbrook remained some time on Rotuma during 1880. Dr D. Munro of Macquarie University made this source available for my use.
both missions. 'The Roman Catholic missionaries were just as much to blame', commented Sir Arthur Gordon the Governor of Fiji, 'but I am afraid that the Wesleyan missionary was not anxious to keep or restore peace'.

If Moore and his Chairman in Fiji, Langham (who refused to believe the seriousness of the situation in Rotuma and declined a request from government authorities to send the mission vessel up to the island with John Thurston as mediator) had wished to see Catholicism 'dead and buried' as a result of the war, their hopes were unfulfilled. The Wesleyans, who could count on four times the numerical strength of the Roman Catholics, once again were the victors but they could not eradicate their enemies. (Among those who lost their lives was the Catholic leader, Reimkau, who was fatally wounded on 27 June in an engagement between an unspecified number of Catholics and 150 Wesleyans).

At the conclusion of hostilities in November 1878, the German traders on the island, who had played a part in bringing about peace, persuaded the chiefs to request British annexation through Sir Arthur Gordon. The petition was granted. When Gordon visited Rotuma at the end of 1879 he made a point of seeing the Marist priests and promising them equal treatment with the Wesleyans: 'they [the Catholics] have been so much persecuted', the Governor noted in his journal, 'that the complete toleration now obtained by them must be an enormous relief'.

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32 Deryck Scarr, I, The Very Bayonet, Canberra 1975, 336-38. In Langham's defence it should be recorded that the Mission Chairman felt there were other vessels which could have been chartered by the Government, especially as the Jubilee was heavily committed to missionary work around the main islands of Fiji. Thurston had not assisted his own case by bluntly reminding the Mission in 1874 not to interfere in government business when sailing around the island; and then in 1878 telling Langham that, 'for many reasons he would prefer to go in any vessel but a Mission vessel'. Thurston to D.S. Wylie, 23 December 1874, C.S.O. Outward Correspondence 74/227, F.1/35(5), Central Archives of Fiji and Western Pacific High Commission; Langham to B. Chapman, 22 July 1878, MOM 103.

33 [Anon], 'Histoire de Rotuma, 1837-1923', MS in Roman Catholic Archives, Nicolas House, Suva. (Microfilm copy, PMB 159, Menzies Library, Canberra.)

34 Fiji Records, vol.IV, 141.
Catholic influence in Rotuma was considerably diminished as a result of the wars in the 1870s. Marafu demonstrated his position of supremacy by dividing the Catholic district of Faguta into two, Juju and Pepjci, thereby effectively weakening Catholic power on the island. Socially the war left deep scars. For almost a century the two religious communities remained divided on issues involving land ownership, marriage, the written language and clan relations.\textsuperscript{35}

Rotuma was too small to satisfactorily accommodate both the Wesleyans and Marists. Even in the larger islands of Fiji the only practicable solution to intermittent religious rivalry was spheres of influence. Such a system existed informally and there was always the possibility that it would break down. This happened in the 1890s when for over ten years there was an eruption of conflict and bitterness. A number of reasons help to explain this decade of turbulence. From the Wesleyan point of view, their primary aim of a nominally Christian Fiji had been achieved by the 1880s and they were now concentrating on reinforcing weaker areas such as Rewa and Cakaudrove, where the Catholics had a following. The latter were also embarking on a programme of expansion by developing mission stations such as Natovi in Tailevu, the heart of Wesleyan territory. Villages where conflict occurred were often situated in those provinces.

The single most important factor in the growing rivalry of the Missions was the significant changes in personnel, mainly on the Catholic side, to a lesser extent with the Wesleyans. Among the Marists, the gentle Father Bréhéret, representative of the early semimonastic missionaries, was succeeded as leader of the Mission in 1887 by the more aggressive Bishop Julian Vidal, who was appointed to take charge when Fiji became a Vicariate Apostolic in 1887. Under Bréhéret, the Marists had resigned themselves to a minority religious role and in that situation (to use Thurston’s phrase) 'manifested little energy’.\textsuperscript{36} By contrast, Vidal came from fifteen years missionary experience in Samoa, with a reputation for active proselytisation; he was, from the

\textsuperscript{35} John Tanu, \textit{op.cit.}, 20-21.

\textsuperscript{36} Thurston to Colonial Office, 18 August 1891, Confidential Despatch, N.A.F.
Marist point of view, the perfect foil to Langham. Vidal immediately adopted a policy of rapid expansion, including an increase in European staff, the purchase of land, construction of stone churches and a new educational thrust under the responsibility of the Marist Brothers (of the Schools) - an educationally oriented religious order - and the Sisters of St Joseph of Cluny.

Predictably, as a result of the Bishop's forward move - by 1899 there were fifty-nine Catholic missionaries in Fiji compared with thirteen Wesleyans - Vidal incurred the enmity of the Wesleyans who saw him as a man of 'bluster and pomposity'. They alleged that while the Bishop was regarded by his Fijian neophytes as 'the greatest of all chiefs in Fiji', he was contemptuously called *kai tani viavialevu* (an aspiring foreigner) by Fiji's highest chiefs. 37 At times Vidal rankled the colonial officials in Fiji with his pretentious shows of authority such as flying the papal ensign above the British flag on the Catholic vessel *Dolphin*. 38

The Wesleyans evinced sharper hostility to Catholicism in the late nineteenth century. 'Good Lord arrest Popery Everywhere, Amen!' exclaimed Thomas Williams in his later years, 39 while men such as Joshua Chapman in Vanua Levu and Henry Worrall in Rewa saw their duty as instructing converts in the 'designs and doings of the myrmidons of his persecuted and imprisoned Holiness the Pope'. 40 The attitude of the missionaries was in part a reflection of the sectarianism that pervaded eastern Australia in the late nineteenth century; 41 more specifically it was a reaction to Vidal's success at propagating Catholicism within Fiji. The Wesleyan Chairman, Frederick Langham,

38 C.S.O. 93/1761
39 Journal of visit to Fiji, 1885-86, B.490 ML.
40 MR, January 1896.
41 See below, 186-87.
kept a notebook between 1877 and 1895 in which he recorded with strict regard to detail the statistics of Catholics in Fiji, chronicling their annual numbers with reports from his teachers and from the Registrar-General's office. In areas where Catholicism appeared to be gaining strength he would fortify them with fresh batches of young wuri, or student teachers, indoctrinated with anti-Catholic propaganda at the various circuit training institutions. Insufficient preparation was no reason to withhold wuri if they were needed for the cause. In Langham's frantic words, the 'emissaries of the scarlet whore must be forestalled':

We must be prepared for the present to send 'poor tools' into the work... We can at all counts send better men than the priests can find and these will satisfy our people for the time being and shut their mouths so that they cannot complain of being left without Teachers. Stir up our Teachers all around to 'go for' the popis.

Between 1890 and 1903 tension and conflict between the two Missions occurred over a number of issues. Firstly there was hostility in villages where both Wesleyan and Catholic churches had been erected. In 1890, at Namalata near Bau, twelve Catholics were imprisoned for refusing to assist in the building of the Wesleyan church. They had received help from the Wesleyans in the erection of their church but, under instructions from their priest, the Catholics had not reciprocated that help. In 1893 the Catholic church at Naivisaro in Tailevu province was pulled down by eleven men, including the village chief, and a Wesleyan building erected on the same site. Those responsible were ordered to pay compensation each, 'for unlawfully and maliciously damaging property of a public nature'.

Whatever the colonial courts decided, in the eyes of Fijians the men involved in the first case outlined above had been justly punished even though the Marist priests protested vehemently. Before

42 Langham, Notebook, 1877-95, B.289 ML.
43 Langham to Worrall, 3 June 1889, NON 295.
44 C.S.O. 90/1061.
45 C.S.O. 93/2403.
the building of the churches it had been agreed at a District Council
meeting that, in the traditional communal manner and in obedience to
their chiefs, Wesleyans and Catholics would work together in the
errection of both buildings. Religious loyalties must take second place
to village unity. Yet the agreement was dishonoured by the Catholics;
with the exception of the local teacher, those imprisoned were satisfied
with the justice of their sentence. The chiefs were greatly irritated
by the action of the Marist priests who, they considered, were disturbing
the unity of Fijian village life, encouraging the lazy and disaffected
and condoning the non-payment of government taxes.46 In the second
incident quoted above, the offenders had been dealt with according to
European concepts of property ownership. The magistrate had shown
little appreciation of Fijian land tenure custom. Most churches in
Fiji were built on native land by the community which was to use it and
thus sole ownership lay with the people. As one government official
belatedly commented, those punished 'were simply dealing with their
own property in a way that they had a right to do'.47

In 1899 Governor O'Brien of Fiji made an attempt to legislate
against the traditional requirement of one denomination to assist in
the building of houses for ministers and teachers of another denomination.
But matters of religion brought out the strong communal features of
Fijian society. The following year, three Catholics from the village
of Bama in Ra were imprisoned for refusing to assist in building the
Wesleyan catechist's house. As in previous cases, the Marist priest
had intervened to prevent the carrying out of a reciprocal agreement.
His action was denounced by the Roko Tui Ra who considered that the
magistrate had rightly prosecuted the men.48

A second area of tension between Wesleyans and Catholics
during the 1890s concerned their methods of proselytisation. The
Catholics criticised the actions of Wesleyan missionaries who, they
claimed, were endeavouring 'to poison the minds of the Fijian people

46 C.S.O. 90/1061.
47 C.S.O. 93/2403.
48 C.S.O. 1900/4238.
against the church and her doctrines'.

They felt particularly bitter about the behaviour of Joshua Chapman, missionary at Bua, who persistently tried to win over to Wesleyanism every Fijian Catholic he encountered. On one occasion he spoke to an assembly of Catholics at Nacula, Yasawa, which had been called by order of the government-appointed Buli. At the height of the meeting the Catholic teacher was forcibly removed by Wesleyan sympathisers, presumably so that Chapman could harangue the people uninterrupted. In 1893 Chapman was taken to court by the Catholic priests on two charges of slander and libel, involving alleged veiled references to illicit relationships between priests and Catholic sisters. Although neither charge was upheld, the Chief Justice admonished Chapman for his 'ill-advised general conduct', describing him as a 'dangerous man'. Chapman's abrasive behaviour was noted by the Roko Tui Bua who attributed sectarian disputes in his province to the presence of the Wesleyan missionary.

The Wesleyans for their part complained of methods used by the Marists to secure Fijian allegiance. They resented the tactics adopted by Vidal in placing Fijian teachers in villages where there was less than a handful of neophytes and even building a church on the strength of this following, a policy deliberately aimed at breaking down Wesleyan strongholds. This strategy was also opposed by the colonial administration which supported those Fijian chiefs who refused entry to Catholic teachers in the belief that it would cause unnecessary 'dissension'. The Wesleyans further produced evidence that Marist priests, in their desperate attempts to increase Catholic following, were bribing Fijians with either money or worse still (from a Fijian

49 Australasian Catholic Record, April-July 1899, 304.
50 C.S.O. 93/143.
51 W.W. Lindsay to H. Worrall, 28 May 1894, NDM 295; J. Vidal, Circular Letter No. 35, 7 March 1903, PHB 463 (Original in Nicolas House, Suva).
52 Roko Tui Bua to Governor, 29 December 1892, C.S.O. 93/143.
53 Col.Sec. to Vidal, 28 July 1890, C.S.O. 90/1860.
point of view) with the tabua (sacred whale's tooth), an object Fijians could not refuse without risking grave offence to the donor. 54

Fijians were caught in the middle of this barren confrontation between Wesleyan and Catholic. 'We cannot say who is right of the two', noted Roko Tui Bua. 'All we know is that it is usual with all the Ministers of Religion in Fiji to dispute with one another'. 55 In 1895 in the Tailevu province, where feelings were at their most bitter, the Roko Tui Tailevu, Ratu Epeli Nailatikau, took matters into his own hands and, on being informed by Buli Dawasamu of trouble between the Wesleyans and Catholics in the village of Vorovoro, Ratu Epeli instructed all the Catholics to 'become members of the true Church [lotu dina]'.

For, as he explained to Father L. Lézer, the zealous priest from Natovi, Tailevu, 'there was much sickness at Vorovoro on account of the very strained relations existing between the members of our Church and members of your Church'. 56 The interference of Father Lézer in village matters and his domineering attitude were resented by Buli Dawasamu, who had official responsibility for village affairs. 'I Reverend Priest, I will deal with the village as I like. I tell you, let no Roman Catholic Priest return to Vorovoro hereafter'. 57 The Government leaders were hard put to exercise a restraining hand on some of the Fijian leaders. 'Don't influence [the Catholics] to turn from their religion', the Roko and Buli were told, 'if it is not their desire to do so. It is left to every man to select whatever religion he thinks best'. 58

54 H. Worrall to Mr Garrick, 4 May 1896, MOM 293; see also Fiji Times, 6 May 1896; papers re friction between the Wesleyan and Roman Catholic Mission in Fiji, 1896–89, M/20, MF; W. Brown to Small, 14 February 1905, F/1/1905; W. Brown to G. Brown, 8 March 1905, MOM Uncat. 1905–53. Father J.L. Guinard S.M., Assistant Priest at Rewa in the early 1900s, confirmed the presentation of tabua as a form of pressure on Fijians to become Roman Catholics. Stories of the Mission, for the people, MS in Roman Catholic Archives, Nicolas House, Suva. Mrs Margaret Knox of Suva allowed me to use her translation of the original document.

55 C.S.O. 93/143.

56 C.S.O. 95/4553.

57 Ibid.

58 W.L. Allardyce to Roko Tui Tailevu and Buli Dawasamu, 21 January 1896, C.S.O. 95/4553.
This philosophy was somewhat unrealistic in view of the strong communal bonds of Fijian society.

In 1898, as part of a campaign to stem the decline of the Fijian population, Governor O'Brien approached both the Catholics and Wesleyans requesting them to provide female missionaries who would visit Fijian villages and give instruction about the care of babies and general standards of hygiene. Vidal responded quickly with the offer of eight European and fourteen native sisters. It was understood that their work would be carried out in Catholic villages and would be entirely financed by the Mission.59

The Wesleyans held back. Slightly sceptical of O'Brien's approach they pleaded financial limitations to account for their inability to co-operate. But privately they felt, with good reason, that a Hygiene Mission was really the job of the Government and that O'Brien was getting it done on the cheap by pitting 'one Lotu against the other'. They realised that if the Catholic sisters went into villages predominantly Wesleyan there would be 'bad blood stirred up' and in response they would have to utilise the teachers' wives and the schools.60

In view of the delicate situation prevailing between the two Missions, O'Brien stressed the necessity for Catholic sisters to concentrate their work in towns where the majority of people were Catholics. It was not long before complaints reached the Government; in the province of Tailevu, the Catholic sister was observed entering predominantly or totally Wesleyan villages and using her position to encourage children to attend Catholic schools. O'Brien was annoyed. His laudable scheme appeared to be foundering on the rocks of sectarian jealousy. Yet he was in a dilemma. In Tailevu, less than ten percent of the population were Catholics and in only one village were they a majority. At the risk of offending the Wesleyans, O'Brien decided to allow Catholic sisters to visit Tailevu villages where Wesleyan adherents preponderated but where also there was a significant minority

59 C.S.O. 98/4919.
60 G. Brown to W.W. Lindsay, 5 April 1899, NOM 46.
of Catholics. The Wesleyan Mission, which had adopted a 'dog in the manger' attitude on this question, responded half-heartedly despite the challenge to their supremacy and by 1901 they had only one missionary sister engaged full-time in Tailevu with two missionaries' wives doing the best they could in their spare time. The Wesleyan missionary in charge of Rewa Circuit did not consider it necessary for the missionary sister in his area to take up similar work. 'The Governor tried to get our wives and sisters to do what he very well knew to be his own work'.

The Wesleyans were disturbed at apparent government support for the Marists in the Hygiene Mission. But they were irate when state aid appeared to be favouring the Catholics in the field of education. In January 1899 Bishop Vidal requested government assistance for the opening of a non-denominational primary school at Naililili Catholic station, Rewa. The school had been asked for by Tui Sawau, the acting Roko Tui Rewa, who had particularly stressed the desirability of young Fijians learning the English language. At a meeting of Fijian leaders in May, the school was enthusiastically supported and it was decided to raise the provincial rates from 2/- per head to 4/- (£80 annually) to cover the estimated cost of the school. Government officers expressed doubts as to whether the Catholic Mission, which would supply the teachers, would allow the school to be exclusively secular but they were reassured on this point by Vidal.

The Wesleyan missionaries, predictably, were not convinced that Bishop Vidal would keep his word for in their experience no child of Wesleyan parentage had gone through a Catholic school without being converted. They were adamantly that the school had been forced on the people by one or two chiefs, the acting Roko included, whose consent had been obtained 'much to the surprise and chagrin of the people as a whole'.

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61 H.H. Nolan to B. Danks, 7 September 1901, Methodist Church of Australia 628, ML. See Chapter 7 for further details of the Hygiene Mission.
64 MR, June 1900.
subsidising a Catholic institution and noted that at Ba (on the opposite side of Viti Levu) William Slade had obtained exemption for Catholics in that province before seeking government support for a Wesleyan girls' school at Nailaga. 65

As with the Hygiene Mission, Catholic initiative goaded the Wesleyans into action; in November 1899 they opened a school at Navula on the Rewa delta where English would be taught. The raison d'être for the Navula school was to provide an alternative to Naililili, which meanwhile was coming under increased pressure. Wesleyan parents, under threat of having their church membership suspended, stopped sending their children to the Catholic-sponsored school. By March 1901 only twenty-one children out of a population of 400 in the Rewa villages were attending. 'The school is almost empty', wrote the Native Commissioner, 'and the people are grumbling at the increased rate levied to provide the grant of $80'. 66 Two years after the school's opening, the province withdrew its financial support, the reason given being that some Wesleyan youths had been persuaded by the priests to accept Catholicism.

The rift between the Wesleyans and the Catholics was probably at its worst in the opening years of the twentieth century. Distrust and ill-feeling were the order of the day. Villages were divided among themselves; missionaries on both sides challenging the authority of chiefs and the Government trying desperately to maintain a neutral stance and carry out their policies above the discordance. In this atmosphere of intense suspicion and uncertainty the Wesleyans received their greatest shock when, in August 1902, more than 800 Fijians from the inland provinces of Namosi and Soloira deserted Wesleyanism and adopted Catholicism.

To a large extent the causes of this secession are totally unrelated to any of the points of conflict already mentioned and hence it is necessary to briefly review the background. The Namosi province to the west of Suva had been one of the last to accept Christianity in the 1870s. The Wesleyans had always found it a difficult area to manage,

65 G. Brown to W.W. Lindsay, 16 May 1899, M.O.M. 46.
66 C.S.O. 88/1412.
admitting that many of the inhabitants were nominally Christian and government accounts spoke of the Namosi people as a restless and warlike hill tribe. Since 1900 the chiefs of the Namosi area and in particular Ratu Matanitobua, Roko Tui Namosi, had lent considerable support to the movement for the federation of Fiji with New Zealand, led by Humphrey Berkeley, a Suva lawyer. It is probable that the reasons for Ratu Matanitobua's dissatisfaction with British rule lay mainly in what he considered to be an oppressive taxation system, which unfairly penalised the tribes in the interior: for instance, in order to earn their 'poll-tax', over half the tax-payers of Namosi district were required to walk more than fifteen miles each day to the sugarcane fields. Together with this work-load, Ratu Matanitobua had ordered his people to undertake the felling of 8,000 buabua logs (Fijian hardwood) in order to raise the funds necessary to send Berkeley to England, the latter to present grievances of the Namosi people to the King.

In July 1902, while Ratu Matanitobua was attending a meeting of the Council of Chiefs, he was insulted by other chiefs who questioned the province's loyalty to the British crown in view of the chief's support for federation. To add insult to injury, on his return to Namosi, the Roko learnt that a Wesleyan native teacher had given information to the English provincial inspector regarding the conduct of some of the members of the head chief's family - (the teacher in question was subsequently disciplined). The old chief jumped to the conclusion that the Government and the Wesleyans were opposed to him and 'he declared to show his power' by leaving the Wesleyan Church and taking his people with him. Other accounts append a further incident which contributed to Ratu Matanitobua's decision. While his people were engaged in cutting

68 Governor to C.O., ibid.
69 H. Nolan, Fiji Times, 25 March 1903; see also Frederick Carr, Fiji Times, 8 April 1903.
70 Nolan, op.cit.
the buabua logs the chief received a letter from the Provincial Magistrate telling him to 'stop that work as it was necessary for the people to engage in a Vaka Missionary'. Berkeley advised Ratu Matanitobua to protest against being forced to make a missionary collection and in reply 'Tui Namosi stated that he and some thousands of his people were prepared to change their religion and become Roman Catholics if this thing were persisted in'. The chief obviously reasoned that it would be preferable to belong to a Church which showed less inclination to act in collusion with government authorities.

Supporters of the Catholic Mission asserted that Ratu Matanitobua, after consultation with the other chiefs of the province, decided to secede on his own volition because the Wesleyans were 'preying upon the native people and doing them no good'. The desire to change their faith was the 'voluntary choice of the natives'. The Wesleyans on the other hand argued that Berkeley, in consultation with Ratu Matanitobua, had suggested to him that the Catholics be brought in. According to the Wesleyan missionary Howard Nolan, the Namosi chief had been turned down as a possible convert by the Seventh Day Adventists 'owing to the chief's excited condition'. When Roko Tui Namosi approached Berkeley the latter said, 'don't call in the Seventh Day Adventists; they don't keep the Sabbath. I will send for the priests from Naililili and take them round'.

From the Wesleyan point of view the more serious side of the

71 Carr, op.cit.

72 In 1899 Governor George O'Brien decided to incorporate the annual vakamisoneri (Wesleyan church collection) into a yearly programme of work so that the people would not be required to work both for the Government and the Mission at the same time. The provincial magistrate who instructed Ratu Matanitobua to stop the work on which he was engaged and take up the missionary collection, was exceeding his legal powers. As Small noted, 'the chief and the people should have been allowed to follow their own wishes in the matter', Fiji Times, 6 June 1903.

73 Cardinal Moran, Fiji Times, 4 March 1903.

74 Nolan, Fiji Times, 25 March 1903. For a discussion of the Seventh Day Adventist Mission in Fiji, see below, 194 ff.
case was the pressure they alleged the Catholic priests and the chief himself put on the people of Namosi to change their faith. Small cited cases of undue influence being brought to bear on some Fijians, including Ratu Matanitobua's own wife, while Tui Namosi in company with Father Emmanuel Rougier, the priest from Rewa, visited most of the villages persuading wavering priests to join the new lotu.\(^7^5\) The following words were alleged to have been used: 'You must all come to the Roman Catholic service tomorrow morning... Any man that does not come...his name will be put on record before these three - the Chief, Mr Berkeley and the Governor.'\(^7^6\)

Father Jean Louis Guinard, assistant priest to Father Rougier at the time of the secession, was at Vivelatula in the Namosi province in August 1902 to say the first mass and distribute medals and rosaries. On that occasion he records that Ratu Matanitobua got the men together and made them give the Wesleyan chapel to be the Catholic Church; 'it is we who have built it, we have paid for the floorboards, it belongs to us and we can do with it what we like; when we were Wesleyans it was our prayer house, now that we are Catholics, it will continue to be so'. In September of the same year Guinard wrote that Fathers J. de Marzan and Rougier, together with the chiefs Ratu Matanitobua and Ratu Verebalavu went into all the villages. They carried a supply of rosaries and medals. 'The chiefs called their people together and got them to exchange their Wesleyan Bibles for rosaries and medals'.\(^7^7\) It is not surprising that Guinard stressed the crucial role of the high chief in the successful conversion of most of the Namosi people. This previously had been the pattern for Wesleyan successes. A brief account of the Namosi secession by the resident Governor, Sir Henry Jackson, noted that Matanitobua's decision was 'immediately imitated by the whole of his people'.\(^7^8\)

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75 Small, Fiji Times, 18 April 1903.
77 Guinard, op.cit.
78 Governor to C.O., see above, n.67.
Whatever did happen at Namosi one point was undisputed — over 800 Fijians who had been Wesleyans were within a short space of time Catholics, if only by name. This defection stunned the Wesleyan missionaries. For Ratu Matanitobua's original decision to leave their Church they blamed the 'foolish conduct' of the Fijian minister resident at Namosi, Peniame Bavia.79 But subsequent events, in view of previous experience with the Catholics, were regarded by the Wesleyans as yet another example of the devious schemes of 'pocracy'. The missionaries insisted, with some credibility, that very few conversions at Namosi had been motivated by purely spiritual ideals and that the influence of an outsider, Berkeley, had significantly assisted the Catholic cause. Wesleyan pride had been dealt a severe blow; now the missionaries waited for an opportunity to return the punch. They chose to do so in February 1903 after newspaper reports of a 'public' Bible-burning at the Naililili Catholic mission station, Rewa.

When the people of Namosi became Catholics they were required to exchange their Wesleyan Bibles and hymn-books for Catholic rosaries, medallions and prayer-books. The Wesleyan material was then carried down the Waidina river to the Catholic mission station at Naililili on the Rewa river and there stored away. On 12 February 1903, 'one Biscuit-tin full of torn and useless Catholic books and Church material, and one kerosene case filled with soiled and useless Wesleyan Testaments and hymn books, which Namosi converts had exchanged for Catholic books' were used as fuel in the lime-kiln on the mission station property.80 It was unfortunate that this dispassionate account of the burning, given by Father Rougier, did not precede an inadequate and suggestive newspaper article which had stated that '238 bibles were publicly burned' at Naililili, an event which had caused a 'great stir amongst the natives in the district'.81 It was rumoured around Suva after this that the burnings had followed the pattern set by the Spanish Inquisition and had been heralded by trumpet and drum amid the exulting shouts of applauding onlookers. Furthermore Fijians in response to the burnings were said to

79 Small to Langham, 17 November 1902, F/1/1902.
80 Fiji Times, 25 February 1903.
81 Western Pacific Herald, 13 February 1903.
be taking up arms and a British gunboat was being summoned to prevent possible conflagration. 82

The Wesleyan missionary at Rewa, William Burns, without bothering to corroborate his facts by taking a five minute walk to Naililili or sending a messenger there (the Wesleyan mission station was at Lomanikoro - about 400 metres distance from Naililili), burst into print with a series of damaging allegations against the Catholics. He claimed that the burning had taken place at the side of a road leading through the Catholic mission station, and though the road was a private thoroughfare it was frequently used as a public path since it was the only means of access from the nearby villages to the Rewa river steamers. In this way at least twenty adult spectators (all of them apparently Wesleyans), together with a large number of school children, witnessed the burning. Also, a couple of boys present had been daring enough to 'steal' two of the Wesleyan testaments from the unlit portion of the kiln. The books having found their way into Burns's possession, he had observed immediately that they were in good order. Burns concluded that all the Wesleyan scriptural material surrendered by the Namosi people had been 'publicly and deliberately' burned at Naililili. 83

News of the incident had meanwhile been transmitted to the Australian Wesleyan officials by the missionaries in Fiji. The former immediately publicised the affair well aware that Protestant-Roman Catholic hostility, not long dormant, would once again flare up. The 1890s in Australia had seen bitter wrangles between leaders of the respective missionary societies. Cardinal Moran, Archbishop of Sydney, was a particularly successful propagandist for the Catholic cause claiming that the Protestants had failed completely in their South Seas mission work and accusing the Wesleyans of making their fortunes while in the mission field. 84 Moran's charges were often based on spurious evidence

82 Fiji Times, 25 February 1903. Bishop Vidal, A few conclusions drawn from the Bible-burning affair, 18 April 1903. MS in Roman Catholic Archives, Suva. (Copy in PMB 463, Menzies Library, Canberra.)

83 Fiji Times, 21 February 1903.

84 The Mission Field of the Nineteenth Century, Sydney 1895, passim.
but the publicity his speeches attracted in Australia did not help the image of the Wesleyans or the London Missionary Society. When Frederick Langham returned to Australia after thirty-seven years in Fiji, he immediately threw himself into a hectic round of addresses at public meetings and Orange Lodge gatherings, condemning the work of the Catholics, accusing them of buying converts and generally answering Moran's allegations with equally hostile remarks. When the distorted facts of the Bible-burning reached Australia, the Wesleyan Church fathers were outraged. In an angry and vindictive mood the New South Wales Wesleyan Conference petitioned the Imperial Government directing its attention 'to the disturbing influence caused by the appointment of a Roman Catholic Governor to Fiji and to the fact that the Roman Catholic authorities [were] unduly using the circumstances to the advantage of their Church and the serious embarrassment of our work'.

The Australian Wesleyans, carried away in a wave of anti-papal hysteria, were behaving absurdly, as Small himself admitted. Aware that his colleagues in Australia were making 'a bit too much of the affair', he dismissed the suggestion that the Governor was involved in any conspiracy with the Catholics. 'The Governor is a Christian and a gentleman and has already helped us much... It is the priest who is crooked."

Father Rougier was more imprudent than 'crooked' over the Bible-burning incident. In his denial of the Wesleyan interpretation of the affair Rougier stressed three points. Firstly, no Wesleyan Bibles of any value had been burned but were still in the keeping of the Roman Catholic Mission at Naulili. Secondly, and acting according to the rules of the Catholic church (which state that all sacred material relating to church worship, including prayer books and Bibles, when worn out and past use, should be destroyed by fire to avoid the possibility of their being put to a profane use), the Catholic sisters, aided by a few of their pupils, had carried out the burning. Finally, the two books stolen by the boys had in fact been put aside on a log by the sisters because of their good condition indicating that those who

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85 Sydney Morning Herald, 11 March 1903.
86 Small to W.E. Bromilow, 27 March 1903, F/1/1903.
performed the burning 'were not actuated by any hostile feelings or a spirit of wanton destruction'.\(^\text{87}\) It is significant that a Wesleyan Commission later supported the claim that the books had been placed away from the kiln thus suggesting sincere intention on the part of the Catholics.\(^\text{88}\)

Government reports of the Bible-burning lent vindication to the Catholic explanation of events. A number of the Wesleyan Bibles had been in good condition and were preserved from the flames. Eventually they were distributed around the various Catholic mission stations in Fiji - a piece of information which would have astonished Wesleyan missionaries who still mistakenly believed that Catholic priests had an inveterate hatred for Scriptures. The Catholics were not entirely exonerated however; the Governor noted that their delay in presenting the full facts of the burning had allowed the affair to explode in the way it did.\(^\text{89}\) And although the Catholics did do their burning in the back-yard, some passers-by were attracted to the kiln. Father Rougier was advised by one newspaper that the next time he wished to carry out the relevant law of the Catholic Church, 'he should perform his clearing up with somewhat more privacy than was observed in the instance under notice'.\(^\text{90}\)

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\(^\text{87}\) Fiji Times, 25 February 1903.

\(^\text{88}\) Confidential Report of Commission..., \textit{op.cit.}, 6. Some Wesleyan missionaries believed their case was strengthened by the clear delay between the time the Catholic priests collected all the scriptural material and the day it was burned. This they asserted indicated that the Catholics were storing up the books for a large public show of burning. Such a claim cannot be upheld. All sacred material held by the Catholic Church is burnt, if useless, in the weeks prior to Ash Wednesday, the commencement of Lent in the Christian calendar. 12 February 1903, was two weeks before this date.

\(^\text{89}\) Governor to C.O., 2 March 1903, CO 83. See also letter of H. Bertram Cox in \textit{Manchester Guardian}, 18 June 1903, for summary of Colonial Office opinion.

\(^\text{90}\) Fiji Times, 7 March 1903. For further discussion of the Bible-burning affair, see A.W. Thornley, 'Heretics and Papists: Wesleyan-Roman Catholic Rivalry in Fiji, 1844-1903', \textit{Journal of Religious History} [in press].
Rivalry between Methodism and Catholicism continued beyond 1903 though the drama that surrounded the Bible-burning was the climactic point in their relations. In 1906 Vidal briefly realised his long-cherished aim of penetrating the Wesleyan fortress of Bau. The leaders on that chiefly island had considered calling in the priests in 1902 when the Chairman's residence was shifted from Bau to the growing capital of Suva; Small managed to appease the chiefs' wounded self-esteem with a diplomatic explanation of the change in residence. Privately however he confided to George Brown his contempt for the overweening pride of the Bauans. If they cannot be accommodated with a seat at the top of the tree, the tree must come down.  

In 1905 Ratu Joni Colata, unofficial leader of a group of Bauan dissident chiefs who had either been dismissed or barred from government office, allowed the Catholics to erect a wooden church on a piece of land he falsely alleged to own outright. Colata's action was part of an anti-establishment campaign dating back to his differences with Cakobau's son, Ratu Epeli. The thought of a Catholic presence on Bau made the Methodists tremble; Howard Nolan wrote to Danks in Sydney:

> Even you can scarcely realise what it would mean if the R.C.'s got a footing on Bau. While Bau loyally remains Protestant, Fiji will be Protestant — but for the chiefs here to dally with the baits thrown out by Rome, would mean that many other places would be at once laid open to the same specious policy...  

Colata's successful if short-lived 'coup' was due in part to the duplicity of Ratu Kadavulevu, Roko Tailevu, who presented himself as a prospective neophyte by condoning Colata's action while simultaneously expressing grave doubts to colonial officials about the wisdom of Catholic encroachment:

> I do not think my people would look kindly on the proposal nor do I consider that it wd be a success as there are no R. Catholics on the island that I

91 Small to G. Brown, 4 November 1902, F/1/1902.
know of. As I am neither a Roman Catholic or Wesleyan I write this from an independent point of view. I believe that if a chapel were started in Bau it would not last long as it is unlikely that there would be any converts.94

Ratu Kadavulevu was well aware that the land on which the chapel was being erected belonged not only to Colata but also, among others, to Ratu Saimoni, Boli Bau, an active opponent of Catholic proselytisation on Bau. The Roko had also received tabua from the people of Namata led by the staunch Wesleyan Niko Rabuku, Boli Namata, expressing their objections to a Catholic chapel on Bau. However, Ratu Kadavulevu was infuriated when he heard that Father Rougier had used the Roko's name to galvanise the Namosi people into cutting fifty buabua logs for the new chapel.95

Catholicism was doomed to failure on Bau even before the church opened in February 1906. Bishop Vidal, twelve priests and several brothers feted its consecration but, on the previous Saturday, Catholic entertainment in the form of a brass band and sideshows was checkmated that evening by the Wesleyans who gleefully led an overflowing Cakobau Memorial Church prayer meeting. According to Methodist accounts Catholic services petered out and Ratu Kadavulevu had the final word over Rougier after the latter countermanded his order for the Tokatoka people (including Catholics) to assist in the thatching of a Wesleyan teacher's house. When Rougier came to make peace, Ratu Kadavulevu did not offer him even a chair and the priest sat on the floor like a Fijian before the Roko. The Roko gave him a great rating and left him sitting on the floor and went on the rara for his cricket practice... The people profess to feel even more loyal to our Protestant faith than ever.96

Under Small's old-guard Chairmanship the Methodists retained a minatory attitude towards Catholicism. On request Fijian ministers supplied Small with statistics of Catholic strength in isolated areas.

94 Ratu Kadavulevu to Father Rougier, 19 October 1905 and Ratu Kadavulevu to Native Commissioner, 20 November 1905, C.S.O. 1905/4931.
95 Nolan to Small, 23 November 1905, F/1/1905.
96 Nolan to Small, 5 March 1906, F/1/1906.
while he in turn fortified them with xenophobic condemnation of other Christian churches; 'Our church is the only true church of our Lord', he wrote to Joni Uluinaceva adding with a rare but ambiguous touch of patriotism, 'other churches are making theirs to suit Fiji but we will build Fiji into a strong, prosperous and a proud nation'. Small wrote to chiefs urging active support of Methodism while in one of his favourite ploys he dispatched capable Fijian ministers such as Mataiasi Vave to follow in the steps of proselytising priests and reinforce the chiefs in their Methodist allegiance. In 1911 he protested unsuccessfully at what he considered to be the 'sectarian' appointment by the Government of Catholic sisters to nursing positions at the Nakogai Leper hospital, which catered for a large number of Fijian Methodists. In a more questionable move Small did not discourage the missionary on Rotuma in 1918 from attempting to prevent the appointment of a Catholic government commissioner.

Confronted with an entrenched denomination, secure in its organisation and with traditionally-based roots, the Marists failed to rival the Methodists in direct evangelisation. But the chink in the Methodist armour was schooling and by the early 1900s Vidal was committing the majority of his staff to the field of education. The Methodists, heavily reliant on village schools and inadequately trained Fijian teachers, found the Catholics building fewer but larger schools, many with boarding facilities and all with mainly expatriate staff. In 1889, eighteen Catholic Brothers and forty Sisters were teaching 496 boys and 432 girls in schools attached to the central stations. Suva typified the program of centralisation with a high school of eighty boys conducted by the Marist Brothers and a girls' high school staffed by the Sisters of

97 Small to Uluinaceva, 21 June 1907, F/1/1907.

98 The Government claimed the appointments were not based on 'sectarian' motives but on the recognition of the ability of the Catholics to provide the best trained nurses. Small was appeased in 1913 when the Government allowed him to place a Fijian minister on the island to have pastoral care of the Methodists. Colonial Secretary to Small, 29 December 1910 and 30 April 1913; Small to C.S., 31 January 1911, F/2/vol.I, NF. See also Sister Mary Stella S.M.S.M., Nakogai - Image of Hope, Christchurch 1978, 32-38.

99 P.M. Waterhouse to Small, 29 October 1918, F/1/1918.
St Joseph of Cluny. The only Methodist boarding schools were at Navula - for boys, and at Nailaga, Ba - for girls. William Slade, founder of the latter school recognised the Methodist Mission's inability to compete with the Catholics:

[They] are making great efforts to take away Fiji from us by means of their schools and their resources in cash seem very ample. It is a strong draw for native boys to be offered an English education free with a hint that they may be sent to a Colonial School. One or two young chiefs are at St. Patrick's College in Wellington. The chance of seeing papalagi is in itself an inducement to perversion.

Slade isolated some of the ingredients of Catholic success in education - a large input of European teachers with finance from overseas to support them, free schooling and the opportunity to learn English. Other missionaries noted qualities of commitment and continuity among Catholic staff: 'they rarely have furlough' wrote J.W. Burton, 'they may die - but two men are ready to fill the gap'.

The Methodists watched helplessly as priests visited the outer islands and left with young men and women eager to share in the benefits of learning. In Lau, some parents refused permission for their children to leave but others much to the 'surprise' of the Methodist Chairman sacrificed denominational loyalty for educational opportunity and 'yielded up' their children to the priest.

The Methodists responded belatedly to the Catholic challenge in schools. They slowly increased their European personnel, introduced

100 Australasian Catholic Record, April-July 1899, 202-03.
101 W. Slade to B. Danks, 1 July 1901, Methodist Church of Australia 628, ML.
102 Burton to Danks, 6 May 1904, Methodist Church of Australia, 626, ML.
103 Small to W.A. Burns, 28 November 1901, F/1/1900. An indication of the determination of some parents to give their children what they felt to be the best possible education is the case of a Tongan Methodist local preacher on Vanua Balavu who allowed his daughter to go to a convent at Levuka (thereby willingly suffering censure from his Local Preachers Meeting) because he was impressed with the Catholics teaching her English; C. Bleazard to Small, 13 July 1904, F/1/1904.
English teaching and pressed for greater government involvement in education as a way to secure more funds. The onset of widespread state-subsidised education after 1930, in which the Methodists but not the Catholics were closely involved, tended to diminish sectarian rivalry and where disputation occurred it was more often between state-supported schools and Catholic institutions. Catholic European staff suspected government schools were bastions of Methodism, if only of the nominal type, but where they made attempts to draw off children into their own schools, Fijians objected, in one not atypical case complaining bitterly that 'the priest's purpose is that all our children should become Catholics in the time to come'.

The Catholic schools did prove an effective channel of proselytisation. Up to 1911 - when the first official census of religious affiliation was taken - Fijians, despite a period of sectarian upheaval and division, remained loyal to the lotu they or their fathers had chosen. Wesleyans numbered over ninety percent, Catholics eight percent of the Fijian population. In the thirty-five years after 1911, Catholic adherence among Fijians rose by forty-two percent while Methodist numbers increased by twenty-three percent, a shift in allegiance attributable as much to the Marist educational emphasis as to any other single factor. However, even in 1946, the large majority of Fijians still identified with the Lotu Wesele (eighty-seven percent).

The deaths of Bishop Vidal in 1922 and Small three years later removed the generation of missionaries that had experienced the bitter sectarian rivalry of the previous decades and ushered in an era of co-existence rather than conflict. The developing mutual respect between Marists and Methodists was not only the result of changes in mission personnel; both Missions had sufficient problems with their own well-established congregations and there was a growing tolerance of each other's doctrine, a reflection of the world-wide move to dismantle barriers that had stood between Protestantism and Catholicism.

104 Bemana chiefs to R.H. Green, 2 February 1938, F/1/1938.
105 Statistics compiled from the official census figures for 1921 and 1946.
The changing attitudes were represented in the degree of co-operation between Methodist and Catholic authorities at the Nakogai Leper hospital. Acknowledgment of a permanent place for each denomination in Fiji's future came from the Methodist side in 1935 when, in the year of their centenary celebration, the Methodist Chairman, R.L. McDonald, conveyed to his Catholic counterpart, Bishop C.P. Nicolas, 'recognition of the part that the Catholic Church is taking in the establishment of the Kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ in these fair isles'. A further factor that reduced friction between the two senior Missions was their preoccupation with a new Christian sect - the Seventh Day Adventist Church - which threatened to make inroads into both Methodist and Catholic congregations.

The Seventh Day Adventist missionaries entered Fiji in the 1890s, bearing strong resemblance to the Methodists with their families and their emphasis on the authority of the Bible, however different their interpretation of it. While echoing some of the Methodist's moral strictures, including abstinence from alcoholic liquor, the Adventists went considerably further with their uncompromising tabu on yqona, tobacco and 'unclean' foods such as pork, crabs and prawn. Also Seventh Day Adventism diverged sharply from Methodism in its observance of Saturday as the sacred day and this feature more than any other was bound to affect their impact upon the Fijian. Pastor J.E. Fulton, an early Adventist missionary, was introduced in the villages by his Fijian assistants as a 'preacher who worships God like the Wesleyans but keeps Saturday as the Sabbath'.

Initially the Seventh Day Adventists confined their mission work to the more populous areas of Suva and Rewa in southeast Viti Levu. Fulton, the most capable and effective of the first pastors, was convinced that Fijians needed the 'converting power of God' despite

106 See R.A. Gibbons to R.L. McDonald, 23 December 1927, F/1/1928; R.L. McDonald to Rev. Mother Agnes, 10 October 1929, F/1/1929.

107 McDonald to Rt Rev. Bishop Nicolas, 30 September 1935, F/1/1935.

108 A.G. Stewart, Trophies from Cannibal Isles, Washington 1956, 84.
their Methodist heritage. He soon gained entry to the Fijian village of Suvavou, three miles from the capital, Suva. There he secured the conversion of Ratu Aparosa, Tui Suva, who ceased his heavy drinking habits and demonstrated his commitment to the new sect by washing the feet of commoners in the church fellowship at Suvavou. Impressed with the chief’s reformation, Small was compelled to admit that Ratu Aparosa is a better man now than he was when he was with us. 109

During his visits to Suvavou, Fulton also befriended Pauliasi Bunoa, a long-serving Methodist church worker who had been a member of the first mission party to New Britain in 1875 and had returned as an ordained minister in 1886. In 1895, at the age of forty-five, Bunoa resigned from the ministry after being found guilty of 'slandering' both Frederick Langham and an elderly respected Fijian minister at Bau, Josefa Ratabua. 110 Adventist literature portrays Bunoa as theologically a 'fundamentalist' but this description would suitably apply to most Fijian ministers. Bunoa was more a literalist, impressed by the manner in which the Adventist pastors 'proved' doctrines of the 'true sabbath' and 'conditional immortality' by biblical exegesis.

Bunoa became an ardent evangelist for the Seventh Day Adventists. In 1901 he went to northern Lau and within a year converted sixty, half of them from his home island of Cikobia-i-Lau. 111 Many of these, as the Methodists argued, seceded for political as much as

109 Small to B. Danks, 28 September 1910, MOM 107; Stewart, op.cit., 93.

110 Minutes of Fiji District Synod, 1895, MOM 26. Bunoa was ordained a minister of the Seventh Day Adventist church in Australia in October 1906.

111 Small to G. Brown, 7 April 1902 and Small to W. Slade, 18 June 1902, F/1/1902. By 1927 only ten Adventists were left on the island of Cikobia. Informants I spoke to, anxious to impress upon me their temporary disloyalty to Methodism, suggested that Bunoa only managed to gain converts on Cikobia-i-Lau because he arrived at a time when the chief, Ratu Isoa – one of the three high chiefs of Vanua Balavu – was absent. Apparently on his return to the island he persuaded most to return to the Lotu Wesele. The movement back to the Methodist Church probably did not take place till after Bunoa’s death in 1918.
religious motives, but Adventist expectations of a large increase in their ranks resulted in the dispatch of a missionary, C.H. Parker, to Mualevu on Vanua Balavu where a local chief, Ratu Tevita, was espousing the Adventist cause. Apart from Suva and Lau, Adventism was also given a sympathetic hearing in Ra province where Ratu Joni Madraiwiwi, Roko Tui Ra, described by Small as 'a veritable Gallic in matters pertaining to the lotu', annoyed the missionaries by allowing Fulton to proselytise unheeded in Ra villages, most of which were nominally Methodist. Madraiwiwi saw little difference between the two mission bodies and was more anxious about the number of villages in Ra that had been without religious teachers for many years. He argued bluntly that if the Methodists could not meet their obligations then the '7th Dayers' should be invited to fill the gap.

The exclusive and rigid character of Seventh Day Adventism proved a forbidding curiosity to most Fijians. They nicknamed the sect Na lotu savasava (the clean church), indicating their muted respect for its hard line on liquor, tobacco and yagona. Adherents of Seventh Day Adventism were promised free medical attendance in times of sickness and Methodist teachers were enticed to switch their allegiance by annual salaries of £30, twice as much as the most experienced Methodist ministers were receiving. Adventist literature was widely distributed and read, especially their monthly magazine, Rarama (Light) edited by Fulton.

By the early 1900s missionaries, jealous that their monopoly of Protestant truth was jeopardized, were campaigning actively against what they called the Adventist poachers. Articles were published in the Methodist magazine, Ai Tukutuku Vakalotu, 'counteracting the pernicious influence' of Adventist doctrine. At Navuloa Training

112 Small to T.W. Butcher, 4 July 1902, F/1/1902; C. Bleazard to Small, 13 January 1904, F/1/1904.

113 Small to C.O. Lelean, 19 September 1904, and Lelean to Small, 12 September 1904, F/1/1904.

114 Stewart, op.cit., 85; Small to G. Brown, 21 September 1904, F/1/1904.

115 Small to W.A. Heighway, 1 May 1902, F/1/1902.
Institution, William Heighway, the college principal, prepared a lecture course for intending catechists and ministers exposing the 'peculiar doctrines' of Adventism and 'the weapons they use to allure the unwary'.116 To the missionary on Lakeba, Small wrote warning him of the impending arrival of Seventh Day Adventist teachers:

Give them a warm reception... Let the Native Ministers and Teachers follow them about. Take pains too in enlightening those and all your preachers with regard to the several doctrines held and taught by the 7th Dayers...117

Missionaries exaggerated the threat of Seventh Day Adventism. In 1911, after fifteen years in Fiji, their following numbered 455 and appeared to be on the decline. They had been ignored on Rotuma, had failed on Lakeba and had lost the patronage of Ratu Tevita at Mualevu. For almost a decade from 1908 to 1918 their presence was measured by a significant silence on their activities from the ever vigilant Methodist missionaries.118

In 1918 Seventh Day Adventist fortunes revived when hundreds of Fijians in inland Viti Levu seceded from Methodism after the Sailosi movement had swept through the villages.119 Sailosi Nagusolevu's 'No.8' religion resembled Adventism in only the proclamation of Saturday as the Sabbath. Government forces effectively quelled Sailosi's movement but many people who had clutched at Sailosi's promises as eagerly as they had listened to the message of Apolosi, refused to contemplate a return to Methodism whose spokesmen had urged and supported government action. Taking advantage of this discontent with Methodism, Adventist preachers, Bunoa prominent among them till his death of influenza at the end of the year, capitalised on the 'No.8'

116 Navuloa Circuit, Annual Report, 1905, MMSA.

117 Small to T.W. Butcher, 4 July 1902, F/1/1902.


119 For a description of the Sailosi movement see Chapter 5, 155-56.
Sabbath and drew large numbers of Fijians from a seemingly defunct cult to Adventism. Preaching not only their own doctrines but emphasising the demands made upon Methodist followers, the Adventists promised an obligation-free religion. They gained converts from among those either deprived of their government position or unwilling to face Methodist church discipline. By the end of the year more than 500 Fijians in the Wainibuka, Noikoro, upper Navua river and Nadrau districts of inland Viti Levu had professed Seventh Day Adventism. 120

Adventist propaganda mistakenly portrayed this mushroom growth as a 'remarkable awakening'. 121 The government commissioner in the area (Joske) more perceptively described the new sect as a 'Cave of Adullam' and while this phrase misrepresented the nature of many early Adventist conversions, it was more applicable to the gains of 1918. 122 'The people are not converts to 7th D.A.'ism', observed one missionary, 'but perverts from the lotu'. 123 Of equal significance is the plausible suggestion made by a number of missionaries that Adventism provided an avenue whereby Sailosi's perfunctory ideas could be perpetuated under the cloak of legality. 'Little do [the Seventh Day Adventist preachers] know', observed J.B. Suckling, 'how far the natives have made use of their names as a cover for holding on to their belief and hope for the fulfilment of Sailosi's promises'. 124 Millenarian features of Sailosi's 'No.8' cult married satisfactorily with Adventist predictions of the Second Advent as portrayed in the Book of Revelation.

The secessions of 1918 further aggravated relations between Methodism and Seventh Day Adventism. In many inland villages formerly

120 MR, February 1919 and November 1919; R.H. Green, My Story, 108; W.J. Chambers to Small, 22 May 1918, F/1/1918. At the 1921 census, there were 1,209 Seventh Day Adventists in the Colo North, Colo East and Ra provinces.
121 C.H. Watson, Cannibals and Head-Hunters, Washington 1926, 66.
123 J.B. Suckling to Small, 1 September 1918, F/1/1918.
124 Ibid. See also MR, February 1919.
united by a common denominational belief, communities were now split while the earlier penetration of the Catholics into pockets of settlement resulted in three churches in some villages. Occasionally chiefs were able to agree on the common use of one building for church purposes; more often there was discord and moves for village separation.

The observance of Saturday as the Adventist Sabbath brought considerable disruption to the weekly activities of village communities. The Adventist minority in many villages made themselves into 'an unmitigated public nuisance' by their working on Sunday. In one notable instance, probably repeated many times off the record, a Methodist congregation, exasperated by Adventists noisily erecting a house during the Sunday morning service, emerged angrily from the church and drove them off with their fists. In court they pleaded provocation and were acquitted.

Social constraint forced less committed Seventh Day Adventists to adopt time-honoured traditions; at Nadrau in 1923, A.W. Amos found the Adventist boys at the government school playing football on Saturday and attending the Methodist service on Sunday. On the same journey, Amos received unsubstantiated rumours that Ratu Joni Bebenisala, Tui Nadrau and 'arch-priest' of Seventh Day Adventism, was the 'only man in Colo that keeps the S.D.A. tabu's', an allegation that for all its exaggeration was probably founded on many accounts of Fijians who had through sheer human frailty been unable to maintain the strict Adventist code. One opportunistic village on the Wainibuka River regarded by the missionary T.N. Deller as 'doubting' in its faith made the best of both worlds by practising a form of 'banana religion'. Although admitting ignorance as to which religion was 'true', the people shrewdly used both according to the arrival of the banana buyer. 'If they could get a better price by cutting bananas on Saturday they were

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125 Brewster, op.cit., 141.
126 Ibid.
127 A.W. Amos to Small, 12 July 1923, F/1/1923.
Methodists but if convenient to cut and ship on Sundays they were Adventists'.

To some extent, Methodist authorities had only themselves to blame rather than political or other factors for the inroads made by Seventh Day Adventists during and after 1918. In hindsight Robert Green justified the activities of both Catholics and Adventists in Nadroga during the 1920s by indicating the lamentable lack of continuity in Methodist work – between 1913 and 1924 six missionaries passed through the Cuvu mission house and visitation of inland villages suffered as a consequence. The Methodist Synod of 1918 rejected a plea from the Matailobau chiefs to place a missionary in the vicinity of Vunidawa, a move which would have strengthened their position in eastern Viti Levu. The Adventists, ever opportunistic, gained a foothold in Natewa Bay through the neglect of girls’ education in that area by the Methodists. Significantly in areas where missionaries and Fijian ministers strove to put teachers in every village and generally improve the condition of Methodism, Seventh Day Adventism following faltered. A.D. Lelean’s long and popular superintendence of the vast Ra Circuit from 1923 to 1935 was an important contributing factor in the failure of the Adventists to consolidate their hold on north-eastern Viti Levu. The traditional roots of Methodism were buried deeper than a first glance might assume.

The official census of 1946 revealed that Adventist numbers had scarcely grown in twenty-five years while the Fijian population had exploded. Adventism was losing adherents in inland Viti Levu, where their organisation failed to match the revived efforts of Methodists, and was making slight gains in Suva, Tailevu and Rewa where schools were being opened and the Central Training College outside of Korovou was

128 Bau Circuit, Annual Report, 1926, F/6/1926-31, MF.
129 R.H. Green, My Story, 110-12.
130 R.A. Gibbons to R.L. McDonald, 25 July 1931, F/1/1931.
131 R.H. Green to Small, 10 July 1924, F/1/1924; T.N. Deller to McDonald, 15 July 1930, F/1/1930; H. Chambers to McDonald, 10 April and 26 April 1933, F/1/1933.
expanding. Officially, the Methodists were still irritated by what they regarded as a 'policy of intrusion' into their preserves but relations among mission personnel were friendly and there was co-operation on social matters such as Temperance. From a Fijian point of view it appeared that strong communal bonds were gradually breaking down religious barriers as typified in the observations of a Seventh Day Adventist visitor to Fiji:

I remember at one [Adventist Conference] I attended in Fiji a native [Methodist] choir came and sang at our meetings nearly every night. On some occasions they remained to our meetings, but on others they sang for fifteen or twenty minutes for us and then went round to their own church in a district nearby... As far as I am aware none of these natives linked up with our people in church fellowship. It was simply a friendly gesture on the part of the native singers.

The decades of bitterness that characterised intra-mission relationships produced little that was positive in character; in fact conflict, far from resolving issues, served only to complicate and hamper progress. Writing in 1906 the Governor of Fiji, Everard im Thurn, stated that 'when two missions clash, whatever their denomination, the good work which one alone might do is cancelled!' The nineteenth century mission experience in the Pacific made colonial officials determined to enforce strict comity arrangements in newer dependencies, the most notable example being in Papua under Sir William McGregor - a colonial official in Fiji for many years. Without challenging the veracity of im Thurn's conclusion, the spectacle of Fiji missions in conflict forced church adherents to question more deeply the nature of Christianity, especially the monopoly of Christian truth which each denomination claimed to possess. Governor J.B. Thurston believed that Wesleyanism was unquestionably accepted for many years by Fijians who, once confronted with a variety of alternative churches,

132 McDonald to H. Short, 22 August 1932, F/1/1932.
133 A.W. Anderson to J.W. Burton, 23 March 1934, MOM 314.
134 Im Thurn to CO, No.45, 17 May 1906, Despatches to Secretary of State, Western Pacific High Commission. Dr Barrie Macdonald of Massey University drew my attention to this reference.
as well as the eastern religions of the Indians, would respond by abandoning Christianity altogether.\textsuperscript{135} It is possible that mission rivalry, particularly in Viti Levu, encouraged Fijians to seek their own spiritual outlets in the continuing and therefore more established traditional beliefs or in the related syncretic movements. Conversely the ability of Methodism to survive years of sectarian division and maintain its extensive nominal following, suggests that it fulfilled an important role at the village level and was meaningful to the Fijian.

Division within villages and related clan groups was the least satisfactory result of mission rivalry. Sometimes the Missions were exploited by competing chiefs to reinforce traditional conflicts. In many other cases the division resulted from deliberate mission policy and served to undermine the overall authority of chiefs. Reacting to the nominal Methodism of many government officials, whose religious partisanship appeared to influence some of their decisions, the Catholics felt compelled to interfere in village affairs, actively discouraging their converts from either the customary or government-imposed obedience normally accorded to chiefs. The Marist priests would have argued that they were supporting a minority under constant pressure; the colonial administration viewed their action as a threat to the complex system of indirect rule by which Fijians were governed.\textsuperscript{136}

The narrow-minded intolerance of many missionaries was not independently pursued by the majority of Fijians. Up till the 1940s altercations took place between groups of young men from villages or institutions of different denominations but these outbursts were more the result of harmless excitability than signs of deep division.\textsuperscript{137}

\textsuperscript{135} Thurston to Secretary of State, 18 August 1891, Confidential Despatch, National Archives of Fiji.

\textsuperscript{136} S. Reay, Commissioner of Ra province, monthly diary for September 1932, F 22/5, Part 2; see also Father Oreve to Secretary for Native Affairs, 2 June 1933. F 50/20, National Archives of Fiji.

\textsuperscript{137} Interview with Archbishop of Suva, Petero Mataca, 24 November 1976.
An isolated but most dramatic confrontation occurred in 1947 between the enigmatic Ratu Emosi Saurara of Naku, a resolute Methodist and two Roman Catholic rebels in his village who, refusing to co-operate with their chief's projects for village self-help, had their homes burned to the ground and were bound up like pigs or humans about to be feasted upon [bokola], to be dumped ceremoniously yet embarrassingly at Bau in a traditional presentation to their chiefly overlord. According to oral testimony Adi Cakobau, having heard of the affair and when faced with the 'tribute', broke down and wept.138

An indication of the new ecumenical spirit that has prevailed in recent years was observed in October 1976 when the Catholic Archbishop of Suva, Petero Mataca, opened a new and architecturally striking church at Deuba. On this occasion he was not consecrating a place of worship exclusively for Catholics. This was to be a church owned and jointly shared by all Christians in Deuba, the first venture of its kind in Fiji. The church was built mainly by voluntary labour drawn from among the Fijians who service the nearby and rapidly growing tourist site. Catholic and Methodist people, along with a sprinkling of the smaller denominations, agreed to make common use of this building, initially at different times for the various Christian groups, but perhaps at some time in the future all worshipping together. The church in Deuba stands, a sign of diminishing illwill, an index of the future.

138 Interview with Meleti Saurara (Ratu Emosi's elder brother), 4 November 1976. For a description of Emosi's career see Rusiate Nayacakalou, Leadership in Fiji, Melbourne 1975, 87-88. Nayacakalou argues that sectarian motives were uppermost in Ratu Emosi's action of 1947. John Garrett (in Motivation, Values and Goals for Economic Development - The Case of Daku, Suva 1973) stresses motives of village unity and preservation. Meleti Saurara also argues the latter reason pointing out that five other Catholics who co-operated with Ratu Emosi's programme were left unmolested while one Methodist ran away from the village rather than participate in Emosi's self-help project.
CHAPTER 7

AFFAIRS OF CHURCH, GOVERNMENT AND LAND

IN terms of Wesleyan political influence within Fiji, the act of cession in 1874 marked the commencement of a difficult period for the missionaries as they gradually relinquished their influential position as prominent advisers to the chiefs. Judging events from a distance, the diminishing political role of missionaries, resulting from the chiefs' identification with stronger government authority, ensured for Fijian Methodism a history free on the one hand from the instability and divisions of Tongan Wesleyanism and on the other from complete identification with an imperial political viewpoint as in Hawaii when, as a result, the Church lost many adherents to Catholicism. 1

The Wesleyan missionaries had been in two minds over annexation when Cakobau first sought British protection in 1859. Both James Calvert and Joseph Waterhouse saw military and economic advantages in Fiji's inclusion in a colonial empire but these benefits had to be weighed against the increase in Catholic activity, a likely effect of the toleration clause contained in the draft agreement between British representatives and Fijian chiefs. 2 Furthermore Wesleyanism had yet to consolidate its position throughout Fiji and, even though Ma'afu's religious imperialism brought official condemnation from the Mission, its primary aim of a Wesleyan Fiji might have been checked by the arrival of a colonial power. In short, missionaries in 1:9 regarded their own position of influence as secure; with a change in conditions came a change in missionary attitudes.


By the 1870s the rivalry between the two Wesleyan patrons, Cakobau and Ma'afu, for pre-eminence within Fiji concerned the missionaries greatly. The prospect of conflict and war, however improbable, threatened the stability and comparative unity of Wesleyanism more than any other institution in Fiji. If fear of anarchy and bloodshed was one motive behind missionary support for annexation, the other main factor was dissatisfaction with the form of government which Cakobau instituted in 1871. On this matter the missionaries identified themselves with prevailing European opinion which opposed the determination of the Cakobau administration to make Fijian interests paramount, particularly on questions of land ownership and the employment of Fijian labour. Attracting greater publicity outside Fiji but a secondary factor in the minds of most missionaries, was the need for regulation of the Melanesian labour traffic.  

In March 1874, insecure about their future under British rule, the majority of chiefs rejected Cakobau's influential opinion and decided not to cede Fiji. There was an outcry from the small but vocal white community in Levuka, many of whom were convinced that 'philo-Fijians' (the term was used by at least one missionary)  such as Thurston, who had been re-appointed as Premier of the Cakobau Government, were preventing the acceptance of annexation in an attempt to maintain their own position. The missionaries were inclined to this point of view and, led by Langham, they informed the British Consul, Layard, of their support for annexation and alleged that the chiefs had been manipulated to reject cession:

"We do not believe the decision to be their own, but one which they have been induced to adopt under the..."
influence and persuasions of those who are personally and pecuniarily interested therein and who have not at heart the best interests of the Natives, and the Whites residing here.5

The mission point of view was based on the attitude of Cakobau to whom Langham had communicated his annexationist sympathies. Yet the missionaries could be accused of manipulation and misrepresentation as much as those who headed the Cakobau government administration. Langham interpreted Cakobau's frustration with his government ministers to mean sympathy with the British Commissioners' offer of annexation; it was equally likely that Cakobau wished a return to the pre-1871 situation. The Bauan chief was not influenced by mission opinion in his support of cession nor did he consider that chiefs required outside advice on such crucial matters as ceding their country to a foreign power. There was fatalism rather than enthusiasm in Cakobau's decision to seek annexation, a capitulation to the inevitable, a recognition of forces that appeared beyond his means to prevent. At least British rule would secure Cakobau's position and check the expansionist designs of Ma'afu, if indeed the Tongan chief was entertaining such ambitions. The fact that the majority of chiefs were eventually persuaded to accept annexation owed little to the missionaries who failed to appreciate the guarantees relating to land ownership and the use of Fijian labour which chiefs demanded before submitting to cession.6

As far as the missionaries were concerned they regarded British rule as a means by which to reverse the tendency among chiefs, indicated by the initial rejection of annexation, to rely less on missionary advice and more on an administration sympathetic to the exercise of control by Fijians. The missionaries expected a colonial administration similar to the British Protectorates of Southern Africa, affording considerable scope for continued mission influence. In this


6 Scarr, op.cit., 324.
matter they were to be disappointed. Fiji's experience after 1874 reflected a common colonial phenomenon that the political influence of missionaries in any community rises and falls in relation to the degree of contact which that community has with the outside world.\textsuperscript{7} The Wesleyans in Fiji reached the zenith of their power in the 1860s. Their involvement with the secular governments of the 1870s gave warning that 'clerical assistance' was patently unwelcome in the conduct of political life.\textsuperscript{8}

Consistent with their attitude to cession, the missionaries applauded the appointment of Sir Arthur Gordon as Fiji's first substantive Governor (1875-80). He was 'the right man in the right place', a 'good Christian' with the best interests of the Fijians at heart. Lorimer Fison predicted, ironically in view of later mission opinion, that Gordon would be extremely unpopular with the white community but 'a true friend to the mission'.\textsuperscript{9} Gordon responded favourably to the Mission, recognising the importance of its support in implementing government policies. With a more realistic appraisal of the situation than the missionaries, he anticipated problems with Langham over the establishment of government influence independent of the Mission:

\begin{quote}
I see everywhere evidence of [Langham's] force and power...he occupies very much the position of one of the political bishops of the Middle Ages...the position is a difficult one, for Langham has been accustomed to rule very autocratically in much outside the spiritual sphere and will not surrender his secular influence without a struggle.\textsuperscript{10}
\end{quote}

Gordon and Langham, the respective leaders of church and state, could not avoid coming into conflict. Gordon was described by a contemporary as 'very determined', ruthless in pursuing his aims and 'aristocratic' in his demeanour, while his high church and liberal...

\textsuperscript{7} A.A. Koskinen, \textit{Missionary Influence as a Political Factor in the Pacific Islands}, Helsinki 1953, 237.  
\textsuperscript{8} Secretariat of Native Affairs to Langham, 3 September 1873, F 1/45(3), Records of Cakobau Government, MS 2626, National Library, Canberra. For a traveller's comment on the extent of Wesleyan influence in 1870, see H. Britton, \textit{Fiji in 1870}, Melbourne 1870, 71. 
\textsuperscript{9} Fison to B. Chapman, 22 October 1875, M\textsuperscript{N}O\textsuperscript{104}; I. Rooney to Chapman, 28 July 1875, M\textsuperscript{N}O\textsuperscript{165}. 
religious attitude clashed with Langham's dogmatic and severe Wesleyanism. In a country where physical appearance was deemed of importance, Langham's impressive figure gave him an advantage over Gordon but the latter carried the decisive sanctions of officialdom. The Wesleyan Chairman, while harbouring a personal grudge at the Governor's gradual accumulation of power, remained confident of his dominance. To his earlier school-master associate and fellow Chairman in Tonga, Shirley Baker, whose star was rising as assuredly as Langham's was fading, he wrote:

[Gordon's] object here has been to undermine our influence hoping to gain it for himself... It was a stupid mistake to imagine he could secure the influence we had obtained... He makes the most grievous blunders...does not know how to conciliate folks and must have a hand in everything. I verily believe if he were Bishop as well as Governor he would be delighted.

In 1878, while Gordon was in London, mission hostility to colonial policies emerged unexpectedly. Supported by the signatures of four other missionaries, Fison, Arthur Webb, Isaac Rooney and William Lindsay, Langham wrote to the Chief Justice in Fiji, claiming that as a result of Gordon's policies Fijians had been subjected to 'great hardship', were discontented and disappointed. Missionary objections to Gordon's administration were focussed on the degree of centralisation and legalisation in Fijian affairs, a policy they had never envisaged and one which challenged the influential position previously held by the Mission. As part of their opposition, missionaries, whether wittingly or not, became antagonists of the means of government rule - chiefly authority - and claimed to identify themselves with the Fijian villager. 'We do not approve of his [Gordon's] policy', remarked Fison, 'because we know that it is an exaltation of the chiefs and a grinding of the faces of the poor'.

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12 Langham to Baker, 30 August 1878, MOM 103.
14 Fison to B. Chapman, 15 July 1878, MOM 104.
of view is instructive as it was later taken to its logical conclusion in his examination of Fijian land tenure where he endeavoured to portray the chiefs as men who had exploited their position and 'overridden' ancient land customs. Fison's argument was as much political as anthropological, based on mission criticism of chiefly excesses and a championing of the rights of the commoner. It was the Mission, not the Government, which had the ear of the people:

[Gordon] does not know that the people are grievously, scandalously oppressed under his rule. He hears only what the chiefs say.... We hear the groans of the people, for they come to us in their griefs.16

There was irony in the situation which missionaries portrayed. Fison did not oppose the continued employment of Fijians on European-owned plantations even though he recognised that mission work would suffer.17 In this regard he could be seen as a forerunner of the later individualists in the Mission such as Arthur Lelean. By contrast, Gordon's policy strengthened Fijian communalism under which mission fortunes prospered since the strength of the church lay in the villages. Furthermore, in the early years, missionaries had carefully cultivated chiefly support for the cause of Christianity; now that their hold on chiefs appeared to be slipping, they condemned the very power from which they had benefitted. The chiefs, not surprisingly, responded with their own criticisms of church policy and showed a new determination to influence church decisions even if this involved clashes with missionary authority.18

In its zeal to expose government oppression, the Mission ignored or refused to admit the extent to which it was also placing increased burdens upon the people. Langham inundated the Government with all complaints of official harassment - some secondhand - that


16 Fison to Chapman, 15 July 1878, MOM 104.


18 See above, Chapter 3, for detail.
came to his knowledge. Gordon, who believed that of all the missionaries only two - Webb and Joseph Waterhouse - understood his native policies, deliberately refrained from detailing Fijian grievances against the Mission which he was receiving from government officers. In fact, Fijians were conscious of growing pressures from all sides - chiefly, Government and Mission:

Fiji of the olden days is not the same as Fiji of the present day. In the olden times they [Fijians] had leisure to spare and did as they listed and paid proper attention to their communal obligations. At the present time there are so many things to attend to - the work of the village, the taxes, the mission and the chiefs. How can we overtake it all? Grumbling is not heard in either the Provincial or District Councils, but it is heard in the roads and houses of the people.

The 'struggle' between Mission and Government which Gordon had forecast on his arrival and which Langham believed was inevitable by 1878, centred around three issues: marriage, taxation and the reconciliation of government position with church office.

Before annexation Christian marriage, under the exclusive rules of the Mission, had given ministers and teachers considerable power. Strict regulations against polygamy insisted on the repudiation of all wives but one or, if necessary, the putting away of all wives for a church ceremony with another woman. The wide-ranging mission regulations enabled church officials to prevent or delay marriages at will. The first Council of Chiefs in 1875 pressed for a 'simple' government law allowing Stipendiary Magistrates as well as missionaries to celebrate marriage, in effect abolishing the monopolistic power of the Mission. The Marriage Ordinance, when introduced in 1877, went beyond even chiefly recommendations, enabling grounds for divorce other than adultery, recognising existing marriages performed 'according to Fijian custom', requiring all seeking marriage to obtain a licence.
before a church or civil ceremony, and regulating marriage fees.

Senior missionaries campaigned vehemently against the ordinance. They openly defied sections of the regulations by charging higher fees (an action which in the less prosperous provinces forced many Fijians into a civil ceremony), marrying without the requisite licence and sometimes simply refusing to marry couples. Unlike their superiors, most Fijian ministers supported the regulation and missionaries, in an effort to present a united front, forbade some ministers to celebrate marriage. At the same time a number of senior Fijian ministers believed with the missionaries that no government regulation could force them to accept a standard fee especially as the money so obtained went into educational or circuit work and not the pockets of the individual.

At the root of missionary opposition to civil marriage was the traditional Anglican view that marriage was primarily a Christian sacrament and that a Christian state had an obligation to maintain its sanctity. 'Marriage was instituted by the Almighty', declared one missionary, 'and we think He should be specially recognised in its solemnisation'. The argument over marriage was fundamentally political: were Fijians to be ruled by magistrate or minister, secular or theocratic government. In Fiji, unlike Australia, the Wesleyan Mission had been in a situation to enforce its idea of Christian marriage upon the society, thereby giving missionaries considerable power. Consequently, the intense missionary opposition to the 1877 Marriage Ordinance arose because the government decree compromised mission hegemony within the community: civil marriages degraded the importance of the Christian ceremony and hence the status of the Church. Aware of the delicacy of the issue, Gordon instructed magistrates at first to avoid conflict with missionaries who were flouting the law. The later generation of missionaries who took up residence in Fiji under a colonial regime, accepted the law even though it displeased them.

22 William Slade, MR, October 1891, 8.
They encouraged their adherents to marry within the Church and demanded a Christian 'blessing' of the civil marriage if a couple so married wished to become church members. Conversely members who refused a Christian marriage were suspended until they agreed to a church ceremony.

Unlike the marriage issue, the principle of universal taxation was introduced before British annexation, firstly by Na'afu in Lau and subsequently by the Cakobau Government. By 1875 missionaries, both Wesleyan and Catholic, were frustrated by interruptions caused to the work of the Missions by tax-collecting and its allegedly detrimental effect on the individuals - ministers, teachers and students - who were obliged to suspend their mission duties and carry out communal labour.

In response to persistent missionary requests for exemption for its Fijian agents, the Council of Chiefs agreed that those training for the ministry at Navuloa should be excluded from tax obligations, but the Council strenuously and unanimously opposed exemption for village teachers and students (vuli) attached to the various mission stations. If this were permitted, the Council argued with justification, chiefly and government authority over Fijian mission agents would be undermined and the circuit training institutions for vuli would be attractive tax-havens.

In practice chiefs dealt sympathetically with the teachers and vuli in their provinces making their tax-load as light as possible. A token effort by many was sufficient acknowledgment of the principle of communal obligation. By 1899 a survey of six circuits indicated that in two (Bua and Ra), students were not required to pay taxes, in

24 Small to R.L. McDonald, 13 March 1909, F/1/1909; Small to C. Bleazard, 24 July 1907, F/1/1907.

25 In 1876 Gordon allowed the Mission to commute tax-work for the sum of 24/- per individual per annum, but the Wesleyans could only afford this luxury to their ordained ministers.

26 This issue appeared frequently throughout the proceedings of the Council of Chiefs between 1876 and 1881. It was not surprising that the Council refused to make special allowances for the vuli. A count in 1895 revealed that, excluding Navuloa where there were 107 students, 413 youths and adults were in residence in Wesleyan Mission institutions throughout Fiji. C.S.O. 1895/26.
a further two (Cakaudrove and Lau) reduced amounts were generally the rule, while in Rewa and Bau the students were in the same category as other Fijians.\(^{27}\) Not till 1940 was there a major change when the Government extended exemption to approved teacher training students, agricultural and technical school students under twenty-one and theological students for a period of four years.\(^{28}\)

Together with marriage and taxation, the third major issue dividing Mission and Government - that of reconciling church position with government office - arose from the actions of Isaac Rooney while he was missionary at Lomaloma. Gordon relates that in 1877 some students at the Lakeba mission school, one of them a vuli in training for the ministry, were brought up before the Stipendiary Magistrate (a Wesleyan lay preacher) Mafi, on a charge of 'riotous conduct, maliciously destroying growing yams in a garden and breaking a bowl [kumeti]'\(^{29}\). Mafi imprisoned the students but his verdict was disputed by Rooney who dismissed him from his church office, took the vuli away from prison and dispatched him to Navuloa to enter him as a candidate for ordination.

Gordon's account of the incident was challenged by at least one reliable missionary source,\(^{30}\) but, whatever the facts of the 'kumeti' incident, it had far-reaching implications. From the Governor's point of view, the 'scandal' removed any doubts about the impropriety of yoking government position and church office. At the next Council of Chiefs he advised the Rokos and Magistrates to neither seek nor accept mission appointments; to do so would be to expose themselves to spiritual

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27 Correspondence re Taxation, 1874-99, F/3/(c), MF.
28 Secretary of Native Affairs to W. Green, 14 November 1940, F/2/Vol.4, MF.
30 Arthur Webb disputed Gordon's story. The missionary claimed that Mafi had ordered the mission student in question to be flogged and that the magistrate's later dismissal from church office was the result of drunkenness, not connected with the 'kumeti' case at all. A.J. Webb, in The Spectator, c.1884, Newspaper cuttings relating to Missions, MON 124.
censure for the impartial exercise of civil justice. The Wesleyans, having brought the action upon themselves, could expect little relief through complaint even though Langham was indignant at Gordon's decision. He claimed there was now 'a stigma upon the Church' and many chiefs were virtually cut off from the means of grace. 31 But to a large extent the 'kumedi' case accelerated a process already at work. The shift of power from Mission to Government introduced a new and stronger basis of authority and chiefly allegiance shifted accordingly.

Mission resentment of government policies was understandably strongest in the first decade after annexation and with Frederick Langham as Chairman it was conceivable that the opposition could intensify further. Other missionaries had too much respect, or fear, for their 'Cardinal' to question his actions in private letters or challenge him in Synod but most of them refrained from supporting his public statements and were embarrassed by his unwarranted attacks on the moral character of government officers. 32 However by the mid-1880s, although Langham was denying to fellow missionaries any loss in his secular authority, in private he must have been keenly aware, as observers were, of his narrowing influence. 33 The Chairman's single-minded, forceful and dominant personality, matched with his abrasive pen, prejudiced harmonious relations with government officers. Langham had no wish to follow in the path of Shirley Baker and sacrifice the pulpit for politics; he turned down Gordon's offer of a seat on the Legislative Council. Nor could the Wesleyan Chairman in Fiji maintain the degree of political influence which the despotic John Goldie was later able to do as Methodist Chairman in the Solomon Islands within the framework of an admittedly skeletal colonial organisation. 34 With its centralised system of

31 Langham to B. Chapman, 24 January 1878, NOM 103

32 Thurston to Gordon, 13 October 1878, Fiji Records, vol.III, 429; W. McGregor to Gordon, 5 January 1879, ibid., 487; G.W. des Voeux to Secretary of State, 21 December 1882, Despatches to Secretary of State, N/176, N.A.F.


government control, Fiji could not happily accommodate within its territory men like Langham on one side and Gordon and Thurston on the other.

Thurston's intolerance of Wesleyan Christianity, its white representatives, methods and policies, had often provided the verbal ammunition behind government correspondence with the Mission in the first decade of colonial rule. Once Thurston was elevated to Governor in 1888, relations with the Mission were in danger of a complete breakdown. Thurston avoided that possibility on his return to Fiji by seeking a workable arrangement with Langham. He requested the missionary to 'declare himself for peace or war' and Langham chose the former.35 Events in Tonga contributed to their peace settlement: Langham and Thurston now saw eye to eye on the necessity for Baker's removal from the prime ministership even though they differed on how this should be achieved. Within Fiji, a recent case involving the punishment of a mission teacher had shaken Langham's previous conviction that government policy was by nature oppressive but, in relinquishing his hard-line attitude, he did not compromise his rigorous principles.37 In the eyes of the Fijians, the reconciliation of two long-standing enemies highlighted mutual government and mission interests.38

By the turn of the century the Mission risked being swamped by government influence over matters previously a mission preserve. In ignorance of mission administration, government offices prohibited ministers and teachers from attending a Rewa Circuit Quarterly Meeting in 1895, believing wrongly that Fijians were gathering from all over southern Viti Levu for the sole purpose of farewelling Langham, an insufficient cause for a meeting, the Government argued, at a time of

36 Noel Rutherford, Shirley Baker..., 160-61; Langham to H. Worrall [n.d. 1886?], MOM 295.
37 C.S.O. 87/603, 87/3204.
38 Langham to H. Worrall, 1 November 1888, F/3/(c), MF.
severe drought in Rewa. The Mission reluctantly acquiesced in Governor Sir George O'Brien's decision in 1899 to incorporate the vakamisoneri or annual church collection into the yearly programme of work for Fijians. This was a move intended to economise Fijian time and labour but its success depended on the support of a sympathetic Buli, one willing to give his people at least two weeks to prepare contributions for the collection; such assistance from government officers was not always forthcoming. For a while the Government contemplated making the vakamisoneri day a Sunday, a move abandoned when the irate missionaries protested that a day intended for merriment would profane the day of rest. In 1901 the mission balance-sheet suggested that vakamisoneri dates set by Government were bringing improved results but the paramount position of Government indicated the extent of change since 1874 when Cakobau had still insisted on precedence for the vakamisoneri over the tax collection in words dramatically phrased by Langham, 'let that be held first, which is of the first importance'.

After 1900 church-government relations assumed a settled, compatible character, partly because the Mission recognised the ascendancy of British control and partly as a result of the new Chairman's (Arthur Small) astute and diplomatic leadership. When the Government sought William Slade's removal from Fiji for his activities in support of federation with New Zealand, Small wrote a conciliatory reply protesting that the extent of Slade's political activities had been exaggerated and the Government backed down. Slade's voluntary retirement from Fiji in 1902 had the mark of Small's subtle direction, although there were also family reasons for his departure. While determined

39 Head Office Letter Books, 1895-96, MOM 44; Correspondence re Rewa Circuit Quarterly Meeting 1895, MOM 293; C.S.O. 1895/1240.
39 Head Office Letter Books, 1895-96, MOM 44; Correspondence re Rewa Circuit Quarterly Meeting 1895, MOM 293; C.S.O. 1895/1240.

40 W.W. Lindsay to G. Brown, 11 December 1899, MOM 165; G. Brown to Small, 27 June and 21 July 1900, F/1/1900; Small to B. Danks, 5 February 1901, Methodist Church of Australia 628, ML.

41 Langham to B. Chapman, 13 August 1874, WNN, October 1874, 62.

42 Small to B. Danks, 5 February 1901, Methodist Church of Australia 628, ML; Small to Slade, 3 July 1900, F/1/1900; W. Slade to G. Brown, 12 May 1900, MOM 165.
to maintain a spirit of co-operation, Small did not hesitate to press for reforms when they seemed necessary. His appeals on behalf of the Mission for government aid to mission schools finally bore fruit in the 1909 Education Commission, and in 1917 his suggested amendment to the new Marriage Ordinance - rationalising the age of consent for Fijians and part-Europeans - was accepted.

The Hygiene Mission, initiated by Governor O'Brien, could have been wrecked by sectarian rivalry; its unfortunate beginning was soon overtaken under Small's leadership by close working relations between Mission and Government. A number of missionary wives, including Mrs Small and Mrs Heighway energetically took up the campaign to improve village hygiene while some of the earliest missionary sisters recruited for Fiji - Misses Dodson, Billing, Butt and Hammatt - were placed in charge of circuit health programmes. In 1906, Wilisoni Lagi, a Lauan student at the District Training Institution was released by the Mission for a three year medical course in Suva. He graduated in 1909 as Fiji's first native medical practitioner and, by an agreement between Mission and Government, was appointed to work in the province of Naitasiri, an area which included the Davuilevu Methodist training centre.

In the 1920s, fifty years after annexation, the Mission view of Government policy had altered considerably. Any criticism by missionaries had a detached quality, without the righteous and partisan outrage of Langham or Fison. There was a general acceptance of the methods employed by the Government to rule the Fijian, in particular its nurture of the communal system. Occasionally a missionary would express reservations; the one missionary who promoted individual tenant farming by Fijians, Arthur Lelean, gained little support from his fellow missionaries who were alarmed by his unorthodox behaviour. Most missionaries were like Charles Lelean who, after twenty years in Fiji, appeared to be torn between defence of communalism with its 'respect for

43 For details of Hygiene Mission negotiations see Chapter 6.
44 S. Albon to R.L. McDonald, 29 March 1926, F/1/1926.
authority' that had made mission work relatively straightforward at the turn of the century, and encouragement of self-help on which matter Lelean believed (with some justification) the Government lacked any policy. 45

The role of the Methodist Mission in the major sugar strike of 1921, an event one Fiji historian has described as 'seminal' in the country's history, 46 indicated the degree to which the Methodist Mission was developing (in practice if not in fact) into Fiji's Established Church. 47 In 1921, Fiji's Indian labourers on the Colonial Sugar Refining Company and other European-owned sugar estates in western Viti Levu went on strike for higher wages and better living conditions. The Methodist missionaries working among the Indians adopted a neutral stance; one of them, Richard Piper, expressed his sympathies with the strikers. Assisted by Government regulations which relaxed restrictions on the engagement of Fijian labour, the two missionaries working among Fijians in western Viti Levu, Arthur Amos at Ba and Stanley Jarvis at Sigatoka, immediately set about assisting the C.S.R. Co. in its efforts to obtain Fijian labour for the neglected estates, since livestock had to be fed and the railway line kept clear. Jarvis had noted elements of 'serious trouble' at the commencement of the strike when, to his puzzlement, the initial sympathies of the Fijians swung towards the Indians and the prospect of a united front loomed as a 'peril' for the white community. Jarvis recorded his actions:

I went to Sigatoka and Nayawa preaching on the Sunday...I emphasized the facts of the Lotu and the Govt. and what they stood for...On the following night a large meeting was held at Laselase attended by hundreds of Fijians, some Indians and many white people...[The Fijians] finally decided to leave the Indians to themselves and stand by the Govt. Lotu law and order...I visited the towns [Fijian villages] where

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45 Lelean to Small, 7 March 1922, F/1/1922.


47 Note also A.B. Brewster's (Joske) comments in The Hill Tribes of Fiji, London 1922, 141-43.
the Indians were living...told them that the Indians were not justified in using their houses and villages, that they were a source of disaffection, that they should be told to clear out and live with the free Indians...48

The intervention of Amos and Jarvis with their recognised influence over Fijians, was regarded as decisive by the C.S.R. Co. authorities who, in appreciation, made presentations to both missionaries for projects in their respective circuits.49 Piper, who claimed that the two missionaries cajoled Fijian Bulis into giving consent to the hire of Fijian labour, noted Jarvis's close identification with European interests - Jarvis was dubbed the 'C.S.R. Chaplain' - while the Indians signalled their utter contempt by spitting on Jarvis's boots.50 At least one missionary, Robert Green, indicated his disapproval of labour recruitment by refusing to support the C.S.R. representative when he came to Kadavu.51 Generally within the Mission there was tacit approval of the actions taken by Amos and Jarvis, though, as Charles Lelean pointed out, 'we ought to deal with Govt. rather than make bargains with the C.S.R. Co.' 52

The single most important issue on which the Mission continually dealt with the Government through the twentieth century, with little success, was the tenure of church land. Land use by the Methodists fell into two categories, freehold and vanua-ni-cakacaka, or land specially reserved for church use but carrying no title. Much of the freehold land had been purchased before annexation and was submitted for examination before the Land Claims Commission established by the Government in 1879. Of thirty-eight land claims lodged by the Mission, thirty-three were allowed, incorporating a total area of over 1,000 acres.53

48 Jarvis to Small, 11 February 1922, F/1/1922.
49 Amos to Small, 30 August 1921, F/1/1921.
50 Piper to C.O. Lelean, 1 April and 15 May 1921, F/1/1921.
51 Green, My Story, 94.
52 Lelean to Small, 10 May and 4 June 1921, F/1/1921.
53 The success rate of the mission claims eighty-seven percent, compared favourably with others. For example, F. & W. Hennings, a trading and merchant firm, had an eighty-one percent success rate. See Land Claims Commission, Register of Claims and Appeals, 1875-82, N.A.F.
Some of the Mission freehold claims generated considerable friction. Walter Carew, a member of the Commission, charged the missionaries with intimidating the Kalabo people over the crucial Davuilevu claim and generally criticised the unsatisfactory manner in which the Mission had looked after its land affairs. A protracted and at times embittered correspondence occurred between the Mission and the Government over the former's claim to the Levuka foreshore as part of the estate bequeathed by John Binner's widow to the Mission. In reply to Gordon's assertion that ownership of the foreshore had always rested with the Crown, the missionaries argued - 'impatiently' in Thurston's view - that the 'Crown' before 1874 had been in fact 'Fijian supreme authority' and this power had alienated the foreshore and given it to the Mission. Such was the persistence of the Mission in pursuit of its claim that Gordon, out of regard for the achievements of Wesleyanism in Fiji and conscious of a political backlash if he did not conciliate, presented the foreshore as a gift, thereby shrewdly avoiding making the success of the Mission a precedent for other owners of coastal land.

By then, however, Langham had been checkmated. He had resisted pressure

54 Carew to Gordon, 6 November 1877, Fiji Records, vol.II, 661

55 The Binner estate, one of the largest portions of mission land, comprised numerous pieces of land in Levuka purchased between 1852 and 1863 by the Mission school-master and successful trader, John Binner, who, unlike his ordained Wesleyan brethren, was not bound by Mission rules to refrain from trading. On his death, the lands he owned were bequeathed by his widow to the Mission in return for £10 and an annuity of £50 until her death. Before annexation, Langham reported that there were constant disputes over the land with native owners. Until the decision was made to shift the capital from Levuka to Suva, the Binner estate was a valuable piece of real estate. L. Fison to J. Calvert, 31 October 1877, M/156, MMS; Langham to B. Chapman, 11 July 1873, MOM 103.


57 Fiji Records, vol.III, 209; Chapman to Langham, 15 April 1879, A 2818, NL.

58 C.S.O. 1883/1929.
from other missionaries to sell land in Levuka in the early 1870s at the height of the cotton boom but the value of the land he sought for dropped sharply once Suva was declared the capital. Subsequently the Binner estate became a liability rather than an asset. 59

Mission land secured by Crown Grant was not necessarily free from dispute afterwards; the extensive mission holding of Navuloa (338 acres) at Kaba Point is an exemplary case. In 1871 Cakobau, under protest from his Premier, exploited his tributary rights to gain approval for the sale of Navuloa from the Kuira and Buretu chiefs whose lands included the Navuloa property. (It was asserted some years after the sale that Langham 'begged' the land from Cakobau knowing that the owners objected to the transaction.) The land was sold to the Mission for use as a central training institute for H20. 60 Once the institute removed to Davuilevu in 1909, the Buretu people demanded an immediate return of the property. They alleged that the land had been given as a gift (ka ni loloma) for which they had received no acknowledgement and, since the site lay unused, was not the original deed of sale null and void? Small was unperturbed. The Mission's position was secure holding a Crown Grant. Yet the alienation of Navuloa remained a 'hornet's nest of trouble' in the Bau Circuit. In 1939 the Kuira people withheld their vakamisoneri contributions because their claim to a part of Navuloa had received no response. Throughout these years the Mission considered the leasing of any Navuloa land as too risky a proposition in view of the adverse feelings of the Buretu and Kuira people. 61

Freehold land in the twentieth century was generally a less

59 Rents from Binner estate: 1876, $282.0.0., 1938, $91.14.2., 1955, $126.10.0.


61 W.E. Bennett to Small, 2 July 1907 and Small to Bennet, 9 July 1907, F/1/1906; C.O. Lelean to Small, 3 February 1911, F/1/1911; S.G.C. Cowled to W. Green, 28 September 1933, F/1/1939; A.I. Buxton to W. Green, 8 April 1942, F/1/1942. The fertile land at Navuloa is still considerably under-utilised today.
sensitive issue than *vanua-ni-cakacaka*, the term applied to land voluntarily given by the Fijian owners for the work of the church but not secured through title. These allotments, including church sites, land for schools, ministers' and teachers' houses and planting land, were always publicly butaka'ed [presented] and formally set apart, and the gift duly reported to the next Circuit Quarterly Meeting. In 1914 Small calculated that there were 1600 pieces of *vanua-ni-cakacaka*, 955 with satisfactory boundaries and the remainder undefined; most of this land had been donated after annexation.

A recurring problem for the Mission was the repossession of *vanua-ni-cakacaka* with no regard in such cases to any implicit possessive rights for the Mission. The Methodists had never insisted on security of tenure over this class of land; it is probable that had they attempted to, very little land would have been donated. Another reason for the Mission's unusually restrained approach to securing *vanua-ni-cakacaka* was the considerable embarrassment and even disgrace accruing to the missionaries as a result of the acquisition of large tracts of land by a few of their number in the 1860s. In the words of Joseph Nettleton:

> It is only too clear that we missed our opportunity [to gain titles for *vanua-ni-cakacaka*] when the Land Commission was at work, but the reasons... were our modesty in not seeming to be land grabbers even for Mission purposes.

Between 1904-10 Governor Sir Everard im Thurn changed the restrictive laws relating to Fijian land and freehold sales were permitted

62 Small to F. Baxendale, 12 September 1905, F/1/1905.
63 Small to J.G. Wheen, 21 December 1914, H.O./1/1914, NF.
65 Nettleton to G. Brown, 24 June 1909, MOM 238; see also J. Carey to Nettleton, 15 September 1868 and Carey to R.B. Crammer, 30 October 1868, B.440, ML; G. Brown to B. Danks, 22 June 1909, MOM 238.
for three years until the Colonial Office stepped in and halted them. The missionaries were equivocal in their response to im Thurn's policy. They took the opportunity to expand their Dauilevu property to 529 acres, a sale simplified by the fact that there appeared to be only two owners, Ratu Peni Tanoa and Savenaca Dolodolotawake. At the same time, however, the Mission championed the plight of Fijian land owners at Nakelo, Dravo and Kuku in the Rewa delta, who were being pressed to sell about 6,000 acres to the C.S.R. Co., a scheme, according to Small, favoured by the Government:

The white man is determined to avail himself of the chance now given to get land from the native which means that the brown man will be bamboozled. The Govt. seems to care little.

As far as the mission vanua-ni-cakacaka sites were concerned, im Thurn made sweeping promises to legislate against their repossession. This could not be done however until a schedule of such land holdings had been compiled, defining limits and establishing the means by which the land had come into mission possession. Once missionaries commenced to delineate boundaries they encountered resistance from suspicious Fijians and Small had to drop his schedule plan when only two circuits were able to complete lists of vanua-ni-cakacaka.

By the 1920s the question of land had become too sensitive for any solution of vanua-ni-cakacaka. As reports continued of repossession, the Mission received a further setback when the revived Native Lands Commission refused to name the Methodist Church as the owner of vanua-ni-cakacaka land - which strictly speaking it was not - even though many such areas had been in the continued possession of the church for over fifty years. Small's successor, R.L. McDonald, responded

66 France, op.cit., 152-61.
67 Small to W. Scott, 18 July 1908, F/2/Vol.I, MF.
68 Small to C. Bleazard, 14 August 1906, F/1/1906; see also Small to Native Commissioner, 3 August 1906, F/1/1906; D. Wilkinson to Native Commissioner, 13 August 1906, L/14, NF.
69 Small to C.O. Lelean, 26 February 1907, F/1/1907 and Small to Lelean, 29 July 1912, F/1/1912; Small to J.C. Wheen, 21 December 1914, H.0/1/1914, MF.
with a final suggestion to the circuit annual meetings, for the placing of vanua-ni-cakacaka under the name of the church though not the ownership. His concern was only to prevent further piratical repossession.

R.A. Gibbons noted the reaction in Bua:

I presented the proposals as clearly and as attractively as possible. But the chiefs suspect trickery or a violation of their native rights concerning land and property. The 'Vakarau Nakawa' [traditional arrangement] is good enough in their judgment and they will not give way. 70

The response of the Fijians disappointed McDonald who believed that opposition to his moves had been led by Apolosi Nawai and the Viti Company. Wild rumours had spread abroad that the Mission was trying to get its hands on Fijian land which might be given to Australia. 71

There was no simple answer to the delicate issue of church land. (It remains today one of the potentially divisive questions between the Church, as one of the largest private land owners, and the people.) 72 In an important sense, any solution regarding tenure would have necessitated decisions imposed from the top by Mission and Government. By the 1930s a more articulate Fijian representation in the church courts resisted European compromise on a matter at the core of Fijian society. In fairness to the missionaries however, they were not insensitive to the deep emotional bonds that linked Fijians with their land. In 1938, Charles Lelean, the most influential missionary then in Fiji, earned the rebuke of the Government when, at a time when Indian access to Fijian land was a highly volatile question, he warned his Fijian congregation at the Jubilee Church in Suva to be on guard

70 Gibbons to R.L. McDonald, 22 July 1930, F/1/1930. The Lau Provincial Council also reacted negatively to McDonald’s proposals, R.H. Green to McDonald, 30 July 1930, F/1/1930.


72 While on field work in Fiji I was requested by Methodist Church authorities to locate if possible firm evidence of the Church’s claim to both Navuloa and Kaba Island (not far from Yanuca Island on the South Coast of Viti Levu); both these claims were under threat of being challenged by the former traditional owners.
lest 'India...dictate to Fiji in respect of native lands'. After representations from the Government, Lelean retracted his statement, urging his congregation in a subsequent sermon 'to trust the Government to guard their highest interests'. No incident demonstrates more succinctly the changes in church-government relations that had taken place in the seventy years following cession.

73 Colonial Secretary to Lelean, 2 March 1938 and Lelean to C.S., 7 March 1938, F/2/vol.2, MF.
PART IV: THE DEVOLUTION OF RESPONSIBILITY
CHAPTER 8

EDUCATION - FOR CHURCH AND COMMUNITY

AFTER 1874 the colonial Government was swift to establish its authority in matters which it considered part of its legitimate realm. One area which the British administration left almost entirely to the Mission was education, the Wesleyans possessing virtual dominance in this field from their arrival until the turn of the century. They held this position mainly by default. Catholic initiatives in education did not begin in earnest till the 1890s, while colonial policy until the early 1900s generally avoided any involvement with indigenous education, the cost of such an enterprise being the main deterrent at a time when colonies such as Fiji were expected to live within their limited tax revenue. Public opinion generally supported the idea of mission-controlled education for Fijians and, to cater for European children, schools were opened at Levuka in 1879 and at Suva in 1883. The white-dominated colonies of New Zealand and Australia were fiercely engaged in the debate on secular education; to introduce it to Fiji in the 1870s, as was rumoured, would be, in Langham's words, 'the most absurd of all absurd things' in a 'semi-heathen' country.1

Other reasons aside, it made common sense politically for the Cakobau Government and then Gordon to sanction the mission hold over Fijian education. Any attempt to disrupt an entrenched and well-organised system - rudimentary schools staffed by local pastors having been opened in every village - was inviting conflict with a Mission which as already seen was at loggerheads with the Government over a number of issues in the years following cession.

Schools were close to the heart of Wesleyanism. In England the early schools used scriptural material, for a long time the only

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1 Langham to B. Chapman, 11 September 1872, NOM 103; see also J.D. Legge, Britain in Fiji, London 1958, 279; Clive Whitehead, Education in Fiji, Ph.D., University of Otago, 1975, 14-15.
texts available, to give children a facility in reading. But the propaganda function of schools was combined with philanthropy, particularly on the mission field. The 'Instructions to Wesleyan Missionaries', drawn up in 1834, stressed not only spiritual enlightenment of the people as a mission aim but also the need to improve their general knowledge. Fiji, in practice, came to reflect the English model with 'knowledge subservient to piety'. The 'three Rs' were introduced as a means for religious instruction. In the 1850s the Glasgow educational system, devised by David Stow, in which much stress was placed on the Bible and moral training, was introduced into Fijian mission schools by William Collis and John Binner. The former included reading, writing, spelling, arithmetic and 'some hints of Natural History' in his Lakeba school curriculum but although the Glasgow system was adopted by Fijian teachers, the primary emphasis in the village school was on scriptural instruction and recital. As one visitor to Fiji in 1872 noted, the object of Wesleyan schools was 'to Christianize the people, more than to impart a very grand Education'.

While the Wesleyans did not deliberately intend to restrict learning in their schools, the range of available literature was a limiting factor. The first publications that issued from the printing press at Viwa after 1838 included a teacher's manual and Gospel lessons for use as a reading book. Apart from the Bible, which was widely available after 1856, the only other book used extensively in schools until the turn of the century was Pilgrim's Progress (Vulagi Lako), in Lady Gordon's opinion a superior Fijian translation to the Bible.


3 Richard Philp, Diary of a voyage to Fiji, 1872, MS in N.A.F.

4 J. Calvert, Mission Work in Fiji, 29 August 1891, M/154, M.M.S. Approximately 8,000 copies of the Bible were sold or distributed between 1856 and 1891 and 60,000 New Testaments in the same period.
(probably in simpler Fijian) and one which was well liked and widely read.\(^5\) Compared with its Wesleyan neighbour, Tonga, Fiji was poorly off for vernacular literature. In 1883 Governor Sir William des Voeux noted the achievements of the missionary and educationalist James Fegan Moulton in providing Tongans with books on geography, natural history, travels and Aesop's Fables.\(^6\) In 1872 Langham wrote an elementary arithmetic text-book for use by Fijians in school but that subject remained a mystery to many children because the village teachers were unable to master it themselves.\(^7\)

Missionaries conducting their annual school examinations reported that the most proficiently executed subject was the reading of prepared scripture passages. Student excellence in this area was due mainly to the catechetical method of instruction adopted by teachers at a time when other forms of instruction were not well advanced in England and were hardly known of in the islands.\(^8\) The tendency among school pupils, in the earlier years most of whom were adults, was to learn by rote and the criteria for literacy often resulted in pupils 'galloping' through whole chapters of the Bible virtually by memory and without a single error. Confronted with an impromptu reading, pupils revealed the inadequacy of teaching methods. Generally, however, the standard of mission education satisfied government officers. At Sigatoka in 1885, Thurston examined 200 schoolchildren and reported most of them 'bright, and, all things considered, well able to read, write and do a few sums in simple arithmetic'.\(^9\) The first government

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5 Fiji Records, vol.II, 167. Note also Small to B. Danks, 3 May 1902, F/1/1902: 'We must now put into Fijian hands something in addition to the Bible and the Pilgrim's Progress'.

6 E. Reeves, Brown Men and Women, London 1898, 265.

7 Bau and Viwa Circuit, Annual Report, 1902, NMSA; Bua Circuit, Annual Report, 1903, NMSA; P.H. Waterhouse to Small, 22 August 1919, F/1/1919.

8 A.C. Cato, A Survey of Native Education in Fiji, Tonga and Western Samoa, Ph.D., Melbourne 1951, 78.

census indicated that, by 1911, over fifty percent of Fijian males and females fifteen years of age and over could read and write. Their situation compared favourably with the Indian population who, after forty years of immigration to Fiji, were only beginning to receive mission educational opportunities. 10

Missionaries were not complaisant about the state of mission schools. At times they deplored the unsatisfactory standards of village schooling, a situation brought about by factors not all of their own making. 11 Absenteeism was a serious problem, resulting from the frequent use of children by their parents for assistance in labouring in European-owned copra estates or in general community duties. In 1872 the Cakobau Government attempted to enforce compulsory attendance on all children from eight to sixteen years, for at least two hours per day. The experiment failed, government poll-tax requirements and its association with adult status proving too great an attraction for adolescents. 12 Even the imposition of a 6d fine on children who did not attend school had little effect; from the monetary point of view it was cheaper to avoid school than church. 13

The successful operation and prosperity of a school often depended on the attitude of local chiefs. Where sympathetic to the establishment of a school, a chief could substantially improve its standing. Attendance would be more thorough and regular; the teacher might be relieved of some of his communal duties and villagers could more easily be recruited to maintain the buildings and be called upon to provide the teacher with adequate quarterage. Conversely lack

11 See S.W. Brooks to B. Chapman, 14 December 1874, MOM 98; Bua Circuit, Annual Report, 1905, NMSA.
12 Cakobau Government Native Code, Act No.35, July 1872, A1487, NL; L. Fison to Chapman, 16 July 1875, MOM 104; Cakaudrove Circuit, Annual Report, 1892, NMSA.
13 Proceedings of the Council of Chiefs, May 1896, 30; 'N.S.M. Jope: "If a child does not attend Church he is fined 1/-; if he does not attend school he is only fined 6d"'.
of interest by a chief often resulted in a deserted school.  

Chiefs and village elders were often critical of the local teacher and for good reason on some counts. Not only did a teacher sometimes abuse his position of authority by excessive use of child labour (normally allowed to him for one day per week) on his planting land, but the mission-educated pastor occasionally assumed rank well above his traditional entitlement, in competition with the local dignitaries, a situation gradually brought under control by the colonial Government.  

On the other hand, chiefly complaints in 1896 of teachers' inadequate salaries rang hollow; the remedy for improved working conditions for teachers lay in the hands of chiefs themselves since one principle they agreed to when receiving teachers from the Mission was that the local village took responsibility for housing and keeping them. The fact remained, however, that in the classroom many teachers were deficient, sometimes incapable, in ability and teaching method, a reflection of their own minimal education and training. As Fison noted in 1875, the Mission could not hope for improvement in its village schools, 'until we have a better class of teachers', a plea that was to be repeated many times in succeeding decades. 

Missionaries faced a dilemma in the training of teachers. Their first duty was the preparation of young men to be village pastors, catering mainly for spiritual needs. From this point of view, school teaching took second place to preaching. But the inadequate training of Fijian youths for their teaching roles inevitably meant a limited education for the next generation of Fijians.

14 Bua Circuit, Annual Report, and Kadavu Circuit, Annual Report, 1873, MNSA; NR, September 1891, 2; Small to W.E. Bennett, 5 January 1906, F/1/1906.  


16 Ibid., May 1896, 37.  

17 L. Fison to B. Chapman, 29 December 1875, WBN, July 1876.
Fundamentally the problem was one of priorities. The Wesleyans in practice emphasized education for the church ahead of education for the community. The village school supplied the rudiments of literacy and numeracy, sufficient for missionaries to concentrate on the logistical task of bringing young men to the circuit training institution for preparation as pastors and teachers, some of whom would after many years earn the rewards of ordination.

The education received by circuit institution students, or vutil, varied depending partly on a missionary's commitment to training and on the ability of the resident minister or catechist, the qase ni vutil, who was often left to do much of the teaching himself. Fison departed from the usual procedure at Lakeba in the 1870s when, in a popular move, he trained vutil for government as well as mission requirements. There was a large complement of seventy students in residence for much of Fison's time at Lakeba. Other missionaries were less successful with their institutions. J.C. Jennison, in both Cakaudrove and Lomaiviti Circuits, between 1900 and 1909, instituted a harsh rule, dictating severe domestic chores to vutil and their wives and giving unsatisfactory instruction. The Cakaudrove vutil demonstrated their feelings by transporting their missionary around the shores of Taveuni at a 'slow paddle' and finally deserting the institution, while the Lomaiviti chiefs protested to Small that Jennison's despotic behaviour towards the young trainees was unprecedented among missionaries.

By 1890 Fijian chiefs, though recognising the need of the mission for vutil, were disturbed that the circuit institutions were attracting not only the genuine trainees but harbouring the indolent,

18 J.W. Burton and W. Deane, A Hundred Years in Fiji, London 1936, 73.
19 L. Fison to Chapman, 29 December 1875 and 11 May 1876, M&O 104.
20 J.C. Jennison to Small, 20 January and 29 January 1903; W. Slade to Small, 5 October 1903; Small to S. Vakadraru and students of Niusawa, 8 January 1903, F/1/1903; Lomaiviti Chiefs to Small, 10 October 1907, F/1/1907.
those seeking to escape their communal *matagali* duties. Thurston responded to their complaints by introducing procedures in 1895 whereby intending *vuli* required the approval of the District Council and Roko before entering a circuit institution. The effect on *vuli* numbers was immediate, a startling decline from 413 in 1895 to 193 in 1900.

The missionaries were distressed, even angered, by what they considered to be a deliberate anti-mission ploy on the part of chiefs. Nolan surveyed a gloomy situation in 1897:

> The Wailevu Vuli is closed. The new law ra young men gaining consent from *matagalis* has emptied it. We have not had a new *vuli* in Ovalau Circuit for nearly 2 years... 12 *vuli* at Kadavu, 8 at Lakeba, 6 Ovalau. It just means the work cannot be carried on.

The position of *vuli* reached a crisis after 1900, a situation which in turn adversely affected village schools. Not only were fewer young men entering the institutions because of the stricter government regulations but other vocations with better remuneration such as scribe, interpreter and clerk in the civil service were attracting potential *vuli*. Moreover teaching lost some of its appeal as a result of another government regulation preventing older boys, the teacher's best planting assistance, from remaining at school after the age of 16.

The acute shortage of teachers for village schools was general throughout Fiji after 1900 but probably worst in Ra province. There the Roko Tui Ra, Ratu Joni Madraiwiwi, was particularly severe in his interpretation of the regulations governing admission to circuit institutions. Madraiwiwi had good reasons. Owing to the relative neglect of Ra province by the Wesleyans, the nearest centre for *vuli* was at Nadi, Ba, outside the provincial boundaries, and Madraiwiwi

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22 C.S.O. 1895/26, 1897/1941, 1900/1711.

23 H.H. Nolan to H. Worrall, 23 July 1897, MOM 295.


claimed that young men, representing the flower of Ra youth, left for Nai'uga and never returned. The Roko summarised his views in a letter to Buli Navitilevu:

I will not sanction the going to the Lotu school another lad in our Province...it appears to me a tricky thing this going of our lads to the Lotu School, for they know they will get stationed in some other Province, while some know-nothing fellow is stationed as teacher in our Province...Their going brings no benefit to this Province, some other province gets their work, while this Province is left to sink.26

The long term effect of Madraiwiwi's policy was evident by 1915 when Ratu Pope Seniloli, on an inspection of the schools in Ra, found that in more than half of the eighty-six villages the teacher was either a local preacher or a layman, untrained and in every instance incapable of teaching. 'I have very strong views on the subject of Education for my own race', wrote Seniloli, 'and it was most disheartening to me to see such a lamentable state of affairs'.27 Small was not prepared to have the Government impute blame for a deteriorating situation to the Mission. It had been impossible to bring about improvements in Ra, he pointed out in reply, owing to the intractable attitude of chiefs who by a short-sighted policy of restricting vuli numbers were preventing the healthy growth of teaching ranks.28 The situation was not only critical in Ra; the Fijian government heads of Bua and Tailevu provinces also complained of 'useless' teachers.29

Confronted with declining numbers of teachers on the one hand and on the other the impossibility of giving adequate training at the circuit level so as to improve school standards, the Mission was

26 Madraiwiwi to Buli Navitilevu, n.d. [1901?], encl. B. Danks, Diary and Letters Received, 1901, Methodist Church of Australia 628 ML.

27 Ratu Pope's comments encl. in Native Commissioner to Small, 6 December 1915, F/2/vol.I, MF.

28 Small to Native Commissioner, 15 December 1915, F/2/Vol.I, MF.

obliged to reappraise its system of elementary education. There were too many schools (over 1,000 in the late nineteenth century with more than 40,000 scholars), 30 too few suitably qualified teachers, limited hours of instruction, a lack of teaching materials and an indifferent attitude to schools on the part of chiefs and parents. 31 After the visit in 1900 of three members of the Australian Board of Missions (including the experienced George Brown), the Wesleyans decided to establish a 'superior' or 'middle' school (up to Standard III) in each circuit to which selected students would be sent, the more distant ones as boarders. The school would be open for three hours each day Monday to Friday, an increase of five hours teaching time per week, and would be conducted by the most capable Fijian teacher, preferably those trained at the Davuilevu District Institution. No pupil over fourteen years would be admitted and the course of instruction would include geography, drawing, book-keeping, drill and English along with the basic 'three Rs'. 32

As part of this mission initiative Matavelo Girls School at Nailaga, opened before 1900, was upgraded and 'superior' schools were established at Navulua (boys, 1902), Suva (boys, 1902), Rotuma (boys and girls, 1908), Niusawa (boys, 1910), Kadavu (Richmond Boys School, 1909?), Kadavu (girls, 1910), Bau (boys, 1911), Vunitivi, Nailaga (boys, 1912), Rewa (girls, 1912) and Nadroga (girls, 1913). Schools such as Matavelo, Richmond and Nadroga received financial aid and support from the provincial councils, some of which were beginning to take increased interest in education for Fijians. Other 'superior' schools for lack of support, either financial or in attendance, did not survive the first year of existence.

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32 Report of Deputation appointed by the Board of Missions to visit Fiji, Sydney 1900, 8–9, 29; Small, Bau and Viwa Circuit. Annual Report, 1900, MHSa.
In almost all the 'superior' schools, mainly because of the decision to include English in the curriculum, the teaching was undertaken by Australian and New Zealand missionary sisters, in some cases with Fijian assistants. Missionary sisters were introduced into Fiji mission work in 1898 and were responsible primarily for teaching in schools and medical work as part of the government-sponsored Hygiene Mission. Those who took up teaching, such as Misses H. Hammatt, M. Forward, C. Butt, P. Brokenshire and M. Ballantine, were generally well-trained, extremely capable, popular with their students and devoted to their task.

Mary Ballantine became associated with the Matavelo Girls School at Nailaga, Ba, a school opened by William Slade in 1899 with the support of the Provincial Council and to which she was appointed in 1903 after two years in Bua Circuit. Despite the difficulties of food shortages and fluctuating attendance, common to most mission schools, Matavelo prospered under Mary Ballantine. She had to overcome considerable opposition from some Bulis who opposed education for girls and, after a boys boarding school was opened at Nailaga in 1912, there were unfounded charges made against the Mission of leading the girls to an immoral life, allegations made in 1915 while Mary Ballantine was in New Zealand, recovering from ill-health. After an operation, she demanded to return to Nailaga but never fully recovered and died there in June 1918. Evidence of her influence among Fijians found expression once a memorial fund was established in 1920 to solicit funds to augment the sum of £100 willed by Mary Ballantine for the building of a central Fijian girls school, eventually opened in 1934 at Suva.

An important indicator of the success of Matavelo Girls School lay in the demand from outside provinces for their Fijian girls to be admitted to the school. This posed problems since the school was subsidised by the Provincial Council and missionaries compounded the difficulty by sending girls from Ba into other provinces, usually

33 C.O. Lelean to Small, 12 November 1912, F/1/1912; Ba Provincial Council minutes, encl. Small to R.L. McDonald, 19 July 1915, F/3/1915.
as assistant teachers, once they had completed their time at Matavelo. Small was warned about such a procedure as early as 1908 and advised to allow the students to pass on the benefits of their learning in their native district. This strong provincialism among Fijians, a feeling that had deep roots in pre-European district loyalties, was either underestimated by the missionaries or simply ignored since it tended to restrict their method of operation.

In some districts such as Lau and Ra, intense provincial loyalties, combined with scepticism about the benefits of mission schools, resulted in the high chiefs - Ratu Jone Madraiwiwi and Ratu Alifereti Finau - refusing to subsidise 'superior' mission schools. Instead they held out for non-denominational schools partially supported by the Government. Independence from the mission system of schooling ensured a degree of control over the eventual deployment of school students; as with the girls at Nalaga, chiefs were finding that youths who completed 'superior' classes and continued at the Davuilevu central mission school, sometimes did not return to their province.

At the turn of the century, the Fijian elite was becoming increasingly dissatisfied with features of mission education, particularly the lack of instruction in English, the absence of higher-grade classes and the tendency for the mission to avoid teaching academic subjects. The chiefs also felt that the Wesleyan Mission had let them down in not continuing a school that had begun with much promise in the 1870s. Early in that decade the Wesleyans, mainly through the initiatives of Jesse Carey and Joseph Waterhouse, commenced a school for the sons of chiefs at Navuloa, under the tutelage of a European lay teacher. The school enjoyed a brief life of seven years. It lapsed partly for want of adequate food supplies at Navuloa, already stretched providing

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34 W. Sutherland to Small, 2 December 1908, F/2/vol.I, MF.

35 One missionary account states that Cakobau was persuaded into giving the land for a school at Navuloa by reports that Ma'afu was intending to sponsor a big school in the Lau Province. Rivalry between the two long-standing antagonists suggests a likely situation which the missionaries were able to capitalize upon. A. Wesley Amos, 'Victoria and the World Task', C. Irving Benson (ed.), A Century of Victorian Methodism, Melbourne 1935, 210-11.
for the ministerial trainees; but since the school could have been
shifted to Davuilevu where there was vacant mission land and the district
was by the 1880s politically stable, the probable reason for the school's
closure was the influential views of Navuloa's principal after 1878,
Lorimer Fison, whose strong Social Darwinian beliefs - that the mental
capacity of the Fijians could not grasp forms of higher secular learning -
would have prejudiced him against any efforts to ensure the continuance
of the school.\textsuperscript{36} The Fijians regarded this school for the sons of
chiefs as commencing a 'new era' because it included in its curriculum
the teaching of the English language.\textsuperscript{37} It had the blessing and support
of Sir Arthur Gordon; furthermore the whole course of instruction -
reading, writing, arithmetic, geography, English grammar, singing and
conversation, was in English, 'the key to the storehouse of knowledge';
the Fijian language was \textit{tabu} during school hours.\textsuperscript{38}

It was this type of school which chiefs wanted and which
finally forced the colonial administration into a greater commitment
to Fijian education. In 1906 Queen Victoria School opened at Nasinu.
The Lau Provincial Council started a school at Lakeba in 1909 and other
provincial boarding schools followed in Vanua Levu, Ra, Kadavu and
Nadroga.\textsuperscript{39}

The reluctance of the Methodists to commit themselves to either
higher education or an emphasis on English teaching opened the way for
Catholic initiative. In 1900 Vidal established a school at Naililili
and immediately attracted enrolments with the offer of English instruction.

\textsuperscript{36} See Fison to his sisters, 17 March 1867, M.120, Pac.Hist. Fison
maintained this point of view throughout his years in Fiji as
evidenced by his opinion of Tongan mentality in issues of the
Christian Advocate, 1885.

\textsuperscript{37} Ratu Deve Toganivalu, 'Fiji and the Fijians', Transactions of the
Fijian Society, 1924, 16-17.

\textsuperscript{38} G.A.F.W. Beauclere, Navuloa School, Annual Report, 1878, NMSA,
xxviii; cf. the desire for English among Solomon Islanders;
Laracy, \textit{Marists and Melanesians}, 83-84.

\textsuperscript{39} The first school established by the Government for Fijians was
the Yanawai Industrial School in 1881, transferred later to
Naikorokoro near Suva.
The Methodists responded in 1902 by opening their Navuloa school to boys between 14 and 16 and giving regular lessons in English. William Lindsay revealed the kind of mission argument that had permeated Navuloa while he was Principal between 1884 and 1900 when he wrote, 'I don't think that teaching the native English will benefit them spiritually, but we feel we cannot resist it any longer'. Pressure from George Brown in Sydney finally resulted in the Boys School being shifted to Davulilevu in July 1906, the General Secretary being concerned that the 'wretched land' at Navuloa would be unable to supply food for the combined numbers of ministerial trainees and school students. By 1908 there were 120 boys from throughout Fiji attending Davulilevu.

Throughout the period under study, the Methodists consistently failed to appreciate the value which Fijians placed upon the learning of English or an education in English. In the 1870s Gordon attempted to have the Wesleyans introduce teaching of English at all mission centres but the missionaries resisted, concentrating on the vernacular language. The Mission did not reject government persuasion merely to maintain an independent stance. The Methodists possessed a clear vision of their role as educators and the type of learning which best suited the Fijian. Since the inception of mission work, teaching in the vernacular had been established policy and although there was a degree of conservatism in the attitude of the missionaries, they saw little relevance or utility in giving English instruction to Fijians. In defence of their position, they pointed out the limited opportunities available in colonial employment and cited India, as an example of a colony where extensive English teaching had apparently done little to assist the real needs of the people. This sceptical attitude to the benefits of English teaching was reflected also among African Missions and had its foundation in the missionaries' stress upon mastering the

40 W.W. Lindsay to G. Brown, 1 November 1899, MOM 165. Cf. the Church Missionary Society in Nigeria who were obliged to provide an English education in Iboland so that they would not lose ground to the Catholics; E.A. Ayandele, The Missionary Impact on Modern Nigeria, 1842-1914..., 292.

41 Brown to Small, 8 April 1902, F/1/1902.

Bible in the vernacular and avoiding the language of white administrators and settlers, many of whom were accused by missionaries of displaying little respect for the Christian code. Implied in the mission outlook was a protective type of censorship, a distrust of the secular influences that might accompany widespread knowledge of English.43

In Fiji, the lack of emphasis by Methodists on English teaching produced a number of results worthy of comment: firstly it enabled the Roman Catholics and Seventh Day Adventists to offer more opportunities to chiefs' sons to follow an English education in Australia and New Zealand. (In one particular case - that of Ratu Mara K. Ululakeba, grandson of Ratu Alifereti Finau - the Methodists were unaware of his removal for higher education to a Catholic school in New Zealand.)44 Secondly and more controversially, the restricted teaching of English in many Fijian schools, particularly those in outlying areas, compared unfavourably with the forward if belated moves in mission education for Indians. At the separate schools for Indians (communally structured education had been unquestionably followed since cession) the teaching of English was emphasised from an early stage.45 Finally, despite the best intention of missionaries, the Methodist attitude towards English - typified in 1930 by a mission policy statement which referred to the government requirement of English proficiency for Fijian school teachers as 'a grave error' - brought adverse opinions of the Mission from a generation of Fijians, as the long-serving missionary Charles Lelean observed in 1937:

As for the teaching of English - you should hear the opinion expressed by some of the young men of today


44 W. Green to D.F. Boorman, 5 April 1940, F/1/1940; see also W. Slade to B. Danks, 1 July 1901, Methodist Church of Australia 628, ML; Small to Ratu Jope, 8 February 1904, F/1/1904; C.O. Lelean to B. Danks, 28 November 1910 and 4 May 1911, MOM 107; D.J. Barnes to W. Green, 6 June 1946, F/1/1946.

45 K.L. Gillion, The Fiji Indians: Challenge to European Dominance, 1920-1946, Canberra 1977, 126-27. A notable exception to the racially separate education system was the Suva Methodist Boys School opened in 1919. In 1939 there were 330 Fijian and 250 Indians in attendance at the school.
who are handicapped through their lack of knowledge of English. They count those who denied them English when they were youngsters to be their enemies, though they professed to be their friends.46

From 1900 until the Second World War, the Methodists, as with educators in many countries before the modern era of decolonisation, never considered offering a purely academic education to Fijians.47 Such a type of education they saw as irrelevant to the real needs of the Fijians. J.W. Burton, in his influential book, The Fiji of Today (1910), argued that only practical education could preserve what he believed was a dying race: 'Better far to master the prose of land manuring and swamp draining than the poetry of Milton'.48 Burton's point of view was supported by Small, Lelean and Bennett; the latter (principal of Davuilevu Training Institution) was reported to have written to the Headmaster of Queen Victoria School at Nasinu 'asking him not to encourage the higher education of the natives as the natives know quite enough already!'.49

The Methodist philosophy of education for Fijians placed major emphasis on industrial education, a direction that was being followed by the majority of Protestant missions in the Pacific.50 It was a policy influenced by a number of writers, the most important

46 Lelean to A.W. Amos, 4 February 1937, F/1/1937. It must be noted that some influential colonial officers, e.g., Governor Sir A.C. Murchison Fletcher (1929-36), opposed the teaching of English. Cato (op.cit., 103) states that up till the late 1940s in Fiji, during the time when he was a missionary there, opinion in mission circles remained prejudiced against English teaching.

47 C.O. Lelean, Developments in the Boys School, Davuilevu, n.d., MS in E/10/(xii), MF.


49 Proceedings of the Council of Chiefs, April 1912.

being the negro educator, Booker T. Washington, whose autobiography 
*Up From Slavery* was first published in 1901. Washington stressed the 
necessity for a schooling which imbued students with the 'dignity of 
labour', not only for its financial reward but for 'labour's own sake' 
and the development of 'independence and self-reliance'. In 
reflecting Washington's sentiments, the Fijian missionaries were adhering 
to a point of view Lorimer Fison had enunciated thirty years earlier. 
An academic education, wrote Burton, was unsuitable 'for the lower races' 
leading, by implication, to their demise. The 'Gospel of Work' was the 
'Gospel of Race Salvation'. Immorality, indiscipline, indolence, lack of 
ambition - characteristics attributed by missionaries to the Fijian - 
all would be removed by industrial education.

In pursuit of their aim the Methodists energetically initiated 
a number of lasting and influential school programmes. In April 1908 
the Davuilevu Industrial Institute opened under Matthew Whan who taught 
primarily carpentry and joinery. The students did contract work, 
mainly for the mission, building the Indian Orphanage at Davuilevu, 
mission houses for Lakeba, Naduri and Nabouwalu, students' houses at 
Ba and the Rewa Girls School. Business was good, with a turnover in 
1909 of $3,000 and in 1910 of $5,000. By 1912, thirty-eight boys 
had received tuition.

Industrial work for girls and women was not neglected. At 
Matavelo Girls School, Mary Ballantine taught laundry work, sewing and 
matmaking and even the cooking of 'some excellent guava jelly'. A Women's Industrial Department was commenced at Davuilevu in August 
1913 with classes in the morning for sewing, mat weaving and basket 
plaiting, and primary school in the afternoon.

51 B.T. Washington, *Up From Slavery*, Oxford 1945, 55. See also Albert 
B. Lloyd, *Uganda to Khartoum*, London 1906, 7ff, (which book Small 
read and was much influenced by).

52 *NR.*, February 1910, 8.

53 Davuilevu Industrial Institute, *Annual Reports*, 1908-13, MNSA.

54 J.V. Thompson (Inspector of Schools) to Colonial Secretary, 
29 July 1911, F/2/vol.I, MF.
In 1919 the Mission reaffirmed its commitment to industrial education with the appointment of R.A. Derrick, Melbourne architect and building instructor, as the new Principal of Davulevu Boys School. A disciple of the Booker Washington ethic, Derrick guided the school curriculum further in a technical direction with 'very little attention to English or academical subjects'. Most of the work was taught in Fijian. Woodwork was the main emphasis of the school; other subjects included commerce, technical drawing, concrete work, elementary engineering, electricity, motor mechanics, typewriting, art work and weaving. Graduates of the school were employed by private firms and provinces, while in 1932 Derrick reported that the Beqa Planters Association, operated entirely by school graduates, was the only existing successful Fijian marketing venture.

Together with industrial education the Methodists focused their attention on agricultural training. From 1908, when Davulevu Boys School was under the headmastership of W.L. Waterhouse, agriculture was introduced into the curriculum though only to a limited extent. Thirteen youths were involved part-time during the school week, carrying out their own planting programme and receiving instruction in the evenings. A plough, harrow and bullocks were purchased and produce was sold at the Nausori market.

In 1923 the Government, sympathetic to the Mission's concern for agricultural education, handed over to the Methodists a free grant of 830 acres of land at Namuanise, Navuso, adjoining the Rewa river. Under the agreement, the Mission obtained the ten-year balance of the lease at £300 per annum, together with the buildings and the loan of farm implements. The Government was permitted to nominate ten students each year for a three years' course. This agreement lapsed when in 1926 the Navuso estate was purchased outright by the Mission Board in Sydney.

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56 R.A. Derrick, Statement on Fiji Boys School, Papers re Fiji District Annual Synod, 1932, F/4/G, MF.
57 Davulevu Circuit, Annual Report, 1908. MMSA, 77.
The first principal of the school, Ernest Oesch, a science graduate, had come from the Central Luzon Agricultural School in the Philippines and he adapted the system there to conditions in Fiji. No fees were charged. Each student - in 1926 there were forty Fijians and twenty Indians - farmed a personal plot of 2½ acres, mainly cash crops for the local market - rice, maize, bananas and pineapples. Poultry and pigs were reared for the market as well. Of the profits from the sale of the produce, seventy-five percent went to the student and twenty-five percent to the Institution for its operational costs. In addition each student was expected to work one day per week on communal plots for the Institution and instruction was given daily on farm management and practical agriculture.58

In 1928 Benjamin Meek, who had succeeded Oesch in 1925 and applied the original farm system for two years, decided to radically change it 'so as to bring the school into line with other schools in the colony'.59 What Meek meant by this vague phrase or what the reasons were for the change in policy were not clear. It is likely however that Oesch's attempt to encourage the independent 'sturdy' farmer either simply failed or was not considered in keeping with general government policy for the Fijian. From 1928 individual farming lots and the profit system were abandoned in favour of a more communal system. Emphasis shifted to the growing of cane together with smaller areas of other crops, and the development of a dairy farm, on which projects all the students were employed. A bonus payment for each student was introduced calculated on the net return for farm produce. By 1935 there were 109 Fijians attached to the Navuso school together with a small number of Indian students.

After completion of their course at Navuso, most Fijians resumed farming on their own mataqali land, although a small number were permitted to occupy two-acre plots for produce farming at Navuso. One of the most successful Fijian farmers linked with Navuso was

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59 Navuso Agricultural School, Annual Report, 1929, encl. in Correspondence with Education Department, 1920-45, E/1, NF.
Jopesa Neqa who, after some years in agricultural training and work at Davuilevu, had been sent in 1920 along with another Fijian, Salacielu Regu, to Hawkesbury Agricultural College in New South Wales. On his return in 1922 Jopesa began farming on 300 acres of land at Sueni, Taveuni. Over a period of eight years he built up livestock including thirty head of cattle, four pigs, fifty poultry and six horses, and planted sixteen acres of crops including nuts, rice, tobacco, maize and yaqona. For six years from 1930 he was the senior Fijian assistant at Navuso Agricultural School, returning to his own land for family reasons in 1936.

While the Methodists gave their attention to practical education at a few central schools, elementary rural education in the hands of mission-trained vuli stagnated. The only solution appeared to lie in substantial financial aid from the Government. Up to the early 1900s the colonial administration had carefully avoided committing its limited revenue to Fijian education, the exception being an industrial school opened in 1881 for sons of chiefs and which was replaced in deference to chiefly insistence by the more academically oriented Queen Victoria School at Nasinu in 1906. Small justifiably complained in 1908 that the Methodists had 'long twitted the Government with having done nothing, or next to nothing, in the matter of native education'. The Education Commission set up by Governor im Thurn in 1909, of which Small was a member, resulted in the Government admitting its responsibility to provide grants-in-aid. Though conceding this important principle, the administration took no immediate action. In 1914 the Council of Chiefs, concerned at the continuing low standard of village schools (the Methodists controlled 684 such schools with 16,437 pupils), pressed for universal grants-in-aid but expressed confidence in the ability of the Mission to retain major responsibility in the running of the schools. The Methodists, their educational resources stretched to the

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60 Small to J.G. Wheen, 26 April 1920, MON Uncat. 1915-58.

61 R.L. McDonald to Secretary for Native Affairs, 2 June 1936, F/2/Vol. 4, NF.

62 Small to C. Bavin, 30 November 1908, F/1/1908.
limit, supported this argument. The Government responded in 1917 by agreeing at first to only allocate grants-in-aid to schools which gave instruction in English. This was extended, following protest from the Methodists, to a few centrally located Fijian vernacular schools, a token gesture. The thrust of government policy was clear; education should stress academic subjects and thus would benefit a privileged minority whose future would probably lie in the civil service.

Government involvement in schooling placed the Methodists under even greater pressure. Most of the village schools remained unaided and in urgent need of upgrading. The available financial resources of the Mission were committed to grants-in-aid schemes which, ironically, resulted in increased educational costs. Recognising the necessity for improved rural education and its inability to finance any such development, the Methodist Mission in 1931 initiated with the Government a scheme of devolution and centralisation. The village school system was transformed, most children attending larger centrally located schools under teachers who had received improved training from mission and government institutions. The grouped schools were managed by committees consisting of the District Commissioner, the missionary or Fijian minister and a local chief. The local people and the Government shared school costs. With the handing over of sole responsibility for village schools, the Methodists were left in charge of twenty-two schools in 1932, all of them in major centres.


64 C.S. Mann, Education in Fiji, Melbourne 1935, 78.

65 For instance, a missionary sister cost £250 to maintain but government grants averaged less than £100 and the Mission had to pay, in addition, half the cost of school buildings and equipment; J.W. Burton, Modern Missions in the South Pacific, Sydney 1949, 122-23.

66 R.L. McDonald to Director of Education, 2 December 1931, Lomai/A/1(b), MF. Although the schools were not listed, in 1950 the fifteen remaining schools under Methodist control were Lelean and Dudley High Schools, and Annesley, Suva Boys, Natavale Girls, Lautoka, Delana (Levuka), Richmond, Niusawa, Cuvu, Lautoka Fijian, Wesley (Suva), Rarawai, Sigatoka and Rakiraki Primary Schools. Memo re Church Schools in Fiji, MS in MOM Uncat., 1905-53.
Not all missionaries agreed with the new arrangements. At Ba H.H. Bock objected to running a school 'with our hands tied', while on Rotuma the sharp denominational divisions exacerbated the problems of committee control.⁶⁷ Defending the sweeping change, the Mission Chairman (McDonald) employed a politically realistic argument: 'to enable the native peoples to keep pace with the advancement of Indians, a better type of rural school had to be devised'.⁶⁸

Although the Methodists withdrew from a central educational role, they still bore the major responsibility for teacher training. From 1911 onwards, when the District Training Institution divided into two sections, the Theological Institution for the training of ministers and the Teachers Training Institute for the preparation of village teachers and pastors, the Methodists signalled a growing commitment to the training of school teachers. Not without protest from some missionaries, on grounds of expense, a second European minister was stationed at Davuilevu in 1913 with special responsibility for teaching training. This decision reflected the Methodists' desire to improve Fijian educational standards; the mission circuit institutions had outlived their usefulness as schools for aspiring teachers. The broader curriculum at Davuilevu was designed to train specialist teachers; subjects taught included political and physical geography, arithmetic, English history, method of teaching, first aid, English homiletics, tonic sol-fa and biblical subjects.⁶⁹

When the Government introduced its guidelines for grants-in-aid in 1917, there was provision for teacher training and examination. The Superintendent of Schools, George Mackay, visited Charles Lelean, Principal of the Davuilevu Educational Centre, and asked him if the Methodists wished to take responsibility for the training of teachers. The Methodists seized the opportunity and a higher grade Teachers Training Institute commenced in 1918 with eight Fijians and nine Indians.

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⁶⁷ H.H. Bock to W. Green, 18 May 1940, F/1/1940; C.M. Churchward to R.L. McDonald, 30 January 1932, F/1/1932.

⁶⁸ McDonald to J.F. Goldie, 5 January 1934, F/1/1934.

⁶⁹ Davuilevu Teachers Training Institute, Annual Report, 1913, MMSA, 46.
All work was in English - six hours daily of lectures, practical teaching and private study.  

The decision of Government to allow the Methodists a monopoly on teacher training was probably a stop-gap measure, not intended to reflect permanent policy. At that time the Methodists possessed the facilities while the Government was ill-prepared to finance its own. As with school grants-in-aid, the arrangement with the Methodists worked to the Government's advantage. The subsidy of £200 for training between twenty and twenty-five students was never considered adequate by Lelean. Eventually in 1929 it was increased to £1,000 but in the same year the Government, acting on the advice of the 1926 Education Commission, opened its own Teachers Training College at Natabua near Lautoka in western Viti Levu.

In Sydney the Board of Missions, as controlling body of the Fiji Methodist Church, resented the decision of missionaries to accept greatly increased government grants without consulting their superiors in Australia. The articulate and persuasive General Secretary of the Board, J.W. Burton, argued for the complete independence of Davuilevu from government monetary interference. The missionaries in Fiji viewed the situation differently. The question was whether to remain in the field of teacher training, not whether to accept grants from Government; the latter principle had been decided over a decade before in 1917. Either Methodist teacher training must cease due to the critical shortage of funds or larger amounts of government money must be allowed to flow so that the Mission might retain the opportunity 'to stamp upon the characters of future government teachers the impress of a Christian institution'.

Either Methodist teacher training must cease due to the critical shortage of funds or larger amounts of government money must be allowed to flow so that the Mission might retain the opportunity 'to stamp upon the characters of future government teachers the impress of a Christian institution'.

As the majority of schools for Fijians slipped out of Methodist control, the missionaries were making a final effort to retain their influence over the next generation of Fijians. Burton and the Board capitulated to missionary opinion.


71 H. Chambers to R.L. McDonald, 26 May 1929, F/1/1929.
The Teacher Training Institution continued for a further eighteen years after 1929. Methods of training improved and the curriculum was broadened to include physical education, tropical hygiene, elementary psychology, sociology and school administration. However an eventual government takeover of all teacher training seemed only a matter of time especially in view of events during the war. The Natabua Government Teachers Institution was appropriated from training camp and the students, most of them Indians, transferred to Davuilevu.

Forced into an unenviable position, the missionaries were as unhappy with the situation as leaders of the predominantly Hindu Indian community who were, justifiably, pressing for non-sectarian teacher training. One serious strike of twenty-two Indian students which followed the dismissal of an Indian trainee by the Davuilevu Institution principal, A.J. Birtles, was resolved only after the appointment of a Royal Commission which vindicated the actions of the missionaries. Such was the racial tension at the time, that not only were the missionaries asked to reinstate the strikers, which they did, but the Governor also asked the Mission, for reasons of 'political expediency', to reinstate the original student dismissed. Birtles refused. To acquiesce in the Governor's request would 'undermine discipline in all educational establishments in Fiji'. As some missionaries had predicted, the Government assumed responsibility for all teacher training two years after the war.

For the Methodists the decade of the 1930s was, retrospectively, a traumatic period, not only because they were obliged to retreat from their position of educational supremacy and their vision of using schools (for both Fijians and Indians) to build an even stronger Christian Fiji, but also because their substantial commitment to industrial and practical education was not satisfying the demands of the Fijian community. Despite the Council of Chiefs protesting in 1933 at the stress on academic education, Davuilevu Boys School was being spoken of as a 'second-rate'

73 Ibid., 117-18.
institution and Navuso was entering a period of decline. It was ironic that, twenty years further on, technical education would be seen as a neglected feature of Fiji's secondary education. This situation was not the fault of the Methodists; the effect of increasing government involvement in education during the 1920s and 1930s had been to stimulate demands for academic, secondary schooling. The Catholics, who with their larger European staff had always emphasised the teaching of English, were the first to capitalise on this new direction opening the Marist Brothers Secondary School for boys in Suva in 1936. Five years later one Methodist teacher commented bitterly, 'we are supplying [the Catholic school] with recruits drawn from the cream of our boys'. At the end of 1942, as a memorial to Charles Lelean who had died in September of that year, the Methodists opened their first secondary school at Davuilevu.

The characteristics of modern education in Fiji either emerged or were confirmed in the years between the two World Wars - the development of a fairly general communal foundation in the composition of schools; the growth of a small number of prestigious government schools, a reliance on committee-run schools assisted by government grants, the devolution of major educational responsibility from Mission to Government and the concentration of mission resources on their well-established schools. At the same time as the Mission moved aside to allow the Government more control over education, so the missionaries were facing up to the necessity for relinquishing management in mission affairs to an increasingly active ministerial and lay element within the Fijian Church.


76 W.E. Donnelly to J.W. Burton, 27 October 1941, F/3/((u)i, MF.
CHAPTER 9

SILVER COINS AND SELF-SUPPORT: THE SEEDS OF
CHURCH INDEPENDENCE

In the evening the king gave us upwards of 2500 roots
of talo as an expression of his love to us.

David Cargill, Journal, 18 December
1839, Schutz (ed.), 169

FIJIAN concepts of an independent Methodist Church had their origins in
the rituals of mission support, the area of church activity where, though
control rested firmly for many years in the hands of the missionaries,
community involvement was optimal. The offering of 'talo' (dalo) to
the mission by Tui Nayau, while an expression of favour, symbolised the
potential which Fijians possessed for managing their own church.
Self-support suggested more than feeding one's teacher; it was the
springboard to Fijian control of their own church resources.

In one respect the Wesleyan Mission in Fiji had been self-relian
t from its early years. The missionaries, when acceding to
chiefly requests for mission teachers, stipulated that provision of a
dwelling, adequate planting land and regular gifts of produce such as
food or mats and later money (vakavulatolu) were a communal responsibility.
Furthermore children who attended the village school were expected to
assist with cultivation of the teacher's planting land. In these
requirements chiefs and commoners readily acquiesced, partly because
the 'grace of giving' was stressed in lotu teaching but more as a result
of pre-Christian experience when the presentation of food to priests was
a customary practice.1 Wesleyan Annual Reports rarely mentioned this
hidden expenditure at the village level which virtually sustained the
mission infrastructure.2

1 J.W. Burton, Modern Missions in the South Pacific, London 1949,
109; Letters and Diaries of David Cargill, A.J. Schutz (ed.),
Canberra 1977, 168-69.

2 Fiji District, Annual Report, 1862, MMSA.
It was the development of the missionary meeting, where money was raised ostensibly for Foreign Missions but in fact used to pay the expenses of administering the Fiji Mission, that provided the catalyst to Fijian aspirations for a church they could regard as their own. Missionary meetings in Tonga and Fiji, modelled on the enthusiastic Exeter Hall gatherings in London, were not introduced until the late 1840s. It is likely that missionaries saw no need for them, distinguishing in their own mind between the converts' support of indigenous teachers and Home Mission responsibility for white missionaries. At Viwa in January 1850 there was a sense of innovation when James Calvert 'arranged to try a missionary meeting', directed, it is clear, at European residents with Fijian contributions solicited separately and probably at their own initiative:

Captain Buck, of the Wesley, presided at the meeting, and he, the whites, and the missionaries contributed above £30. The natives too made a collection, consisting of 76 mats, 44 baskets, 3 bows with arrows, 7 pieces of sandalwood, 16 fans, 62 very superior clubs, 1 pillow, 31 spears, 11 hand-clubs, 4 ladies dresses, 3 pieces of native cloth, 5 water-vessels, 4 combs and 1 pig.

If the Fijian gifts were additional, even incidental, to Calvert's main object of stimulating European support, they signalled the willingness of Fijian converts to participate in a ceremony that had features not unlike traditional rites. Material support for their system of belief was integral to the Fijian way of life. During the yam festival called Ruku among the Boubutho people of inland Viti Levu, offerings of the first fruits were made to the ancestral spirits through the medium of the priests. Similar annual yam festivals occurred elsewhere in Fiji, but known by different names - Yambaki, Yevaki and Baki. The solevu, or formal exchange of tribute with a chief or clan, was a day of celebration accompanied by dancing and feasting. An unspoken spirit of emulation pervaded these occasions and village

3 Gunson, Messengers of Grace, 2.
4 Calvert and Williams, Fiji and the Fijians, 461.
5 Brewster, The Hill Tribes of Fiji, 91-93.
The early mission teachers drew comparisons with features of pre-Christian life to encourage contributions at mission meetings. 'In your heathenism', proclaimed a Tongan teacher, 'you gave your property to the devil; you should now give to the lotu'. Kelepi Bai, a Lakeban teacher later a minister, reasoned that since each man had helped in the 'heathen' wars, 'so each should help in the cause of Christ'. European missionaries too, such as Walter Lawry, sought justification for mission offerings in pre-Christian tradition:

Did they not give largely to their Heathen gods? not merely a little property, but fingers, arms, and legs? Yea, and not in a few cases only, life itself was offered at the shrine of an idol.

Lawry, while on his visits to Tonga and Fiji as Superintendent of the Wesleyan Missions in Polynesia, was the first missionary to recognise the potential of annual missionary meetings. His journeys through the islands in 1847 and 1850 coincided with the regular appearance of these meetings on the mission calendar. Lawry singled out Thomas Williams' use of the 'school-feast' or 'solavu' at Bua for particular notice and praise. At this gathering which many villages attended, people demonstrated before the missionary their acquaintance with portions of the Scripture and Catechism and followed this performance with gifts, both Christian and pagan 'cheerfully contributing'. The business-conscious Superintendent emphasised the financial role of Fijians and Tongans in mission work, which he believed had been neglected:

Their being asked to contribute towards sending abroad the word of God, would greatly please them, and do them good.

7 WMN, April 1858, 63.
8 W. Lawry, A Second Missionary Visit to the Friendly and Fuejee Islands in the year 1850, London 1852, 103.
9 Ibid., 98.
They would enter into the matter in due form and with
great ceremony. A day must be fixed for the offering;
all necessary preparations are made. They go to their
Heathen friends for help... The day of offering is a
great day with them... All are dressed clean and well;
and a feast closes the day.\textsuperscript{10} 

Lawry advised missionaries to inform their congregations of
the type of articles which could best be 'turned to account'. He
predicted that in areas of strong Christian influence they should
expect many instruments of war to be dispensed with but the products
to encourage were coconut oil and arrow-root.\textsuperscript{11} According to mission
accounts Fijians responded enthusiastically to the missionary meeting
or vakamisoneri as it was called.\textsuperscript{12} At first articles were contributed
indiscriminately but gradually, as Lawry had urged, missionaries
channelled Fijian generosity into the more lucrative trade products
such as oil, sandalwood and arrow-root all of which were transported
by the mission vessels, John Wesley and Jubilee, to Sydney markets.\textsuperscript{13}

From 1870 onwards missionaries indicated a marked preference
for cash donations. In Lau, where the vakamisoneri prospered for many
years on coconut oil, the shift to cash contributions followed the
establishment of comparatively stable trading firms such as F. & W.
Hennings who, although paying far less than the Sydney price, removed
the uncertainties and sometimes loss of income experienced by the

\textsuperscript{10} Ibid., 103.
\textsuperscript{11} Ibid., 104.
\textsuperscript{12} The complete phrase for missionary contributions is 'Na soli
vakamisoneri' (i.e., the missionary gift) but popular usage deletes
the first two words. There is considerable variation in the
spelling. A. Capell (Fijian Dictionary, 1940) gives 'vakamisioneri'.
One of the earliest spellings frequently employed was 'vaka
M.A. thesis, Tradition, Choice and Change in the Fijian Economy
(Auckland University 1955) uses 'vakamisinari'. In this chapter
the spelling is that used by both Langham and Sir Arthur Gordon,
\textsuperscript{13} See for example W. Wilson to J. Eggleston, 8 June 1858, WNN,
July 1859, 137.
Mission when storing and transporting coconut oil. A further reason for mission encouragement of cash donations was that village teachers were receiving inadequate quarterages in kind from their people and small gifts of money were of greater utility. Governor Gordon criticised the Mission's preference for cash as compared with the Government's system of a levy on produce. Gordon had evidence showing that Fijians were finding themselves hopelessly in debt in order to raise coin for their vakamisoneri. That was the case for a short time in Lau in the 1870s when Lakeba Circuit under Fison and Lomaloma under Ma'afu rivalled each other to achieve the dubious distinction of having made the greatest contribution. Most Fijians avoided debt; Fiji never became the imitation of Tonga where co-operation of missionary and trader deliberately forced people into debt. At times of depression or drought the missionaries continued to accept donations of produce, mats or native cloth.

The vakamisoneri ritual was developed during the 1850s by missionaries such as William Moore and Frederick Langham. Three weeks before the day of the vakamisoneri, the initial speeches were made from the pulpit in each village announcing the date and the intervening time was used by the people to collect their subscriptions, either by selling cash crops or making their labour available to a local planter.

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15 Rewa Circuit, Annual Report 1875, xxvi; Lakeba and Lomaloma Circuit, Annual Report 1907, Jy'. Bau and Viwa Circuit, Annual Report 1907, lxxii, MNSA.

16 Fiji Records, vol.IV, 496.

17 Thurston to Gordon, 7 January 1879, Fiji Records, vol.III, 493; J. Leggoe to B. Chapman, 9 November 1877, MOM 98.

18 See Thornley, op.cit. Fison's letters in MOM 104 illuminate his methods of raising church finance in Lau in the 1870s.

19 A.W. Amos to Small, 9 February 1915, F/1/1915.

20 W. Moore to J. Eggleston, 4 September 1857, WNN, April 1858, 65.
The importance attached to a vakamisoneri meeting, reflected in the extent of preparation, meant that Fijians regarded it as an indicator of their attitudes towards the lotu. The words of Aminio Baledrokadroka in a letter from New Britain could be equally applied to Fiji:

"[The people] support the lotu because they know its value in preventing wars and hatred to each other and cannibalism and heathenism and that it ensures peacefulness, as well as demonstrating to them the goodness and truth of the lotu."

The repayment of debt, a central element in the solevu custom, was a powerful motivating force behind the vakamisoneri. The highly regarded Tongan minister, Taniela Afu, urged his Fijian congregation to contribute generously since they were obliged to repay the debt that had accumulated from the money subscribed in England to support missionaries in Fiji. The vakamisoneri was the yardstick by which appreciation for the lotu was measured. When starting the collection on Lakeba in the late 1870s, Tui Nayau expressed satisfaction 'that the lotu had done great things for them as a people' and announced his determination to demonstrate with a larger subscription his 'growing love for Christianity'.

Apart from its traditional links, the vakamisoneri owed its success as the major source of mission income to a number of factors. The meetings were generally arranged and led by chiefs, the weighty advantage of this being the support which chiefs were able to summon by virtue of their position. On the other hand the considerable influence exercised by chiefs occasionally embarrassed the Mission, such as at Vuda in 1876 when Ratu Tevita announced a compulsory levy on people in his district further suggesting that non-payment would result in imprisonment. Even though social pressure helped to keep the collection plates full, the vakamisoneri was not, as Gordon asserted,

21 WMN, April 1888, 14.
22 Afu's speech reported in W. Moore to J. Eggleston, 7 February 1860, WMN, October 1860, 221.
In response to the Vuda affair, Webb insisted that the money be refunded. Compulsion owed its sanctions to a different source than rightful duty or obligation. In 1895 the Roko Tui Lau was surprised by white reaction to a vakamisoneri levy announced by the Lau Provincial Council. Faced with protests at the illegality of the Council's decision, the Roko pointed out that government taxes had been paid, 'but if you wish to prevent us we do not mind'. Mere abrogation of a resolution would not have altered the will of a chief.

The word of a chief could ensure a generous vakamisoneri return, his indifference its failure. After the establishment of the colonial Government, many chiefs came under considerable pressure as they sought to reconcile the demands of both Mission and Government. Those with official positions such as Buli or magistrate had commitments to their employer and the vakamisoneri was sometimes deferred or neglected in favour of tax requirements. Missionaries frequently complained of the minor consideration given to missionary meetings; 'the Government bleeds the people for the taxes', protested Henry Worrall, 'and after they have paid them we have to whistle for our vakamisoneri'. From the official point of view, Governor George O'Brien indicated his concern in 1899 at the disruptive character of vakamisoneri meetings and persuaded the Wesleyans to have the gathering incorporated into the annual work programme for each district. The arrangement did not satisfy missionaries who complained that chiefs never allowed sufficient time for the people to raise their contributions. By 1913 the system of fixing a date appeared to have lapsed although the chief's influence was not diminished. As Small wrote in 1917:

We can only move the people through the chiefs, while these are largely controlled by the Government. Their policy is to put Caesar first.

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26 C.S.O. 1895/1035.
27 Worrall to G. Brown, 22 September 1896, MOM 165.
28 Colonial Secretary to W.W. Lindsay, 6 September 1899, F/3/(b), MF.
29 Small to J.G. Wheen, 12 October 1917, MOM Uncat., 1915-58.
While the role of the chief remained crucial in securing the best arrangements for a vakamisoneri, the concept of a collective presentation aroused deeply-held beliefs in an efficacious God and this was frequently the motive behind large contributions. Considerable investment required adequate return. In 1900 Small suggested 'indulgent consideration' for Matuku in Lau as a reward for that island's large vakamisoneri total, while in 1920 the tiny island of Ono-i-Lau with 635 Methodists gave over £1,000 as an insurance against the removal of their Fijian minister, Luke Rokovada. Missionaries exploited this aspect of Fijian generosity. When the normally liberal Methodists of Rotuma managed only 260 gallons of coconut oil and 4 1/2 tons of copra in 1872, John Osborne regarded their effort as 'disgraceful' and suggested the removal of the missionary as a punishment for the people's 'meanness'. Again on Rotuma in 1919 P.H. Waterhouse 'stirred up' the people to give generously 'as a thank offering for escaping the plague', (a reference to the influenza epidemic that struck Fiji in 1918). They responded with over £1,208.

The one weakness in this strategy of the missionaries lay in the failure, as often happened, of the Christian God, to satisfy Fijian expectations. While missionaries were sometimes seen to judge the spirituality of a circuit by its generosity, a display of liberality by Fijians did not always produce sufficient reward from the Mission which was subsequently faced with unexpected responses, including a poor contribution the following year or the withholding of a collection until demands had been satisfied or threats of secession to another church denomination.

One of the enduring attractions of the vakamisoneri to Fijians was the method of its collection. The 'red-letter' day, when many

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30 Small to W. Burns, 10 September 1900, F/1/1900; N.R. Greenwood to Small, 13 April 1920; Small to Greenwood, 22 April 1920, F/1/1920.

31 Osborne to S. Rabone, 20 July 1872, MOM 98.


33 See, for example, A.D. Lelean to Small, 1 April 1920, F/1/1920.
villages joined together for the missionary meeting, was preceded by weeks of preparation including the saving of coins and the purchase of new clothes, ‘muslin dresses, fancy ribbons, even hats!’ On the day set down for the gathering, people from surrounding villages would leave in the morning to congregate in a central village which, as host to the vakamisoneri, usually presented a substantial feast. Then each village before making its contribution presented meke on a wide range of subjects, some of them by independent account far from religious in character:

[The dancers] were festooned with masi and garland... many coloured likus and vesas plumes in head, bells and clubs over shoulders grasped in both hands. In fact they were got up in every way in what in Fijian Wesleyan Terminology is condemned as 'vuravura' [matters of the flesh and devil].

It is likely that missionary disapproval of meke at the turn of the century resulted in their replacement by hymns and prayers, morally elevating, less exciting.

The transfer of contributions from villagers’ possession into the large ‘enamel plates’ or onto large mats utilised for the occasion was a complex process. First, the type of money given carried significance. In the earlier years Fijians disdained both 'coppers' and paper money. The latter they called lavo gulu or 'dumb money'; it lacked the jingle of silver money which was the favoured vakamisoneri currency, from threepence to half-dollars and sovereigns. Second, the size of the silver coin was of importance particularly as the vakamisoneri was a public celebration and donations were observed carefully. As the money passed over applause would break out:

34 I. Rooney to B. Chapman, (?) July 1874, WNN, January 1875, 78. See also William Fletcher’s reminiscences in NR, July 1906, 11.


36 Thomas Williams, 3 November 1885, Journal of visit to Fiji, 1885-86, B.589, ML; H.H. Nolan to Small, 31 December 1906, F/1/1906; NR, April 1913, 15.

37 WNN, January 1875, 79.
Nothing less than a shilling was noticed... For a shilling 'vinaka' [well done] was said, for a dollar 'vinaka, vinaka na dolu' but for a pound came the climax when the air resounded with shouts of 'vinaka vinaka vinaka na paudi' caught up and reiterated by the white shirted [church] attendants.38

At some meetings where the size of individual contributions mattered less than the amount given by each village, people entered into the festive air of the occasion by making frequent trips to the plate; shillings were converted into threepences so as to prolong the act. Many donors, on returning to the collection plate, gave in memory of their deceased family members or relatives, while others solicited coins from friends so as to enjoy a further trip to the plate.39

A visitor to the Suva Circuit vakamisoneri in 1912 recorded a detailed description of the event, though one that hardly conveys its spontaneity and excitement:

First there was a short address from the missionary after which a hymn was sung. Then the collection began. Those who had just sung came hurrying up and popping coins into the plate, hastily retired; then there was again a hymn and another group; and another; and another. A young Fijian chief of importance marshalled the people and with an insinuating smile brought them up, the missionary again addressed the people, then the Fijians who had already given again approached the plate, the chief evidently enticing and encouraging them. Again and again they came hurrying up getting more and more excited, always preceded by the chief, till at last they were actually dancing up the aisle, and the chief with his garland of leaves, smiling and elated...I observed some come up as many as five times. A few words from the missionary, and a little smiling encouragement from the chief roused always more and more enthusiasm. I learned that no less than £297 was subscribed.40

38 A.B. Joske, C.S.O. 1884/2713. Langham demonstrated his attitude towards the giving of silver coins when he reported on a missionary meeting held on Bau in 1874: 'I think the size of the pieces of money contributed very satisfactory indeed. There were only 5 three-penny pieces, 96 six-pences, 365 shillings, 4 eighteen-penny pieces, 178 half-dollars, 8 half-crowns, 7 three, and 49 four-shilling dollars and 16 sovereigns. Total £66.13s.3d.' (WNN, August 1874, 63.)

39 NR, September 1891, 11.

The missionary meeting combined perfectly a day of celebration
with the ideal environment for contributions. Churchward, missionary
for almost fifteen years on Rotuma, claimed that the people would not
give if the matter was left to the individual; 'the only way to get
money out of them is to have a big feast or festival of some kind, and
do things altogether on a big scale'. In 1884 when the Government
made inquiries throughout Fiji into the holding of the *vakamisoneri*,
after there had been complaints of people going into debt to obtain
coin, they found that debtors were few and that Fijians welcomed the
*vakamisoneri* as a 'gala day' where the contribution was virtually a
fee for participating in the entertainment:

> Any interference with the *vakamisoneri* [wrote Joske] would be greatly resented. They look upon them as big sprees in which they show themselves off and air their finery... So popular are they that in Rewa, where there is a large Roman Catholic element, I have known members of this body give subscriptions in order that they might join the fun.

There were features of the *vakamisoneri* which, under missionary
influence, exaggerated its commercial and competitive functions.
Village rivalry, a motivating force at any missionary meeting, was
deliberately aroused by some missionaries to bolster contributions.
Small may have regarded this emulatory spirit as 'wholesome' but the
danger in this commonly-held attitude was that competition, based
often on traditional rivalries, could degenerate into 'moral' compulsion -
contributions being given for fear of loss of face. The concept of
shame, with its association of condemnation, was a powerful social control
in Fiji and was played upon by many missionaries, for instance Small:

41 Churchward to R.L. McDonald, 13 October 1926, F/1/1926.

42 Joske, C.S.O. 1884/2713. See also Colonial Secretary to Langham,
28 January 1885, C.S.O. 1884/2810; C.S.O. 1884/2811, 1884/2653,
1884/2654.

43 MA, May 1905, 11; Small to H.H. Roget, 22 December 1906, F/1/1906;
P.M. Waterhouse to Small, 22 August 1919, F/1/1919; A.D. Lelean
to Small, 7 March 1922, F/1/1922.
The collection at Gau b404 is just magnificent and should shame other places into giving on the same scale.

To what extent Fijians accepted these missionary methods as a legitimate form of soliciting funds is extremely difficult to judge. There was a thin line between what Fijians regarded as normal, persuasive techniques by which to stimulate people to action and the excesses which inevitably occurred in practice. In 1877 the Roko Tui Namosi criticised the Mission for the manner in which it continually beat the lali (drum) at the time when offerings were to be given to the teacher until every family had been shamed into making a contribution. In the 1930s an anthropologist living in Bua noted that personal honour depended on giving liberally to the church. So conscious were Fijians of their status or image in the eyes of their fellows that, from 1870 to 1913 at least and probably beyond, they strove to give at the vakamisoner the four shillings required to have their names individually recorded in the printed missionary subscription lists.

Despite the excesses of the vakamisoner system, it resisted abolition or even reform. No amount of manipulation by missionaries alone could have ensured the durability of the vakamisoner; indeed the reaction of the pious Australian Methodist to the system in Fiji was probably well summarised in the words of a newly-appointed missionary in 1929. The vakamisoner horrified him: it was 'unscriptural, childish' and more of a 'birthday present' than a religious duty.

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44 Small to S. Jarvis, 6 March 1917, F/1/1917. For a discussion on the 'language' of shame in Fijian society see A. Arno, 'Ritual of Reconciliation and Village Conflict Management in Fiji', Oceania, vol.XLVII, no.1, September 1976, 49-65.


46 B. Quain, Fijian Village, Chicago 1948, 60-61.

47 Bau Circuit, Annual Report 1870, MMSA: Langham to B. Chapman, 9 July 1873, MOM 103; H.H. Roget to Small, 10 April 1906, F/1/1906; Small to J.C. Lawton, 28 August 1913, F/1/1913.

The vakamisoneri survived and flourished because of its immense popularity among Fijians. They exported the system to Papua and other mission fields; more significantly they rejected newer methods of church support in the twentieth century such as regular stewardship, which would have placed the burden of support more heavily on a declining membership rather than on the wider community of adherents.

So long as the Mission was structured on provincial lines, reflecting the intense provincial loyalties of many Fijians, the annual church offering was a lucrative source of income. For circuits, as well as villages, vied with each other in their contributions, to the point where missionaries were embarrassed by the generosity of their converts.\(^{49}\) Eager in the 1870s to publish totals of individual circuit vakamisoneri, the Annual Reports from 1906 onwards ceased to print this information. Early in that year Small had requested Benjamin Danks, General Secretary, not to publish Cakaudrove Circuit's contribution for 1905 of $1,000; Europeans in Fiji were passing adverse remarks on the size of the vakamisoneri. When Ra Circuit shortly afterwards raised nearly the same amount at a time of food shortages, Charles Lelean could not fail to hear the gossip outside the Mission.\(^{50}\)

There were good years and bad for the vakamisoneri. Not all circuits managed the level of contributions reached by either Ra or Cakaudrove. The totals of most Fiji circuits, including Ra and Cakaudrove, fluctuated considerably. Natural disasters such as hurricanes and droughts, the price of copra, government tax commitments, the attitude of chiefs, the organising ability, character and enthusiasm of the missionary; all these factors influenced the amounts raised. The wealthiest circuit, due to its copra resources, and the most

\(^{49}\) I. Rooney to Chapman, 10 December 1875, NOM 165; Langham to Chapman, 26 September 1878, NOM 165.

\(^{50}\) Small to Danks, 25 January 1906 and C.O. Lelean to Small, 30 March 1906, F/1/1906.
reliable contributor was Lau—called by missionaries the 'Goshen' of Fiji.\textsuperscript{51} Excluding the outpost island of Rotuma, Lau consistently contributed more annually than any other circuit in Fiji even though Ra, Rewa and Bau were more populous areas. However it was generally accepted by Fijians, as also by government administrators, that the eastern parts of Fiji—Cakaudrove, Lomaiviti and Lau—were 'more fruitful' and could afford to contribute larger sums of money.\textsuperscript{52}

A similar assessment applied to the isolated Rotuma Circuit where 600 Methodists, exploiting their rich reserves of copra, fiercely competitive on vakamisoneri days and with fewer avenues to direct surplus cash income, regularly gave twice as much per church member as Lau's 2,500 members.\textsuperscript{53}

Despite the obvious potential for some of the circuits in Fiji such as Lau, Kadavu and Rotuma to follow Tonga's example of 1875 and become self-supporting, the missionaries deliberately refrained from encouraging this trend. Following Methodist connexional tradition, the surplus from well-to-do circuits was used to subsidize poorer circuits such as Bua, Macuata and Nadroga. Small, who ardently defended this system throughout his forty-five years in Fiji, was ignoring, either consciously or not, primary provincial loyalties:

We are a Christian commune, the wealthy assisting the poor and this is both scriptural and in keeping with native ideas.\textsuperscript{54}

While mission financing appeared equitable on paper, in practice it worked to Fiji's disadvantage. After 1875, with Tonga keeping most of its contributions, money raised in Fiji, then the largest single source of income for Methodist Overseas Missions, disappeared

\textsuperscript{51} MR, January 1896, 3.

\textsuperscript{52} See Proceedings of the Council of Chiefs, 1878, 6, 20.

\textsuperscript{53} Statistics calculated from Minutes of Fiji District Synod, 1906-30, F/4/C-F/4/G, MF.

\textsuperscript{54} Letter to Fiji Times, 28 April 1917.
to Sydney where it returned to pay missionary salaries and district expenditure such as salaries of Fijian ministers and the Central Training Institution. Yet as Fijians lifted their vakamisoneri from an annual $2,600 in the 1870s to $4,400 in the 1890s, there was no corresponding increase in funds dispatched from Sydney. In effect Fiji was neglected by Australian and New Zealand Methodists in favour of the newer Missions such as New Britain and New Guinea. Despite the large increase in church membership and in the Fijian ministry, Fiji was financed on the same amount of money in 1895 as it had been in 1866. Missionaries argued, conclusively they thought, that even in the 1890s Fijians were not raising sufficient to pay the costs of their church; what they failed to recognise was that many circuits were giving three times as much at the turn of the century as they had been thirty years previously and expecting a greater return for their improved effort. The Mission was not responding to increased generosity. Teacher shortages continued; ministers were still paid inadequately; there was no assistance in the rebuilding of churches that needed replacement; circuit boats were not forthcoming; in short the lotu had not benefited from larger subscriptions.

Fijians were frustrated at being left completely ignorant or at the best only ill-informed on mission finance, a secret revealed only to the missionary. At the Council of Chiefs in 1883, the Roko Tui Ba expressed the sense of injustice which Fijians felt over the handling of the vakamisoneri when he complained that the missionary subscription was being taken to the colonies instead of being utilised for the benefit of Fiji. In 1895 the Lau Provincial Council, influenced by events in Tonga, endorsed proposals for a Free Church in Lau. Although government officers persuaded the Council to drop the matter, the Lauans indicated their dissatisfaction that the vakamisoneri of

55 MR, November 1895, 2; Fiji District, Annual Report 1897, MMSA.
56 Report of Commission appointed as a deputation to Fiji by the Board of Missions, Sydney 1900, 14.
over £2,000 had not even secured a missionary for the Lomaloma mission station. In 1900 Fijian ministers articulated their people's anxiety that missionaries were engaged in a conspiracy of silence:

Our quarterages are clear to the people of the lands, they know these come to us, but they do not know what becomes of the missionary money... The people want to know how these are disbursed... Let it be placed before the people, and they will be pleased and seek to meet expenses. I say not hide anything from us.59

Despite clear evidence that Fijians wished to be acquainted with the system of mission finance including decisions on the disbursement of funds, the missionaries refused to contemplate Fijian representation at the financial deliberations of Synod. Their reasons, as expressed by Howard Nolan in 1901, had advanced little since the crucial 1875 decision relating to ministers:

[Financial matters] must very largely rest in the hands of the white missionaries. To bring the natives into a finance Com. with the missionary will in my opinion hazard the position he now holds. You know what wild suggestions natives will make and if the idea is firmly fixed in their heads they may become obstinate about it... It is altogether too Utopian to suppose that the Fijian in one generation is fit to sit side by side with equal vote on financial questions as ourselves.60

Missionaries at the turn of the century were loath to move away from an attitude held consistently for three decades under the influence of Langham. Until his death in 1903 Langham wrote letters to Small urging the Mission not to advance responsibility in finance to Fijians. The missionaries were also supported in their view by the Acting Administrator of the colony, William Allardyce. Only when pressure came from members of the Australasian Wesleyan Methodist Conference, including George Brown who with the wisdom of hindsight was

58 A. Duncan to W.W. Lindsay, 20 November 1895, MOM 293.
59 Report of Commission... 1900, 6.
60 Nolan to B. Danks, 12 January 1901, B. Danks, Diary and Letters Received, 1901, Methodist Church of Australia, 628, ML.
61 Small to G. Brown, 18 December 1901, F/1/1901; Langham to Small, 30 April 1902, N/97, MF.
anxious to avoid a repetition of Tonga's split with its mother church, did the missionaries agree to Fijian ministers having representation at the Financial Synod. They voted with the missionaries, which the latter probably predicted, and did not question a single item. 62

On the matter of laymen's representation a majority of missionaries in Fiji led by the young and articulate J.W. Burton, refused for six years to accept the attendance of church stewards at Synod. This group of missionaries, ironically nicknamed the 'Young Reform Party' also included in its ranks William Bennett, William Heighway, Charles Lelean, all convinced of the need for European hegemony in mission district affairs. 63 The 'Young Reform Party' members, who at one stage threatened to resign en bloc rather than accept lay representation, were not opposed to the principle as such; they would have accepted it in Australia. Influenced more than missionaries in either Tonga or Samoa by principles of colonial rule, the Fiji missionaries claimed that Australian ministers were pressing the Mission to move with injudicious haste - 'premature democracy' Lelean called it - when compared with the Government, to grant 'final' power to the Fijians. The balance of control must remain with European missionaries:

Our objection [to Lay Representation] is concerned with the term 'European' and 'Native' and connects itself with the world-wide problem as to the wisest methods of governing a native race. 64

Lacking continued support for their stand from the Methodist Church in Australia, the missionaries eventually capitulated to a compromise solution suggested by the Chairman, Small. He ensured the chiefs and not just church stewards, most of whom he classed as 'nonentities...men of no social standing and little education', would

62 Small to Brown, 4 November 1902, F/1/1902; MR, July 1901, 4; Brown to Small, 20 February 1901, F/1/1901.
63 Cf. Lelean's attitude on ministerial responsibility in the 1930s, Chapter 2.
64 Report of Commission appointed by the Board of Missions to visit Fiji, Sydney 1907, 17; Lelean to Small, 29 November 1907, F/1/1907. Cf. the strong Samoan influence in London Missionary Society church affairs, R.P. Gilson, Samoa 1830-1900..., 134-37.
be eligible to act as lay representatives. 65 In adopting this position, Small was not conceding a predominant position to Fijians. He, like all missionaries in Fiji, believed in the primacy of European ministerial authority: 'our people must be taught', he stated in 1907, 'that the Missionaries rule the Church, not they'. 66 From 1908, Fijians outnumbered Europeans on the Financial Synod but missionary fears of 'log-rolling' by the Fijians were unfounded. Not till the 1930s did Fijians exercise the strength of their position.

Even before the wrangle over lay representation had been resolved, a split in the Fijian church (predicted by both George Brown and Benjamin Danks in view of missionary obduracy) took place, not surprisingly in Lau, the wealthiest circuit. In 1906 a group of Fijians led by Ratu Josua Uluigalau, Bili Lakeba, and Ratu Salesi Kinikinilau, a former native magistrate and great-grandson of Roko Talai Tupou, Tui Nayau at the time of Cross and Cargill's arrival at Lakeba, seceded from the Methodist Church to establish a Free Church (Lotu Tawatala) along Tongan lines. The missionaries in Lau attempted to discredit the movement by labelling it a 'Cave of Adullam', attracting only those discontented with the Roko, Alifereti Finau, and the Government or those under church discipline. There was some truth in these allegations. Kinikinilau was a rival to the position of Tui Nayau, his grand-uncle Ratu Eroni Loganimoce having been the incumbent before Finau. The power struggle between these two high chiefs, Kinikinilau and Finau, was one reason for the split in Lau Methodism. In seeking to attract people away from the established line of Methodism, Kinikinilau chose to emphasise the dependent position of the church in Fiji when compared with the Free Church in Tonga. Small, who journeyed to Lakeba to hear the grievances of the secessionists recognised that their major complaint related to methods of mission finance, particularly the desire of the Fijians to retain the vakamiseneri in Lau for the benefit of church development there. In an interview with the leaders Small reported the comments of Kinikinilau:

65 Small to Danks, 6 April 1904, Methodist Church of Australia 626, ML.

66 Small to W.A.: Heighway, 24 December 1907, F/3/(e), MF.
[The Free Church Adherents] had no quarrel with the lotu in which they had been reared, its teachings they still accepted and sought no other, but they simply looked to the Tongan Church and saw how much better the temporalities of the church are managed there, and wished for a similar state of things here. Personally I do not wish to leave the Meth. Church, it was my great grandfather who extended welcome to the first missionaries to Fiji and my relations and friends are still members of the Meth. Church and I do not wish to sever myself from it. But simply on account of the funds which we contribute that these may be kept in this land and used amongst us, and that we may see more of the benefit of it.67

Small's total commitment to the principle of connexionalism - 'you are part of Lau and Lau is but a part of Viti'68 - brought an impasse in negotiations with the secessionists. The Methodists were in the stronger position; they had the support of the most powerful Fijian in Lau, Alifereti Finau, who in view of his dominant influence within the church saw no need to join forces with the Free Church. Indeed, partly as a reaction to Kinikinilau's sympathy with Tongan Methodism, Finau made positive attempts to diminish Tongan influences within the Lauan church.69 However, he also was dissatisfied with the system of mission financing and, when presented with the opportunity in 1916, he attempted (in co-operation with the missionary) a circuit independence scheme for Lau.70 The Free Church persisted on Lakeba but did not expand, securing little support elsewhere in Lau but showing no inclination to reunite with established Methodism. In 1921 the Free Church had a following of 145.71

The division in Lau Methodism caused missionaries to reconsider their attitude towards Fijian responsibility for church finance. From 1902

67 A.J. Small, 'Notes of Interview held at Tubou, Lakeba, 23 July 1906', F/1/1906; C. Bleazard, Lakeba and Lomaloma Circuit, Annual Report, 1907, NMSA.
68 Small, 'Notes...1906'.
69 See above, Chapter 4, n.52.
70 See below, p. 271 ff.
71 Census of the Population, 1921, Legislative Council Paper 2/1922; Small to J.G. Wheen, 31 May 1906, F/1/1906.
half the funds raised in the vakamisoneri were retained in Fiji for the payment of Fijian ministers' salaries and for special projects such as educational expansion at Davuilevu. Partly as a result of the decision to retain money in Fiji as well as favourable economic conditions and the acceptance of lay representation, vakamisoneri contributions increased sharply after 1906. Missionary authorities in Sydney, anxious to concentrate their resources in New Guinea, New Britain and the Solomon Islands, drew up constitutions to make Fiji and Samoa both 'self-supporting and self-directing'. Missionary superintendents and teachers would still be recruited from Australia but their financial support would come from the island churches.

While the Methodist Church in Samoa moved to financial independence in 1915, Fiji's hopes of a similar transition were dashed after a series of low vakamisoneri collections caused by a complex series of factors: a spate of unusually severe hurricanes between 1910 and 1914 which adversely affected the copra industry; a sharp decline in the price of copra after 1913; over-commitment of slender mission reserves to the Davuilevu educational centre; the onset of war and diversion of Fijian cash income into 'patriotic funds' and the monetary demands of the Viti Company, which after 1914 achieved considerable popularity on the main island of Viti Levu.

There were two other reasons why Samoa achieved financial independence well before Fiji. The church members, prospering from the fruits of Samoa's economic expansion in the years before the war, were each contributing four times the amount of their Fijian counterparts. Further, the Chairman of the Samoa Methodist Mission, Ernest Neil, was

72 Fiji District, Annual Report, 1911, 15.
73 MR, October 1913, 10.
74 Small to J.G. Wheen, 1 September 1914 and 5 December 1914, HO/1/1914; J.G. Wheen to Small, 16 September 1914, F/1/1914; Lau Circuit, Annual Report 1914, NMSA; MR, April 1916, 10.
75 J.W. Davidson, Samoa no Samoa, Oxford 1967, 89. In 1913 Samoa (2,394 Methodist Church members) gave £2,799 as their year's contribution; Fiji (32,305 members) gave £8,038; figures from Annual Report, 1913, NMSA.
more dedicated than Small to the pursuit of financial independence. Small's attitude reflected that of his conservative brethren who, fearful of the size and greater responsibility of Fiji, when compared with Tonga and Samoa, spoke of self-support following a good vakamisoneri but quickly retreated from that position in a 'lean' year. At least Small recognised the close links between the vakamisoneri and Fijian aspirations for an independent church. 'The matter of the Missionary meeting', he wrote to Lelean in 1913, 'all has a bearing upon the movement of erecting the district into an Independent and Self-supporting one'.

There were signs of impatience and frustration in the Fijian community after the collapse of district financial independence. Vakamisoneri meetings were ignored on parts of Viti Levu in favour of the strongly nationalistic Viti Company gatherings. The years of greatest enthusiasm for Apolosi's venture, 1915 and 1916, saw the lowest church contributions between 1907 and the 1930's depression. Viti Company leaders made wild accusations that half of the vakamisoneri sent to Australia was 'banked and saved' for the benefit of European missionaries. In another sign of dissatisfaction with the system of finance, villages or circuits that reached target amounts set by missionaries, demanded that the surplus be retained either for their own use or for credit against the next year's vakamisoneri. This effectively was sabotage of the principle of connexionalism that Small so strenuously upheld.

In 1916, to the displeasure of his missionary colleagues, Arthur Amos in Lau capitalised on the Roko Tui Lau's enthusiasm for financial

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76 Small to C.O. Lelean, 14 January 1913, F/1/1913; Small to N.K. Gilmour, 10 February 1909, F/1/1909; Lelean to Small, 12 November 1912, F/1/1912; MR, November 1914, 16; for a critique of Ernest Neil see A.H. Wood, Overseas Missions of the Australian Methodist Church, vol.I, Melbourne 1975, 315.

77 B.H. Willis to Small, 10 February 1915, F/1/1915; cf. Solomon Islander accusations against Marist missionaries relating to secret deposits of money in Sydney; Laracy, Marists and Melanesians, 104-05.

independence and instituted a circuit independence scheme (ai vakarau vou: lit., the new arrangement) under which the major portion of the vakamisoneri was retained in Lau to pay church expenses including the missionary's salary while the remainder was sent to Suva to assist with district expenses. The scheme was immensely popular with leading Fijians and for some years it captured the imagination of the people. It was hoped that there would be sufficient funds to pay for a second missionary at Lomaloma and to start a girls' school on Lakeba. Amos believed the experiment was crucial in view of the people's desire for larger powers and the 'prevailing spirit of unrest' in the church. Rumours were also rife, following Apolosi's success, about the establishment of a people's church in Fiji (Lotu i Taukei) and Amos saw his scheme as an attractive alternative to that development.  

While Fijian chiefs at the Synod watched the inauguration of the independent circuit with much sympathy and interest, Charles Lelean, heading a group of missionaries including Small, attempted to undermine the scheme by imposing heavy district obligations. The missionaries were unimpressed at what they considered to be a selfish move designed to hoard funds which should be made available to the whole of the district. The Lauans protested at the action of Synod; their schemes for circuit improvement were in danger of collapse for lack of adequate funds. Small's ideal of Fiji as a Christian commune, the wealthy assisting the less well-endowed, carried little favour among the strongly provincialist Lauans; they believed that their own generosity was shoring up circuits which could achieve better results if forced to do so.  

For two years, 1918-19, the high copra prices enabled the Lau Circuit scheme to prosper but it failed to survive the post-war slump and a hostile change of mood by the temperamental Roko.  

Although Charles

79 Amos to Small, 8 August 1917, F/1/1917.
80 Amos to Small, 1 December 1917, F/1/1917.
Lelean regarded the Lau experiment as a 'blunder' and Small admitted he had never been in favour of it. Fijians in three other circuits, Kadavu, Macuata and Lomaiviti, supported similar financial arrangements for their own areas. 82

The impact of the Lau scheme produced intensive debate in the early 1920s over a satisfactory system of funding for Fiji. On the initiative of the new General Secretary, J.W. Burton, all vakamisoneri funds were retained in Fiji from 1923 onwards to spend entirely on the Fijian church, including missionary houses, ministers' salaries, educational work etc., while missionary salaries and allowances continued as the responsibility of the Australian church. Burton also pressed for the introduction of a scheme for self-supporting circuits (Tu Vakaikoya), a principle he believed long overdue in Fiji. Even the conservative Charles Lelean, feeling the breeze of change, recognised in 1929 the desire of Fijians for greater control of church affairs. 83

The circuit self-support scheme was, unfortunately, introduced at the worst possible time, in 1929, immediately before the severe economic depression. Out of each pound raised by a circuit, twelve shillings was retained for ministers' salaries and other circuit expenses, the balance of eight shillings being a district levy, mainly for educational expenses. Throughout the early 1930s the circuits struggled to make ends meet. District levies were often neglected, Fijian ministers underpaid and the church went deeply into debt - almost $5,000 by 1935. To avoid burdensome district obligations Fijian church leaders within their own area of influence lobbied for sectional independence, a trend strongly opposed by the missionaries who envisaged the complete breakdown of the tight Methodist organisation which they believed to be one of the church's strengths. 84 When Charles Lelean took over as Chairman in 1936 he despaired of the direction in which the church was moving; rather

82 Lelean to H. Chambers, 5 May 1929, CAK/A/1(a); Small to W.E. Bromilow, 15 June 1922, F/1/1922; MR, February 1920.

83 Lelean to Chambers, 5 May 1929, CAK/A/1(a); J.W. Burton to R.L. McDonald, 9 January 1923, F/1/1923.

84 R.H. Green to R.L. McDonald, 1 June 1931, F/1/1931.
than a 'healthy vigorous Native Church' which his predecessor McDonald believed to be emerging, Lelean, focussing on the circuit of Nadroga, saw signs of 'general disintegration' in the church as a whole:

They [the people] want complete independence of Nadroga - they want the Native Minister to occupy the Mission House. They don't want to pay anything to District Funds or Davuilevu. They will train their own teachers and their own ministers and spend solely in Nadroga what is raised there.

This indigenous church is a sort of fetish that I am doubtful about. Hawaii tried it with disastrous results. The Free Church of Tonga shows what a muddle a church can get into financially and morally. We may expect in Nadroga, unless the situation is carefully handled, a reversion of heathenism - not the from savagery to cannibalism of 100 years ago but the 'Lotu ni Gauna' - with its witchcraft and superstitious rites - is quietly working and the withdrawal of the white hand and the handing over to Nadroga of its own affairs may end in a strange bastard Christianity which will bring discredit on Methodism and its administration.85

Parenthetically, some comment is required on Lelean's disparaging remarks about the 'indigenous church' in Hawaii and Tonga and his questionable association of Fiji with the situation in those countries. In Hawaii in 1863 many of the churches commenced by the Sandwich Islands Mission were handed over to its successor, the Hawaiian Evangelical Association with Hawaiian ministers assuming greater powers within their parishes while American missionaries remained as pastors in the important centres. Most Europeans subsequently criticised the increased powers available to the indigenous pastorate but, in view of the continued prominence of American missionaries, the problems in Hawaii (if as Lelean claims there were problems tantamount to a disaster) cannot be attributed exclusively to the early creation of an indigenous church. Lelean's comment on the Free Church of Tonga, which came into existence after 1924 as a breakway group from the Free Wesleyan Church of Tonga, is probably a truer reflection of the situation as it existed. But whereas the Free Church specifically excluded Europeans from exercising ministry, the people of Nadroga (about whom Lelean writes) did not

specify the complete withdrawal or exclusion of all European missionaries. In fact a notable refrain in Fijian demands for increased self-reliance was the desire to maintain Europeans in important positions until Fijians felt they could manage without them. On two counts Lelean's remarks are harsh reflections on the church in Fiji: first he clearly had little faith in the experiment of using Fijian ministers at Bua and Macuata in a superintending capacity; in both these circuits, as McDonald had found, the people responded favourably to Fijian leadership. Second, Nadroga was not unique in its attraction to the lotu ni gauna nor in the continued practice of traditional religious rites. As earlier demonstrated, priestcraft and syncretism had remarkable resilience in all parts of Fiji. Lelean mistook difficulties of a temporary economic nature for a general malaise throughout the church. Pessimistic about its future he attempted to reverse the trend to self-reliance by placing a European missionary at Nadroga. Fijian opinion in Synod, satisfied with the situation in Bua and Macuata where there were Fijian ministers in charge, stopped the Chairman from re-introducing missionaries there. By this time the desire for independence was not confined to Nadroga alone. The momentum towards an indigenous church was increasing. In 1936 a group of Fijians first articulated the growing interest in an independent church for Fiji.

This group, known as the 'Toko farmers' because most of its members were tenants on the Colonial Sugar Refining Company's estate of Toko near Tavua, had its origins in an independent farming scheme inaugurated in 1929. Fijians mainly from the Nadroa area of inland Viti Levu were resettled on cane-growing land, some of it as in the case of Toko belonging to the C.S.R. Company, in Ba province. Behind this

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encouragement of Fijian individualism stood the Governor, Sir Murchison Fletcher, the C.S.R. Co. in a supportive role and the enthusiastic Methodist missionary, Arthur Lelean, who for some years had been running a farm school for Fijians. Only Lelean's energetic assistance, in the opinion of a C.S.R. Co. officer, and his rapport with the people secured Fijian tenants for company estates.

Lelean had two major reasons for encouraging Fijians to become independent farmers, or galala, free from the traditional and government tax obligations. First he believed, rightly or wrongly, that the Fijians were in danger of losing their land rights to the Indians who, having completed a gruelling period of indenture, were putting their farming skills to good use. A scheme for independent farming was the opportunity Lelean had been seeking to 'give [the Fijian] a trial alongside the competitors for his birthright'. Lelean's secondary motive was his conviction that individual farming would bring a degree of prosperity to Fijians they had not before enjoyed and which in turn would enable the Fijian Church to become self-supporting. By 1938 there were 686 Fijian cane farmers working ten acre lots, 134 of them on C.S.R. Co. estates.

Lelean's commitment to independent farming did not result in the economic transformation he had hoped for. However it did produce in 1936 a large number of Fijians, the Toko farmers - many of whom had received some agricultural tuition at Navuso Agricultural School - who pledged themselves to work for a separate Methodist Conference in Fiji. The movement, led by Ratu Macanieli Rawaidranu - 'a good loyal

87 A.D. Lelean to R.L. McDonald, 5 March 1931, F/1/1931.
88 V. Clark to R.L. McDonald, 7 May 1930, F/1/1930.
90 Minutes of Meeting of Gentlemen re formation of Co. to aid Fijians in acquiring his own native land, 28 April 1933. MS in F/1/1933.
91 Macnaught, Mainstream to Millpond..., 307.
chap' according to Lelean. According to Lelean, saw its role as 'Partners in establishing the Methodist Church' (mata veitokani ni kau Lotu Woselo) and announced a period of five years during which time to collect 100 tabua (whales' teeth) and $500 to be presented to the Annual Synod. Ratu Nacanieli died early in 1941 but by that time 118 tabua had been collected - ninety from Ba and Ra provinces, seven from Bua, eleven from Tailevu and ten from eight other provinces - together with almost $500 subscribed mainly by the Toko farmers themselves but, in addition, donations from Tailevu, Serua, Naitasiri and Kadavu.

On the presentation of the tabua and money to the 1941 Synod, the Toko farmers asked that the money be used by Synod appointees to travel to chiefly centres and, in Fijian tradition, present the tabua with a request for the collection of a large fund of money, presumably to help relieve the church of its considerable debts before embarking on independence. In making their submission to Synod, the Toko farmers asked their fellow Fijians to consider whether the time had come for Fiji to be a separate Conference:

The lotu reached Tonga in 1826, Fiji in 1835 but Tonga is a separate conference, and now in the second century Fiji should seek independence.

The procedure of the Toko farmers was significant, blending continuity and change. They recognised the crucial role of chiefs in Fijian society and in decisions relating to the church's future; tabua symbolised the close relationship of the church with the land and its people and were the essential traditional prerequisite to any

93 A.D. Lelean to W. Green, 1 July 1943, F/3/(u)iii, MF.

94 A.H. Blacket, Notes upon the Movement Towards an Independent Church n.d. NS in NOM Uncat., 1905-53, File for 1949; 'Toko Farmers Subscription Book', M/87 MF. It appears that, along with their drive for an independent church, some Toko farmers were also involved in secretly supporting the charismatic Apolosi (in exile in Rotuma), contributing funds in preparation for the beginning of the new era. See T.J. Macnaught, 'Apolosi', Pacific Islands Portraits, Deryck Scarr (ed.), vol.II [in press], 304.

95 Comments reported in M.G. Wilmshurst to C.F. Gribble, 12 September 1949, NOM Uncat., 1905-53.
requests for assistance. The farmers also emphasised the financial demands of independence. Just as a generous vakamisoneri entitled Fijians to expect consideration from the Mission so the establishment of a large independence fund would strengthen any request for a separate Fiji Conference. On the question of leadership the Toko farmers were insistent that independence should not imply immediate withdrawal by the missionaries. They should remain to 'lead us or teach us until they think that we can be left to ourselves'.

The 1941 Synod laid aside the Toko farmers' submissions though accepting the tabua and money for safe-keeping. War conditions, it was argued, precluded any immediate action. There was a suggestion that missionaries such as the Chairman, William Green, were not anxious to further the independence plan regarding it as a premature scheme that needed much discussion by individual circuits. Missionaries would also have been concerned at independence proposals that made no reference to the future status of the Indian Christian community in Fiji. It is likely also that some influential chiefs regarded the proposals as too ambitious, emanating as they did from Fijians removed to some extent from traditional society. Without doubt the Toko farmers expressed the general direction of Fijian thinking; the relative speed at which they had acted was disconcerting. At the 1948 Synod, when the Toko farmers' plan was again discussed, it was agreed that 'the church was not ready'. The European Chairman was careful to note that 'this was a Fijian decision'.

Viewed in terms of their own objectives the Toko farmers failed. Enthused by their own ability to adapt to a new economic direction, they attempted to breathe that same spirit of change into the church and moved too quickly for it. After so many years of dependence the church, its very size guaranteeing its conservativeness, would only

96 Ibid.

97 W. Green to H.H. Bock, 14 July 1941, F/1/1941.

98 M.G. Wilmshurst to C.F. Gribble, 12 September 1949, HOM Uncat., 1905-53.
move gradually towards the opposite objective.99 Self-support and leadership responsibilities for Fijian ministers: these were the aims Fijian church leaders sought by the 1940s. As for independence, the most significant contribution of the Toko farmers had been to convince Fijians that the ultimate goal of separation from European control was feasible, even though the church was struggling in debt, and despite the lack of positive encouragement by well-intentioned missionaries. There still remained problems to resolve in the attainment of independence but once the seeds had been planted the roots would flourish.

99 In 1944 the Synod gave an even cooler response to the independence schemes of Ratu Emosi Saurara, the famous chief of Daku in the Rewa delta. Emosi's assumption of all-embracing leadership over his village and its development, after Emosi gained exemption for the village from the Fijian Administration, is well discussed and analysed in Nayacakalou's Leadership in Fiji (Oxford 1975, 87-88) and in John Garrett's 'Motivation, Values and Goals for Economic Development - The Case of Daku', Ray Parkinson Memorial Lecture, U.S.P., 1973. It suffices to add here only that at the Synod of 1944 Emosi announced his intention to raise funds for the independence of the Fijian church. Services were held at Daku in early 1945 and the $200 raised was invested in freehold property at Levuka, on which at some future date Emosi hoped to build a new church. When William Green, the Chairman, conferred with Emosi, he reported him as confused in his thinking and Green indicated his preference not to involve the Mission in Emosi's plans without careful forethought. Emosi's plans were cut short in 1947 by his arrest for burning the homes of two of his villagers. Green to S.G. Andrews, 16 April 1945, F/1/1945.
BETWEEN 1874 and 1945 Fijian Methodism moved from a situation of insecure dependency to be on the threshold of moves for independence, from an era when missionaries were dominant to a time when capable Fijian ministers and church leaders assumed positions of considerable responsibility. Methodism in Fiji was, of course, still young in 1945 (its history could be spanned by the lives of two of its ministers), but by the end of World War II most of the Church's characteristics had emerged.

Leadership had been one of the vital issues. Greater responsibility for Fijian ministers came only gradually, it could be argued belatedly. Missionaries retained their leadership role for a variety of reasons: their apprehension at the preponderant influence of chiefs, their strongly held belief in occupying positions which Fijians could only be slowly prepared for (a point of view influenced by the colonial experience) and the reluctance of many Fijians to accept any other leader than a white missionary. However there were signs in the 1940s that Fijian chiefs were prepared to give greater freedom of action to church ministers. As Ratu Tevita of Vuda said in 1945, 'the day when the things in the church were decided vakavanua [according to tradition or custom] seemed to be passing'.

From one influential quarter, doubt was expressed about the ability of Fijian ministers to carry extra responsibilities. The Secretary for Fijian Affairs, Ratu Sir Lala Sukuna, believed that Fijian ministers lacked 'the basic education and experience of the outside world to make them really effective as Church leaders'. Although Sukuna was right about ministers' limited education and overseas experience, the linking of those characteristics, however disadvantageous,

1 Quoted in H.H. Bock to W. Green, 22 March 1945, F/1/1945.
with success as a church leader was a tenuous argument. It ignored the fact that the Church did not possess the resources to send most of its ministers abroad for education. The fortunate few who did go, such as Setareki Tuilovoni, received scholarships from donor countries. Training for most senior ministers came through their long experience in circuit positions and the ministers chosen as superintendents in 1946 - Nacanieli Mataika, Apisai Bavadra, Elimi Kurusiga, Wilisoni Lagi, Jone Buadromo, Ropouma Vunakce, Pennia Dimuri, Kiniwilliam Namoumou, Peni Tirikula, Tomasi Vosaicake, Joeli Moce and Puata Taito - were all men of proven ability.

The retention of power in missionary hands up to 1945, although denying opportunities of leadership to a generation of Fijians, had the effect ultimately of making the Church less reliant on the whims of chiefly opinion. This did not mean that ministers could ignore the will of the chiefs. On the matter of church independence in 1964, the ministerial element in the Fijian Synod was able to exploit divisions in the chiefly ranks and ratify moves for independence from Australian control.

Following the initial revivalist phase of Fijian Methodism, succeeding generations of converts remained faithful to the Church of their fathers even though the experiential features, characteristic of early Wesleyanism, declined in popularity. Tradition is strong in Fiji and tradition has helped to sustain Methodism, an association born out of the clash between two cultures, one successfully portrayed as superior or of greater utility than the other. Methodism in Fiji has demonstrated, like the Churches in Africa and Asia, the urges to an independent expression of Christianity and the need to rediscover 'its own soul'; to cast back and seek security in pre-Christian beliefs, partly as a response to the more rapid social change of the twentieth century. On the other hand there has not been the general retreat from orthodox church-going or the mushroom growth of indigenous splinter Churches which have characterised Western Christianity and

African Churches. Although the constraints of church membership lost much of their meaning, the Church has not been abandoned in its role as a central village institution. After 1945 the main problem was to make Methodism relevant to the urban-dwelling Fijian. Provincial loyalty has been brought into the cities, church loyalty to a lesser extent. Methodism's social reforming tradition has never been prominent in the Fijian Church, simply because social problems were minimal in village life. To some extent that situation has changed.

With the gradual deepening of religious tradition and commitment to one denomination or another, sectarian conflict has diminished from the years of turmoil at the turn of the century. Religious rivalry was very much the result of expansion by one group into the territory of another and the ensuing struggle that usually followed. Within urban centres, new and imported religious denominations and sects have appeared with less friction (predictable in a situation where there are increasing secular influences) and with a degree of success: Methodist following has declined slightly at each succeeding census. By contrast, in the more tradition-bound villages where those same new religious movements attempt to gain a following, they are regarded with suspicion as 'sheep stealers'. Fiji continues to inherit the disunity of Western Christianity.

Methodist relations with the Government went through two main phases: a period of conflict and turbulence during the time of the theocratically-minded Langham and a time of co-operation subsequent to those years. Methodism in Fiji did not suffer, to the extent that African Churches have, from too close an alliance or association with colonialism. This was partly because Fijians proved loyal subjects. For example, they subscribed willingly to patriotic funds in both World Wars and the men readily volunteered for combat service. In these matters the Church was closely involved, holding farewell services for soldiers and supplying chaplains. The Fijians' support of the colonial Government was the stronger because they regarded it as an ally against the growing economic power of the Indian community. The lotu as well as the matanitu (government) tended to be havens of Fijian identity. Around the yqona bowl Fijians drink to a society held up by three pillars, vanua (custom or tradition), matanitu and lotu.
It is possible to write almost exclusively about Fijian Methodism (as distinct from the Indian Christian experience) up to 1945, because until that time the Fijian and Indian Missions were kept entirely separate, a reflection of implicit colonial policy and the communal realities of Fiji. An indication of the determination that existed within the Fijian Methodist community to retain that separation is seen in 1945 when Fijian leaders specifically requested the mission authorities to make Lelean Memorial Secondary School at Davuilevu an exclusively Fijian school. In the words of one missionary, 'they wish to preserve a section of land at Davuilevu which shall be forever "Fiji" and not partly "India"'. The Methodist Synod held out for an integrated school.

After 1945 Fijian church leaders, both ministers and chiefs, had to confront the question of integrating the Fijian and Indian Missions, as a prelude to independence for the Church. A new constitution in 1946 brought church representatives, Indian and Fijian, together for the first time in a United Synod, a meeting with limited authority but which missionaries envisaged would eventually develop into a Conference similar to those in the Australian states. However the fifty-year separation of the two branches of Methodism had produced tensions arising as much from ignorance as from real differences and reflecting inter-racial feeling within the community as a whole.

There were powerful emotional arguments against bringing Fijian and Indian Mission work together in one Conference. From the Indian's point of view, the small number of Christians (less than a thousand in 1947) feared that a single Conference would result in the swamping of Indian identity by growing Fijian nationalism. The Fijians (reflecting the opinion of the Toko farmers) envisaged a Conference separate from the Indian Mission. The latter would continue to rely for support on the Australian Methodist Church. Although Fijians formed

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a controlling majority within the Church, they were influenced by events outside of it. The racial tension that gripped Fiji towards the close of the 1950s had its effect on certain sections of the Church. A racially-based 'vanua' movement was formed within the Fijian community to protest at the apparent drift to integration in both Church and Government. Within the Methodist Synod groups from Rewa, Bau and Ba—all dominated by chiefs—resisted a united Conference. 6

In 1960, Mission Board representatives travelled to Fiji to present proposals for an independent Conference to the Indian and Fijian sessions of Synod. Missionaries meanwhile had been influenced by recommendations of the Burns report of that year which suggested the vital need to work towards the integration of the two culturally distinct communities. However difficult an aim, missionaries believed that part of the role of the Church lay in initiating moves towards that object. The alternative, a tempting one for the Church, was to retain communal identification and 'become the resort of conservatism'. 7

The initial mood of the Fijian Synod deliberations was one of uncertainty if not opposition. Cecil Gribble, the patient, quietly spoken General Secretary, reassured the members that the Conference proposals were moderate, maintaining in important areas the existing arrangements that had allowed for racial identity. There would be one Conference of Fijians and Indians but within that framework provision for meetings of each communal group. The latter would be responsible for domestic affairs, ministerial, stationing, financial, but the decisions of each group would be reported back to the united Conference for formal ratification. The Conference itself when in joint session would be responsible for matters of common interest such as the ordination of ministers, discussion on the Work of God and education. In presenting the plans Gribble expressed the wish of the Board that just as Tonga had achieved independence and Samoa was moving towards it, so Fiji should take the final step. Older representatives of the

Synod would have heard in Gribble's words echoes of the Toko farmers' plea two decades before.

The lay representatives within the Synod, reflecting the more conservative chiefly lobbies from Bau and Rewa, were yet to be totally convinced. They saw little gain from becoming a Conference if the only change in the Fijian position involved the granting of more authority to a united Conference. According to a later account of the proceedings of this crucial Synod, the atmosphere was charged with emotion. General feelings of hostility in the Fijian community as a whole towards the increasing influence of Indians made their impact felt in church deliberations. Some Fijians mistakenly feared that the impressive and capable Indian minister, Ramsey Deoki, would be appointed first Conference President, a thought that had never been contemplated by the European missionaries.

Had chiefly opinion been united in opposition to an integrated Conference, there is no doubt the independence plan would have faltered. Setareki Tuilovoni, inaugural President of the Methodist Church in Fiji, has suggested that many of the ministerial representatives in the Fijian Synod paid less heed to the views of those chiefs opposed to independence because they were not 'high chiefs'. For instance the two highest chiefs from Bau, Ratu Edward Cakobau and Ratu George Cakobau, were both sympathetic to moves for independence. According to Tuilovoni, the speech that swayed the Fijian Synod in favour of the Mission Board's proposals came from Setareki Rika, a highly-regarded minister of twenty years' experience in circuit work. Rika appealed to the delegates to consider Christian principles in making their decision:

He emphasised the fact that we belonged to the same family - God is our father and therefore we are brothers and sisters - it doesn't matter whether you are Fijians or you are Indians or Europeans, we are all one in the sight of God and therefore we should

---

8 Interview with S. Tuilovoni, 10 January 1977, Suva.

9 S.G.C. Cowled to A.W. Thornley, 4 April 1977.
not discriminate between Indians and Fijians.10

The 1960 Fijian Synod was the breakthrough. The Indian section of the Church agreed to independence with less trauma, confident in the assurances from Australia that money and men would continue to be supplied for the small but committed Indian congregations. In August 1960 Ramsey Deoki summed up the position of the Church:

It is pleasing to note that, in a country where there is an acute problem of economic and political unsettlement, in certain areas the Church is marching ahead and is resolving some of its difficulties. At the present time, within the Methodist Church, there is very great racial harmony and a sense of Christian brotherhood, which undoubtedly should help to stabilise future inter-racial relationships.11

Deoki's optimism was shared by Fijian church leaders even though the decision to move to independence had not been unanimous within the Fijian community. On 11 July 1964 the Church received its independence from the Methodist Church of Australia. Autonomy for Fijian Methodism gave church followers pride in an institution they could at last call their own. Political independence, a more ambitious step than self-government for the Church, now appeared more feasible. In fact it came six years after church independence, in 1970.

The constitution of the new Fiji Methodist Conference blended conservatism with challenge. It allowed for the continued dominance of each communal grouping, in effect preserving Fijian hegemony in the Church. However it was also sufficiently forward-looking to allow for increased powers for the joint sessions of Conference and sufficiently flexible to accommodate as its leader ministers of all races. On Tuilovoni's retirement as President after the stipulated three years, a Rotuman took over the position followed by a European and, in just over a decade, an Indian. All indications pointed to the Church's role in Fiji as a progressive institution.

10 Interview with S. Tuilovoni.

### Fijian Ministers: 1851-1945

**NOTE:**
1. # indicates Tongan born ministers
2. Dates indicate years of active ministry
3. '1945-' indicates that the ministry extended beyond 1945

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Peniame Waqalckaleka 1861 - 69
Tomasi Navunisinu 1862 - 72
Aisake Nataraku 1862 - 72
Aisake Qiokata 1862 - 64
Tomasi Viomua 1862 - 69
Jenesa Havea # 1863 - 81
Joeli Nau # 1863 - 75; 1888 - 90
Josefa Ratabua 1863 - 1902
Marika Tagicakibau 1863 - 1906
Kelepi Bai 1864 - 91
Wesele Ciri 1864 - 71
Tevita Nauhamea # 1864 - 83
Setareki Seileka 1864 - 6
Peniame Tora 1864 - 94
Filimone Tukana 1864 - 67
Viliame Vutikalulu 1864 - 81
Eliesa Bula 1865 - 1909
Mataiasi Cakau 1865 - 67
Filimone Raawaw 1865 - 85
Aisea Vunilologolo 1865 - 89
Melekiseteki Fifi # 1866 - 84
Joeli Koroikata 1866 - 71
Epeli Kailbure 1866 - 83
Sailasa Naucukidi 1866 - 74
Samuela Navesita # 1866 - 91
Malakai Vula 1866 - 87
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Sakeasi Tamanidrove 1867 - 78
Jeremia Yurui 1868 - 75
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Tikiko Korocawiri 1889 - 1912
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Adriu Yalayala 1889 - 1922
Akuila Navuda 1890
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Timoci Raibiriki 1892 - 1910
Tomasi Tabu 1892 - 1917
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Patiliai Suesue 1905 - 20
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Samuela Donu 1906 - 14
Samuela Dolabula 1906 - 15
Isikeli Daveta 1906 - 27
Filipe Levaci 1906 - 20
Aminio Matakii 1906 - 17
Sakenai Rokodi 1906 - 22
Josefa Sokovagone 1906 - 07; 1936 - 45
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Mecusela Railumu 1907 - 28
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Kini William Pai 1917 - 23
Serusupepelii Rabuka 1917 - 21
Emosi Seru 1917 - 35
Viliame Uluiinaceva 1917 - 43
Peniamo Vesikula 1917 - 32
Manoa Vakalala 1917 - 37
Penaiia Dimuri 1918 - 45
Esala Delana 1918 - 33
Tovita Liganigudi 1918 - 42
Joni Malimali 1918 - 37
Kini William Hamoumou 1918 - 45
Aseri Robarobalevu 1918 - 42
Eparana Saito 1918
Opetaia Tuivuya 1918 - 31
Juta Ulisesese 1918 - 26
Kelepi Vitivau 1918 - 22
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Josaia Wasasala
Sakaraia Labalaba
Asesela Nauraba
Sairusi Qarainivalu
Akuila Tuinasau
Apisai Waqa
Eroni Dau
Anitikini Kuruvoli
Aminiasi Levaci
Sakaraia Nasau
Epeli Qio
Jekope Vunisa
Maneu L E V o c e b e s
Samisoni Vugakoto
Joni Wesele
Samuela Daulekeha
Mose re Kuri vit i
Lebani Mate baldavu
Viliame Tiko
Sunia Vula
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Nacanieli Saumi 1945 -
Enisa Taito 1945 -

APPENDIX 2

Methodist Church of Fiji

Circuits and Sections: 1835-1945

NOTE: Sections are listed under their respective Circuits. Next to each Circuit and Section is listed the date of the first ministerial appointment and, where applicable, the last.

BAU 1853
- Bau 1857
- Buretu 1911
- Dravo 1867
- Gau 1859
- Koro 1859
- Matailobau 1875
- Moturiki 1872
- Nairai 1863
- Nakorosuli 1913
- Namena 1864
- Navula 1909, 1910
- Tailevu 1866 (no further appointment)
- Verata (transferred from VIWA 1895)
- Viwa (transferred from VIWA 1895)
- Waimaro 1869
- Wainibuka 1887

BUA 1847
- Bua 1859
- Dreketi 1864
- Lekutu 1865
- Nabouwalu 1889
- Nasavu 1857
- Wainunu 1913
- Yasawa 1863
Cakaudiko

Biaugunu 1869
Koroulau 1887
Korolevu 1868 (no further appointment)
Labasa 1887
Naduri 1862
Namuka 1874
Natewa 1865
Navatu 1920
Savusavu 1903
Somosomo 1859
Vaturova 1888
Waikava 1861
Wailevu 1865

District Theological Institution

1856 Mataisuva, REWA
1861 Richmond, KADAVU
1872 NAVULOA
1909 DAVULEVU

KADAVU 1859
Nabukulevu 1864
Naceva 1861
Nakasaleka 1866
Ono 1862
Ravitaki 1928
Tavuki 1859
Yale 1859
Yauravu 1913, 1927

LAU 1835
Cicia 1862
Kahara 1859
Lakeba 1855
Lomaloma 1859
Matuku 1872
Nolau 1859
LAU 1835 cont.
Mualevu 1865
Nayau 1920
Ono-i-Lau 1851
Totoyu 1901
Vulaga 1911

LOMAIVITI 1906
Batiki 1909
Bureta 1912
Gau (transferred from BAU, 1906)
Koro (transferred from BAU, 1906)
Levuka (transferred from OVALAU 1906)
Makogai 1914
Moturiki (transferred from BAU 1906)
Nairai (transferred from BAU 1906)

LOMALOMA 1871, 1881
Cicia (see LAU)
Lomaloma (see LAU)
Mualevu (see LAU)

MACUATA 1892
Cikobia 1919
Dreketi (transferred from DUA 1892)
Labasa (transferred from CAKAUDROVE 1892)
Nadogo 1933
Naduri (transferred from CAKAUDROVE 1892)
Namuka (transferred from CAKAUDROVE 1892)
Sogobiau 1920, 1931
Wainikoro 1909, 1919

NADROGA 1908
Cuvu (transferred from REWA 1908)
Lomawai (transferred from REWA 1908)
Malolo 1919
Nasaucoko (transferred from REWA 1908)
Noikoro (transferred from REWA 1908)
NADROKA 1908 cont.

Raivaba 1918
Sigatoku (transferred from REWA 1908)
Vatulele (transferred from REWA 1908)

MANDI 1848, 1858

OVALAU 1852, 1905
Levuka 1856

RA 1889

Bukuya 1901
Bureloa 1903
Matanagata 1936
Nadi (transferred from REWA 1889)
Nadrau (transferred from REWA 1889)
Nailaga (transferred from VIWA 1889)
Nalawa (transferred from REWA 1889)
Namoli 1913 (no further appointment)
Naviti 1897
Nawaka 1909
Mayavuira 1913
Rakiraki (transferred from VIWA 1889)
Sabeto 1911
Saivou 1902
Tavua 1889
Vitogo 1934
Vuda (transferred from REWA 1889)
Waya 1906
Yaqeta 1922
Yasawa (transferred from BUA 1889)

REWA 1838

Bemana 1875, 1876
Beqa 1860
Cuvu 1865
Davuilevu 1865, 1869
Lomavai 1889
Nadi 1878
NEMOA 1838 cont.
Nadrau 1884
Naitusiri 1870
Nakelo 1861
Nakorotubu 1869
Nalawa 1871
Namosi 1874, 1902
Masali 1864, 1876
Masaukoko 1877
Noco 1861
Noikoro 1903
Rewa 1855
Serau 1867
Sigatoka 1904
Soloira 1875
Suva 1887
Tokatoka 1862
Vatukarasa 1878
Vatulele 1861
Veivatuloa 1885, 1905
Viria 1870
Vuda 1865
Wainimala 1878

ROTUMA 1864
Malhaha 1920, 1938
Motusa 1896
Nostau 1915, 1938
Oinafa 1897

SUVA 1903
Bega (transferred from REMA 1903)
Navua 1906
Serua (transferred from REMA 1903)
Suva (transferred from REMA 1903)
VIWA 1832, 1v25
Nailaga 1868
Rakiraki 1862
Tavua 1889
Verata 1872
Viwa 1851
APPENDIX 5

Chronology of Events in the History of
Fijian Methodism 1835-1947

NOTE: * indicates that the event took place during the year

1835

October 12: Reverends William Cross and David Cargill M.A. land at
Tubou, Lakeba, after being assigned to Fiji by the Tonga
District Meeting of December 1934.

* A 'First Book' in Fijian, of four pages, is printed at the
Tonga press.

1836

* William Cross visits Oneata where he makes contact with
three Tahitian L.M.S. teachers brought to Lakeba in July
1830 by the Reverend John Williams and Samuel Henry.

1837

December 30: Cross departs for Bau and Rewa, establishing himself at Rewa.

1838

February: James Watkin's impassioned appeal for missionaries to work
in Fiji is published in the Wesleyan Missionary Notices.

June: Arrival of six Tongan teachers at Lakeba including Joeli
Bulu and Joni Havea.

December: Reverends John Hunt, Thomas Jagg'ar and James Calvert arrive
at Lakeba.

* Fiji is constituted a separate Mission District with David
Cargill as the first Chairman.

1839

June: Arrival in Fiji of Reverend R.B. Lyth.

July: Hunt and Lyth appointed to Somosomo; Cargill to Rewa.

August: Cross shifts his station to Viwa under the patronage of
Namobimalua.

* First Christian teachers (L.M.S.) placed on Rotuma by John
Williams.
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<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1840</td>
<td>July 7</td>
<td>Arrival of Thomas Williams.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>July 27</td>
<td>Departure of David Cargill after death of his first wife, Margaret.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Chairmanship assumed by Cross.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1841</td>
<td>September</td>
<td>Two teachers stationed at Levuka.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1842</td>
<td>October 15</td>
<td>Death of William Cross at Somosomo. Hunt succeeds as District Chairman.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1843</td>
<td>April 25</td>
<td>Death of Cargill in Tonga.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>* Teacher dispatched to Bua Province.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Intermittent war between Rewa and Bau (1843-55).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1844</td>
<td>August</td>
<td>Rewa mission station closed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>* Roman Catholic Mission commences in Fiji.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1845</td>
<td>March 21</td>
<td>Conversion of Varani, nephew to Nanosimalua.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>October-November</td>
<td>'Revivals' on Viwa and Ono-i-Lau, the latter island in Lau</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>being the mission's greatest success before 1854.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1847</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>Somosomo mission station abandoned.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>November 3</td>
<td>Thomas Williams shifts to Tiliva, Bua.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>November 9</td>
<td>John Watsford, J. Ford and Joeli Bulu commence mission work at Nadi on the south coast of Vanua Levu.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1848</td>
<td>October 4</td>
<td>Death of John Hunt, on Viwa.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>mid-year</td>
<td>Teacher dispatched from Bua to the Yasawa Islands in response to request.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>October 19</td>
<td>Public profession of Christianity by Tui Nayau.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1850</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>Lyth appointed Chairman of District.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1851</td>
<td>August</td>
<td>First Ordination to ministry in Fiji of Tongan-born teacher, Joeli Bulu; ordained by David Hazlewood.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>end of year</td>
<td>Joseph Waterhouse takes up residence at Levuka.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1852</td>
<td>October</td>
<td>Rewa mission station re-opened with a teacher.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1854 September: Death of Varuni at Lovoni.
* Waterhouse shifts to Bau.
1855 April 30: Seru Cakobau professes nominal Christianity.
September: William Moore appointed to Rewa.
1856 February: Rewa mission house burned down.
March: King George (Tūfaʻāhu) of Tonga arrives in Fiji with 39 canoes on a visit to Cakobau.
April: Battle of Kaba. Alliance of George and Cakobau defeats Fijians led by Mara.
May: Teachers commence work on Kadavu and along the south coast of Viti Levu as far as Sigatoka.
August: Tui Bua professes Christianity.
* Completion of translation of Old Testament by Hazlewood (d.Oct. 30 1855).
* Calvert assumes District Chairmanship.
* Wesleyan Missions in the South Seas, including Fiji, come under the direct management of the Australasian Conference.
1857 January 11: Baptism of Seru (Epenisa) Cakobau, after his renunciation of polygamy.
1858 May: Jesse Carey refused permission to settle on Rotuma. Head Chief insists upon removal of all Tongan and Fijian teachers.
1859 May: Carey returns to Fiji to re-establish mission work in Cakaudrove with headquarters at Wairiki, shifted to Waikava.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tr>
<td>1859</td>
<td>Mission indicates its displeasure at aggressive proselytizing methods of many Tongan teachers acting under the command of Henele Ma'afu, virtual ruler of Lau.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1860</td>
<td>Joseph Waterhouse appointed Chairman.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1861</td>
<td>Calvert returns to Fiji.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1862</td>
<td>Calvert re-appointed Chairman.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1863</td>
<td>First wooden chapel for Fijians opened at Tubou, Lakeba.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1864</td>
<td>July 23: Fletcher recommences mission work on Rotuma.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1865</td>
<td>December: 5000 copies of complete Fijian Bible, published by the British and Foreign Bible Society, arrive in Fiji.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1866</td>
<td>Frederick Langham, Superintendent of Bau Circuit, makes first missionary journey up the Rewa river into inland Viti Levu.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1867</td>
<td>July 21: Murder of Reverends Thomas Baker and Setareki Seileka together with Sisa Tuilekutu, Josefa Tahuvarawa, Taniela Batireroga, Nemuni Raqio, Nafitalai Torau and Setareki Nadu, while on a journey through inland Viti Levu, but following a different route from Langham. Aisea Nasekali and Josefa Nagata manage to escape the ambush.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1867</td>
<td>Coalition of inland tribes formed to resist Christianity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1869</td>
<td>Church of England appoints minister to Levuka.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1871

* Ma'afu successfully pleads for a separate Lomaloma Circuit. Isaac Rooney becomes superintending missionary. Separate circuit status for Lomaloma continues till Ma'afu's death in 1881 but two missionaries continue to supervise Lau till 1915.

* First war between supporters of Wesleyanism and Roman Catholics on Rotuma.


November 29: Cakobau, with the consent of Kuiru and Buretu chiefs, sells to the Mission for £20 land at Navula on the lower Rewa for the re-siting of the District Training Institute.

1872

* Tui Wainunu professes Christianity, the last important chief in Bau to do so

* Headquarters of Cakaudrove Circuit shifted from Waikava to Vuna in southern Taveuni, after petition from white settlers of Vuna.


* Outbreak of hostilities in inland Viti Levu brings mission evangelisation in those parts to a standstill for almost four years.

1874

* Missionaries indicate support for the annexation of Fiji by Britain.

1875

Jan-April: Measles epidemic in Fiji. Death of nine Fijian ministers and many church agents and members. Epidemic reinforces reaction against Christianity among the Fijians of inland Viti Levu.

July: New Constitution for Fiji District limits number of Fijian ministers permitted to attend the Annual Meeting. Constitution operates for fifty years before reform.

September: Langham declines Governor Sir Arthur Gordon's offer of a seat on the Legislative Council.

1876 July: Joseph Waterhouse fails in an attempt to impeach Langham's chairmanship.

Protracted dispute between Mission and Government over boundaries of 'Binker Estate', Levuka, (1876-81).

1877 May 7: Death of Joeli Bulu.

* Demand for teachers from defeated tribes of inland Viti Levu. Rewa Circuit, including most of southern and western Viti Levu, grows in numbers to become the largest Methodist circuit in the world.

1878 * Second war between supporters of Wesleyanism and Catholicism on Rotuma. Catholic chief, Reimka, killed in battle.

1879 * Negotiated religious settlement on Rotuma under mediation of Sir Arthur Gordon. Toleration accorded both denominations.

1880-2(?) * Completion of Cakobau Memorial Stone Church on Bau.

1884 * Lorimer Fison retires from Fiji.

1885 * Thomas Williams makes three months visit to Fiji as part of the Jubilee celebrations of the founding of the Mission. Opening of Jubilee Church in Suva on site in Stewart St.

* Tuka cult, led by Navosavakadua, threatens to disturb the religious allegiance of many inland Viti Levu Fijians. Cult suppressed by Government.
North-eastern section of Vava Circuit separated to form Ra Circuit with headquarters at Nailaga, Ba.

Missionary stationed at Naduri in Macuata section of Cakaudrove Province.

May: Serious rebellion of students at Navuloa, led by Tomasi Naceba-resident Fijian minister. Main complaints about conditions of work and salaries of ministers. Missionaries call in Governor Sir John Thurston to conciliate and he orders all students reinstated. Naceba later expelled from ministry.

May: Langhorn departs to revise the Fijian Bible after 38 years in Fiji, 25 of them as Chairman. William Weir Lindsay at Navuloa succeeds to Chairmanship.

A.J. Small moves from Vava to Bau and the former is incorporated into the latter circuit.

Reverend Pauliasi Bunoa resigns from Methodist ministry to become an evangelist for the recently arrived Seventh Day Adventists.

Wailevu, Savusavu and Loaloa sections on Vava Levu transferred from Ovalau Circuit to Cakaudrove. The islands of Lomaiviti (Koro, Makogai, Wakaya, Batiki, Moturiki, Nairai, and Gau) transferred from Bau Circuit to Ovalau.

Opening of Matavelo Girls School at Ba under direction of Reverend William Slade and the teaching of Miss Mary Ballantine.

November: Opening of Navuloa Primary School with special instruction of English in effort to counteract influence of Roman Catholic school at Naililili.

Death of W.W. Lindsay at Navuloa, missionary since 1871, the last seventeen years at the District Training Institute. Memorial cairn erected at site of Institute. Arthur James Small succeeds as Chairman.
1900 cont.  * Methodist Mission hygiene campaign commences after Catholics agree to proposals put forward by the Governor. Methodist efforts to help improve village conditions led by Miss Dodson, Mrs Small and Mrs Heighway.

* Niusava Estates, north of Somosomo on Taveuni, purchased by Mission for £185. Total area 428 acres.

1901  * Reverend Esala Seru returns from Rotuma after fourteen years on the island in a virtual superintendent capacity.

1902 January 15:  Mission day school commenced in Suva for Fijian, Rotuman, Samoan and Solomon Island children.

* Mission sells land and house at Vuna for same price as that paid for Niusawa Estate (£185) Headquarters of Cakaudrove Circuit shifted to Niusawa under direction of Reverend J.C. Jennison.

* Suggested move of Chairman's residence from Bau to Levuka thwarted by protest from Bauan chiefs.

* Frederick Langham completes revised edition of Fijian Bible under auspices of British and Foreign Bible Society. Copies reach Fiji towards end of year.

August:  Secession of approximately 800 Wesleyans in Namosi to the Roman Catholic Church. Movement led by Roko Tui Namosi, Ratu Matanitobua.

* Fijian ministers sit on Financial Synod for the first time. A majority of missionaries, led by W.E. Bennett and J.W. Burton, strongly oppose lay representation for Fijians.

1903 February 12:  Catholics burn Wesleyan scriptural material at Naililili, including Bibles handed over by the Namosi seceders. Although angry protests from Wesleyans, government reports exonerate Catholics.
1903 cont. June 21: Small preaches farewell sermon at Bau before shifting Chairman’s residence to Suva.

June 21: Death of Frederick Langham in England.

1904 January: W.E. Bennett, principal of Navulola Institution since 1901, is removed from his post by decision of Australasian General Conference as a result of his controversial pre-millenial views. His successor is William Heighway.

1905 October: At request of Roko Tui Macuata, Macuata province is constituted a separate circuit.

1906 May: Missionaries at Annual Synod sign a memorial threatening to resign their positions in Fiji if lay representation for Fijians is introduced. Small introduces a compromise whereby any Fijian layman who is a church member, and not necessarily church officers, may act as a representative.

May: Work begins on the erection of Davuilevu Primary School, which opens in July under Mr P.M. Waterhouse.

* Amalgamation of village mission schools commences.

October: Ovalau Circuit renamed Lomaiviti.

1907 April: Death of Kitione Kauata, first ordained Rotuman Methodist minister.

June: English-teaching school opens on Rotuma under direction of Mrs H.H. Roget and with the assistance of Fijian Merawalesi Ratu.

June: Australasian General Conference overwhelmingly votes for lay representation at Fiji Synod.

September: Reverend Colin Bleazard and two Fijians drowned off Katafaga Reef, Lau, after their craft is caught in a storm between Nayau and Lomaloma.
1908
July: Removal of District Theological and Training Institution from Navulaoa to Davuilevu. New buildings constructed from wood cut and gathered from Mau in the Veivatuloa District. Bennett re-appointed to Davuilevu.

October: Circuit changes: Navulaoa Circuit attached to Bau Circuit. Davuilevu constituted a separate circuit. Formation of Nadroga Circuit after pressure from Nadroga chiefs. Headquarters at Cuvu. Vatukurasa refuses to be incorporated within the new circuit owing to argument over land with Nadroga and remains within Rewa Circuit.

Bennett re-appointed to Davuilevu.

1909

October: Lay representation introduced at District Financial Synod.

1912
February: Government halts emigration of Fijian teachers to New Guinea and the Solomon Islands.

September: H.H. Roget sets up printing press on Rotuma and begins printing portions of the Old Testament.

* Bua Circuit headquarters shifted from Bua to Nabouwalu, the residence of the Roko.

* Expenditure of over £8000 on Davuilevu Educational Centre between 1908-12.

1913
May: Strike of students at Davuilevu over an inadequate programme for the teaching of English; 35 men sent away after police brought in by W.E. Bennett. Six students subsequently dismissed.

October 4: Baker Memorial Hall opened at Davuilevu.

* Ban on emigration of teachers to new mission fields lifted by new Governor, Sir Bickham Sweet-Escott.

* Establishment of the Viti Company [Viti Kabani] under leadership of Apolosi Nawai results in considerable defection from Methodist ranks and dissatisfaction with mission.
1914 cont. rituals such as the *vakamisoner*. Josaia Wacokeckoe first resident Methodist Minister at Makogai Leper Station (est. 1912), (1914-24).

1915 Lolohea Ratu, after 3 years teacher training in Australia, takes charge of primary school at Davuilevu and establishes first kindergarten for Fijian children.

February: Death of senior Fijian Minister, Eliesa Bula (b.1839), on his home island of Cau.

1916 Birth of Setareki Tuiolvoni at Matuku, first President of the independent Fiji Methodist Church, 1964.

* Y.M.C.A. launched in Fiji.

August: Methodists discourage Salvation Army from commencing work in Fiji.


1918 January: A.W. Amos introduces self-support to the Lau Circuit with assistance of Alifereti Finau, Roko Tui Lau.

June 26: Death of Mary Ballantine at Nailaga after 16 years a teacher at Matavelo Girls' School.

* Secession of Wainibuka Methodists to the 'No. 8' religion led by Sailosi. Subsequently many of these defected to Seventh Day Adventism. Sailosi Movement suppressed by Government.

December: Influenza epidemic in Fiji. Death of many Fijian church adherents and one missionary, J.B. Suckling at Cuvu.
1919
March 17: Death of Hutu Livai Volavola

* Mataiase Vave, minister at Davuilevu, commences fund-raising tour of Fijian Circuits to help pay off accumulated debt on Davuilevu Primary School.

* Davuilevu Boys Technical School commenced under direction of R.A. Derrick.

1921
* Missionaries A.W. Amos (Ra Circuit) and S. Jarvis (Nadroga Circuit) accused of taking sides in 1921 strike of Indian Tenant Farmers by encouraging Fijians to work for the Colonial Sugar Refining Company.

1922
* Lau Circuit Self-Support Scheme discontinued owing to accumulated liabilities of £2300.

* On suggestion of A.W. Amos, appeal opens for a Central Boarding School for Fijian Girls as a memorial to the work of Mary Ballantine.

1923
February: Navuso Agricultural School opened by the Mission after a free grant by the Government of the remaining term of the lease at Navuso (830 acres). First principal of the School is Ernest Oesch.


December 9: Opening of new Primary School building at Davuilevu costing £1700.

1924
February: Small's health declines. R.L. McDonald assumes Chairmanship.

1925
May: Reverend Simione Momoivalu commences deputation tour of Fiji after return from more than 20 years in Papua.

June: Reverend Wilisoni Lagi, a trained medical practitioner, begins mission work in Papua.

September 19: Death of Aminio Baledrokadroka, buried at Lakeba.
1925 cont.
September 20: Death of Arthur J. Small after 46 years in Fiji, over half of them as Chairman (1900-24). Buried at Suva Cemetery.

1926 October: Changes in Constitution. Three separate sessions of Synod created-Fijian, Indian and United European.

1927 July: First choir contest in Fiji; held on suggestion of Reverend R.A. Gibbons in the Bua Circuit. Winning choir - Lekutu.


1930 February: * Fijian Circuit Self-Support Scheme introduced by McDonald.

1931 * Economic Depression forces retrenchment of missionary numbers from 13 (in 1929) to 8.

1933 February: Division among the ex-patriot staff as to the site for Ballantine Memorial School postpones commencement of building.

1934 January: C.O. Lelean retires from the District.

1935 October: Ballantine Memorial School opened at Muanikau, Suva, by the Governor at the request of Adi Torika. Roll - 65 boarders, 130 day-pupils and 2 Missionary Sisters as teachers.

1935 October: Centenary Celebrations of Church. S.S. "Katoomba" sails around Fiji, with 400 Australian mission supporters. Cross and Cargill Memorial Church opened at Lakeba on October 12. Foundation Stone of Suva Centenary Church laid.
1935 cont.

December: R.L. McDonald resigns after 26 years in Fiji, eleven as Chairman. Lelean, aged 68, recalled to Fiji to assume Chairmanship.

* Group of independent Fijian cavo farmers from Toko, Tavua, led by Ratu Macanieli Rawaidranu, announces proposals for an independent Fijian Methodist Church.

1936 September: Foundation meeting of Y.W.C.A. in Fiji.

1937 January 12: Ratu Emosi Saurara of Daku inaugurates his new order combining church and state authority in an independently-run village.

May 7: Death of Reverend L.K. Saville, missionary at Taveuni, of typhoid fever.

1938 January: C.O. Lelean retires and is succeeded as Chairman by W. Green.

* Publication in Fiji of revised Fijian hymn book - edited by C.M. Churchward and containing 140 new hymns.

1939 October: Government takes possession of Ballantine School property for defence purposes.

December: Ballantine School shifted from Muanikau to Delainavesi on a 40 acre site (three times larger than Muanikau) granted to the Mission as compensation.

1941 * Davuilevu taken over by the Government for use as an evacuee camp; Dudley House School for Indian Girls and Toorak Fijian Girls School taken over for emergency hospital.

1942 September: Death of C.O. Lelean. Synod decides to sponsor an appeal to the Fijian people for funds to establish a secondary school for Fijian boys as a memorial to Lelean.
1943

February: Fijian District Committee of Synod approves attendance of Indian boys at Lelean Memorial School.

September: District debts accumulating since the late 1920s finally cleared off as a result of improved financial position during the war years.

October: Setareki Tuilovoni accepted as a candidate for the ministry.

October: Annual Synod requests Board of Missions to investigate the possibility of a united theological institution to serve the South Pacific.

December: Most Methodist schools used for defence purposes restored to the Church.

1945

January: Revised constitution comes into operation. Separate Fijian and Indian sessions of Synod remain but the United European session is abolished in favour of a United Synod involving all Synod representatives but at this stage having minimal powers. The number of European missionaries is reduced giving increased superintending responsibilities to senior Fijian and Rotuman ministers.

March: Ratu Emosi of Daku prints a challenge to Chiefs and people of Fiji aimed at establishing a national independent Church.

1947

January: Ratu Emosi arrested after houses in his village are burned down and the occupants injured.

March: Savusavu becomes new mission headquarters for Vavau Levu and Taveuni Division.

October: Ratu J.L.V. Sukuna as Secretary for Fijian Affairs deplores decline in numbers of European missionaries.

October: D. Walken Brown takes over Navuso Agricultural School.

December: W. Green retires from the Chairmanship.
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