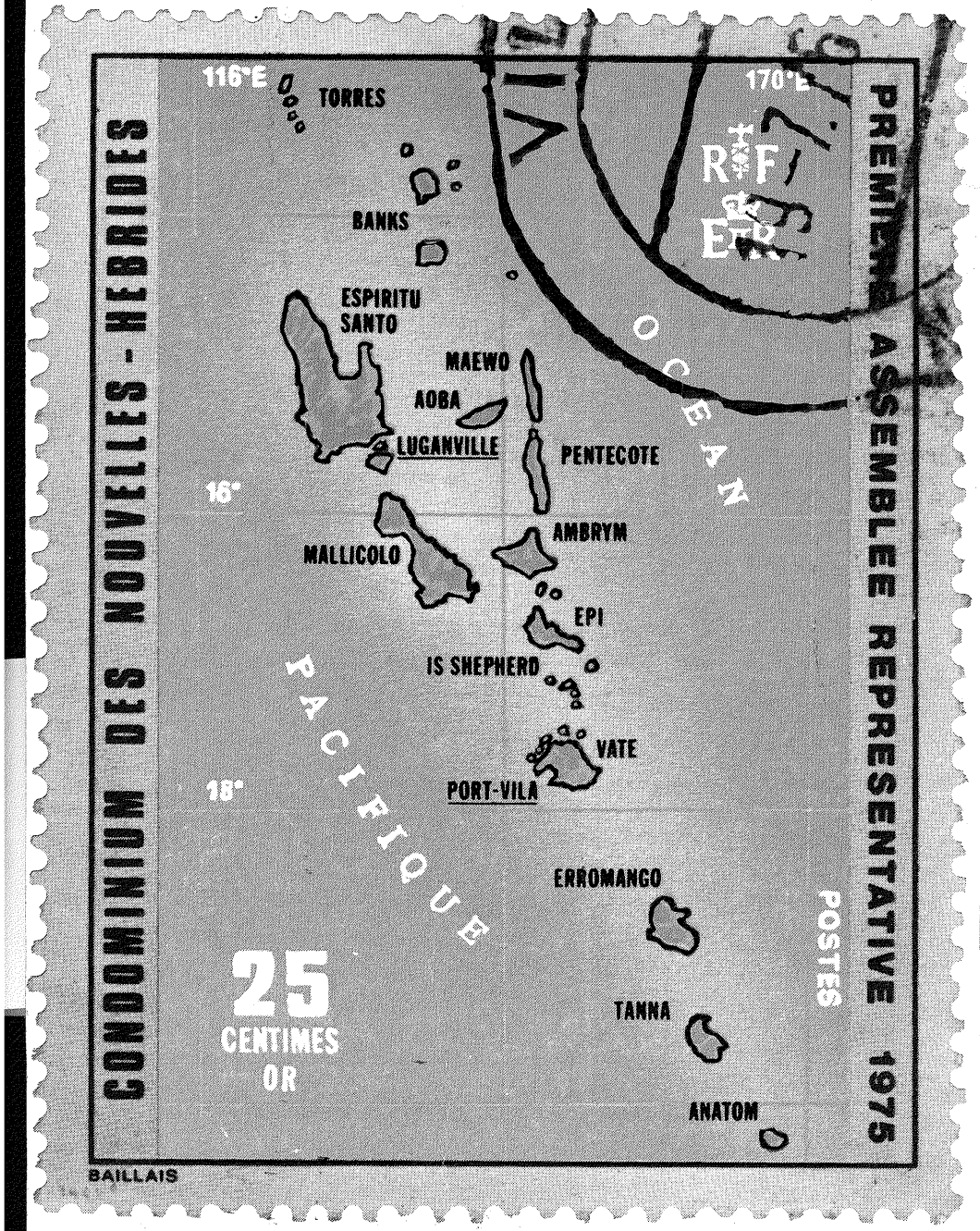
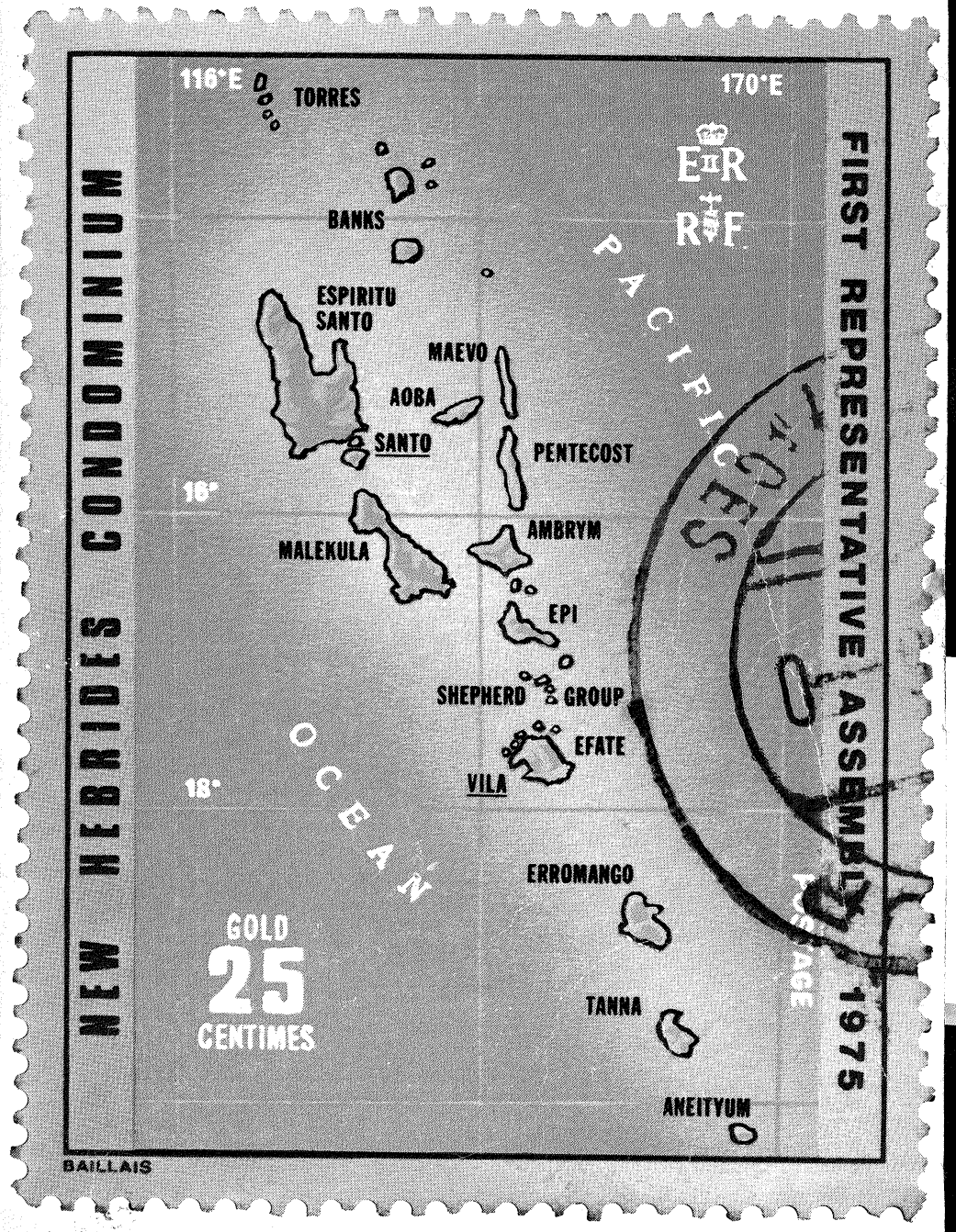


LIVE

Book I

J. Graham Miller



LIVE

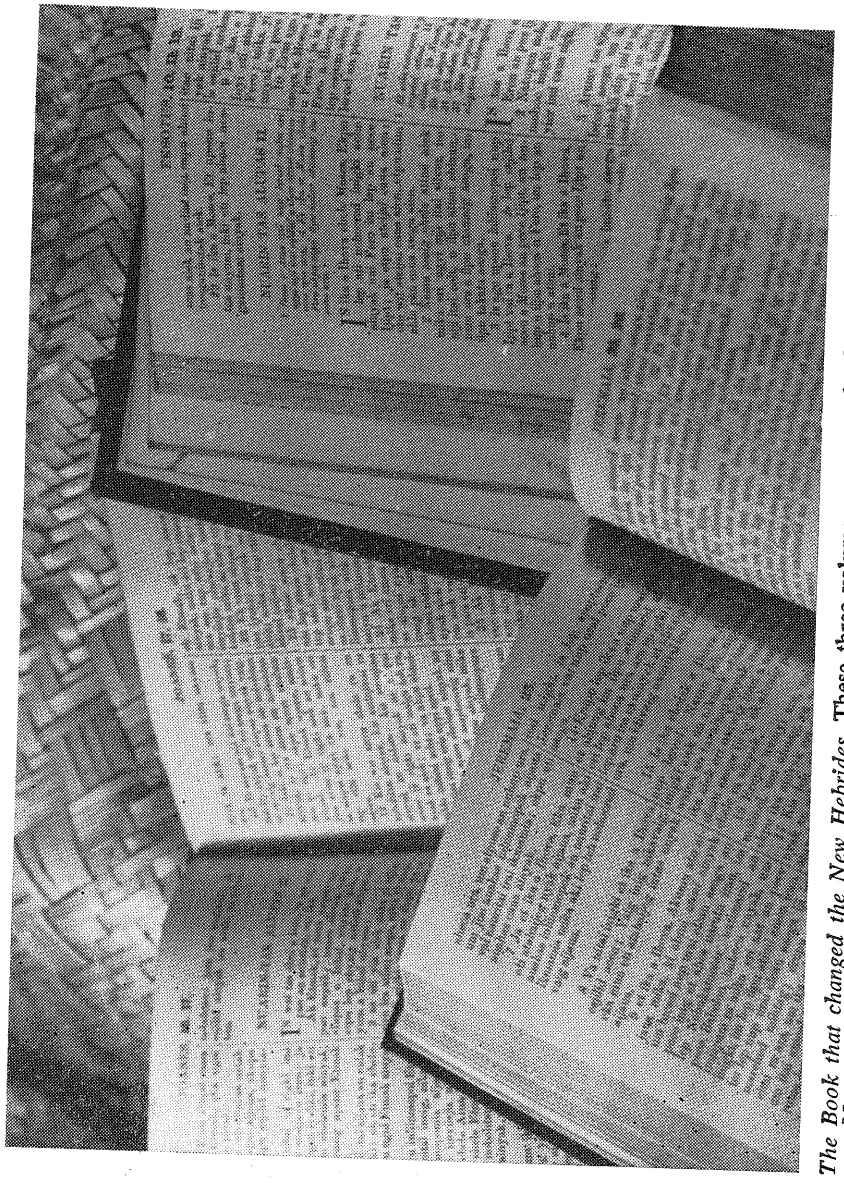
J. Graham Miller

A history of Church planting in the New Hebrides, to 1880

Book I

The Voyage that changed the New Hebrides. Stamp commemorating Captain James Cook's voyage of discovery and naming of the New Hebrides in 1774.

LIVE



The Book that changed the New Hebrides. These three volumes represent the first complete Bible published in any New Hebrides language, Aneityumese (1863-1879) and the first complete Bible in any language of Melanesia.

LIVE

A HISTORY OF CHURCH PLANTING IN THE NEW HEBRIDES TO 1880

Book One

J. Graham Miller

"Live" is published by the Committees on Christian Education and Overseas Missions of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Australia.

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Grateful acknowledgement is made to the Honourable Luke Dini, Minister of Transport and Communications, New Hebrides Government for kind permission to use the 1975 Commemorative Stamps as the cover motif for this book, and the 1974 Captain Cook Commemorative Stamp as an illustration.

Dedication

Islands of the New Hebrides
We remember
The silver moon,
The stormy wind,
The soft sunset
And the rush of rain on the forest's roof;
The rustling fronds of the palm,
The smell of copra,
Seasickness,
The scream of the *siviri,*
And the sudden trembling of the earth;
The night sky bright with wildfire,
The graves and the gardens
And the banyan's shade.

Friends of the New Hebrides
We have loved you
Since first we saw you
And you welcomed us ashore,
To live and serve together;
First as brother and sister
Now as father and mother.
Here our sons and daughters were born,
And they are proud of you.
Our love for you continues
In a distant land.
Thank you for your love
To us.

We shall not forget you
Nor cease to pray for you,
In Jesus Christ our Lord.
He has made us one,
He will keep us one,
He will bring us home
In peace, together,
To the Father's house;
Your Father,
And ours.

Graham and Flora Miller

Foreword

by MR. K. M. SHING

Headmaster of Onesua High School, New Hebrides

In "Live", Dr J. Graham Miller has enabled us to take a fresh and a good look into the beginning of the witness for Jesus Christ in these islands of the New Hebrides. No one is more qualified than Graham Miller to undertake the great task of reading through the many books and journals about the early days of the mission work in the New Hebrides and then writing down the story in the form that can be read and understood by even those with limited English education.

As well as being a missionary in these islands for many years, Graham Miller has a deep interest in the history of the mission work and a fantastic memory for detail. When meeting a village personality he would talk about some interesting event known to that person, interspersing the conversation with questions whose answers he would listen to with rapt attention.

In his book Graham Miller has not only shared his vast wealth of knowledge, but has given back to the indigenous people of the New Hebrides their Christian heritage which has been locked up for so long in archives and a few private libraries. We, the New Hebrideans, for many generations to come, will praise God for the privilege of looking back through Mr. Miller's writing and learning of the firm foundation on which the Christian Church of the New Hebrides was built.

To read through the historic events in this book is like reading the eleventh chapter of Hebrews: "By faith they conquered kingdoms, administered justice, received promises, won strength out of weakness . . . By faith 'they' still speak, even though 'they' are dead . . ." "By faith . . ." They had little else, but they had Jesus Christ and unshakeable faith in Him.

May God bless and challenge all who read through this book so that, together, as "we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. Let us fix our eyes upon Jesus, the Pioneer and Perfecter of our faith".

Kami M. Shing

Commendation

I AM VERY honoured to have been asked in my dual capacity as Moderator-General and Convenor of the Overseas Missions Committee to write this commendation to this most instructive book on the life and work of the Presbyterian Church in the New Hebrides to 1880. It is the first of an anticipated four volumes.

To be able to write a history about a nation, a people, a church, one needs to have an understanding of all three; and, in addition, be able to express in clear, simple language what one knows about each of them. It is indeed fortunate when a book is written by such a competent person. Such a book is LIVE. I. The Rev. Doctor Graham Miller has all the necessary attributes for writing a history of the Presbyterian Church of the New Hebrides. As a principal, a preacher, a missionary, administrator, and a friend of the people, he knows the situation at first hand experience and therefore writes as a "witness of these things". He is a man possessed of a fine, sharp mind that is quick to assess a situation rightly; he also possesses that rare gift of impartiality that allows him to write objectively about it—he paints it "warts and all"; and, in addition, he has a great love for the people of the New Hebrides which allows him to write with a great depth of feeling, which is so essential if one is to move one's readers.

The accounts are discussed in a very readable, non-technical way, and work, faith and life, are throughout recognized as inextricably bound together.

Dr. Miller's affection for his subject is obvious as one reads this lucid account of the beginnings of the Presbyterian Church in the New Hebrides. It must be regarded as essential reading for those who want to know the background of what is now a great church. We look forward with keen anticipation to the second volume which, I am sure, will be studded with treasures as is this one.

I cannot commend this work too highly to you. When you have finished reading it you will be glad and thankful that God put it into the heart of His servant to record such events.

Rt. Rev. K. J. GARDNER,
Moderator-General,
Presbyterian Church of Australia.

Preface

LIVE HAS BEEN written for the people of the New Hebrides. I have tried to piece together the story of how the Good News came to these islands. The story is written as a people's book, from the inside, by one who watched the church reach self-government in 1948-1949. The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of the New Hebrides in 1973 encouraged me to do this work. The dedication indicates one's sense of the privilege which was ours as missionaries on Tongoa from 1941-1947, as principal of Tangoa Training Institute 1947-1952; and later as the first principal of the Bible College, 1971-1973.

Three Missions have an important place in this story: the London Missionary Society, the Melanesian Mission and the New Hebrides Presbyterian Mission. But this book aims to be not so much a story of the Missions as of the churches which took root under the work of these Missions more than one hundred years ago.

I have tried to write from the standpoint of those many New Hebrides people of today who are eager to know their national history. For this reason references to the island culture and customs run through the story. The use of New Hebrides words, proverbs and place names, and of bislama, the trade language, should help the island reader to relate more closely to the story.

This book begins the story of the period 1839-1880. The second volume will deal with the latter part of the same period, uncovering the story of early church planting island by island. This history has never before been written in detail for the people of the New Hebrides.

Many friends have helped me, and their names appear in the story. The older records, diaries, reports and books are mainly found in libraries. I express my gratitude to the following: The Presbyterian Church of the New Hebrides for access to their records in Vila; the Pacific Manuscripts Bureau, Canberra, for access to microfilm copies of some of this material; the Cultural Centre, Vila; the Latrobe State Library of Victoria, Melbourne; the Mitchell Library, Sydney; the National Library, Canberra; the United Church of Canada archives; the Presbyterian Church in Canada archives; the Provincial archives of Nova Scotia and the Ferguson Memorial Library of the Presbyterian Church in NSW. To the Rev. Brian Burton of the Presbyterian Media Centre, Sydney, I am indebted for photographic help in presentation of the illustrations, and to Mr. David Miller for the maps. Mrs. Loraine Tompson, great grand-daughter of John and Charlotte Geddie, encouraged my brother in his editing for publication of John Geddie's Journal, and has encouraged me with access to all her resource materials.

Warm thanks are due to Mr. K. M. Shing, a son of Aneityum, a former dux student of Tangoa Training Institute and until recently headmaster of Onesua High School, for his Foreword; to the Rt. Rev. K. J. Gardner of Brisbane, Moderator of the Presbyterian Church of Australia, for his Commendation; to Dr. John Garrett and Mrs. Garrett of Suva for their reading of the manuscript and their suggestions and to Miss Betty Cochin who typed the final manuscript for publication.

To the Rev. C. R. Thomas, the energetic Convener of the Christian Education Committee, I am indebted for the sponsorship of publication by that Committee and the Overseas Missions Committee of the Presbyterian Church of Australia, and to Mr. W. Dixon of Bridge Printery, Sydney, who gave to the printing and publication of this book his personal skill and enthusiasm.

Our lasting debt is to that gracious lady who funded the publication of this history and to our friends of the New Hebrides, past and present, who welcomed us in 1941, taught us much of their own culture and have made us feel that we belong to them still.

J. GRAHAM MILLER

St. Giles' Presbyterian Manse,
Hurstville, Australia, 2220.

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Maps and Illustrations

PART ONE

The Preparation

CHAPTER ONE

How the Church Began

THE PEOPLE WERE almost all in darkness when John and Charlotte Geddie landed at Aneityum on 29 July 1848. On that day he began his journal. This journal is now the most interesting and valuable of all the early sources for a history of the Presbyterian Church in the New Hebrides. Here is part of John Geddie's first entry in the journal; he is speaking of Aneityum:

> "This is truly one of the dark places of the earth, and all the abominations of heathenism are practised without scruple or remorse. Our hearts are sometimes tempted to say, 'Can these dry bones live?' But we know that the gospel must be 'preached to every creature', that Christ shall have *the heathen for his inheritance and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession,* and that all things are possible with God. May the time to favour this dark island soon arrive." [Misi Gete p. 31].

The words in italics are taken by Mr Geddie from Psalm 2:8.

These islands are certainly at the uttermost parts of the earth; far from the England which sent out John Williams, the Nova Scotia which sent out John Geddie, and the land where the Son of God lived and died and rose again. Geddie believed that the Son had asked His Father for the people of the South Pacific as part of His promised inheritance. He also believed that the inheritance which the Father had promised, and which the Son had asked for, would be granted.

This island church began in the heart of God. It was given by the Father to the Lord Jesus because He purchased it by His saving death upon the Cross. These islands belonged to God before the first Polynesian teachers came, before the coral islands and volcanic mountains of the Pacific were discovered, before the world was made by the power of the living and true God. This truth encouraged John Geddie, the leaders of the London Missionary Society, and the workers who followed them and lived and died in the New Hebrides. That is why they did not give up or leave this land in darkness and death.

In this history we shall see that many lives were laid down; the the lives of men, their wives and their little children, of Polynesians and Melanesians, Samoans and Rarotongans, Scotsmen and Englishmen, Canadians and Australians, Loyalty Islanders and New Zealanders, Aneityumese and Aniwans, Efatese and Eromangans. Every island had its apostles and graves. The graves and the history have largely been lost. But the living Church grows by the power and purpose of God.

This book seeks to tell about that history which had almost been lost.

CHAPTER TWO

God the First Missionary

The High God

LONG BEFORE THE coming of the Spaniards, Quiros and Torres, in 1606, or the coming of Captain James Cook in 1774, the New Hebridean people knew about the High God. As far back as traditions go they speak of the High God whom the ancestors reverenced and to whom they made sacrifices.

When the Rev. T. Watt Leggatt landed at East Malekula in 1887 he found that the people around Aulua spoke of the High God as Bokoro, but they knew very little about him.

On Aneityum the High God was called Inhujeraing, the maker of heaven and earth. The Aneityumese believed that he had many children and grandchildren, but nobody knew who their mother was. The Makuran people of the central New Hebrides called the High God Nasum.

In the year 1947 some students of the Tangoa Training Institute spent a week with me in the bush villages of Santo. As we sat around the fire at Morokiripu one night Triev-matan asked the chief if he knew about God. The old man shook his head.

Then he asked the chief, in his language, if he knew who made the trees and the taro.

"Etaro," was the quick reply.

Triev-matan next inquired, "Do you know Jesus Christ, God's Son?"

The chief looked a little sad as he replied:

"Mifala harim we Etaro i stap on top. Be mifala no harim samtaem we Etaro i gat wan pikinini." ("I have heard of the High God, Etaro; but I have never heard that he has a son.")

The ancestors knew about the High God. But they knew nothing about his Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, the heart of the Good News. Wherever I have inquired I have found that the New Hebrides people had a name for the High God.

Supwe in the Central New Hebrides

Most of the islands have lost any clear understanding about who the High God was and what he did for his people. But we learn from a study of the culture of the Efatese tribes of the central islands that many of the ancestors had a traditional knowledge of who Supwe was and what he required of men.

They believed that Supwe was the creator of all things, the only living and true God. He was good to his people and created everything for their benefit, trees and wild-cane for their houses, yams and taro for their food, fowls and pigs for their feasts. Supwe had placed healing medicine in certain trees and leaves. He taught the people how to use these in times of sickness and gave the people their arts and crafts, their skills with axe and fire, the irrigation of the taro, their songs and their sacred men. He was the fountain of life, giving them their babies, healing their sick, and giving their spirits life after death.

Supwe owned the land and set up the chiefs as *supwe ni navanua*, gods of the land, his rulers on this earth. The chiefs had to account to the High God for the proper use of all the land. The people must present to the chief their firstfruits and gifts so that the village might make its sacrifical offerings. These gifts were seen as payment of rent to Supwe for the use of his land. A man was guilty of a sin against Supwe if he ate the new yams before the chief had made the new yam feast to Supwe. Sin demanded sacrifice by the shedding of blood. Usually this meant the death of the transgressor of the chief's *tapu*. The chief was God's sacred man on earth. The blood of pigs became the sacrificial blood for private sacrifices, family sacrifices and village sacrifices. Sacrifices were also made for births and marriages, chief-making and death.

The name of the High God was in daily use. A pretty insect was called *lango ki Supwe* — God's flying insect. A graceful reed was called *tiko ki Supwe* — God's walking-stick. A cord round the waist of a little boy was called *natali ki Supwe* — God's sacred cord. Local proverbs, songs and culture were full of words about the High God.

Animism and Monotheism

New Hebrideans believed that their fathers' religion was higher than animism. Animism is the worship of the spirits. Animism

was like the bark of the tree of belief in the High God. Monotheism is the firm belief in one living and true God, and worshipping Him above all other persons or things. This understanding of the High God, which many heathen people have had all over the world, was spoken of by the apostle Paul when he addressed the heathen in the Asia Minor city of Lystra, in 46AD (Acts 14: 16-17).

We can understand why the Rev. Peter Milne of Nguna decided to use the Efatese name Supwe for God in his translations of the Bible. There are no translations of the Scriptures anywhere in the islands which have spoken so long and so well to the hearts of our people as the Nguna-Tongoa translations. One of the reasons for this fact is the choice of the name Supwe, the High God, to translate the name of the living and true God of the Bible. God was here before any missionary came. He was the first Missionary to the New Hebrides. But where did these high ideas of God come from? How did the fathers in the New Hebrides know about God?

CHAPTER THREE

Where Did We Come From?

Tom Avusa's question

THE FIRST RESIDENTIAL Presbyterian district school of recent times was built by the Tongoan church at Ere, Tongoa, in January 1942. The threat of Japanese invasion was real and few missionaries were left in the Group. The first prefect of that school was Tom Avusa, now Ti Poloa-mata, the chief of Itakoma and a former member of the old Advisory Council of the New Hebrides Condominium.

One night in 1942 he came up from group study to ask a question. He said that all the students had been talking about it. "Misi, what happened to the ten tribes of Jews who were taken away by the Assyrians?"

I was astonished to hear this question. It concerned a matter which some western people speak about as the British-Israel teaching. This is the teaching that the Anglo-Saxon people of the British Commonwealth and North America are the descendants of these ten lost tribes.

I could not think that Tom Avusa had ever heard about this theory. But to make sure I asked,

"Why do you ask me this question?"

"Because we believe that we are the descendants of these lost tribes."

His reply astonished me as much as his question had done.

Tongoan customs

In those first six years of our life in the New Hebrides we were largely cut off from the outside world and enjoyed learning the language and culture of the people of the Shepherd Islands. One of the first facts that came clearly to me was the understanding of Supwe as the living and true God. Gradually other things began to enlarge upon this central idea of the High God.

I remember the first time I saw a circumcision-tree beside the bush track on Tongoa. No one had told me what all those sharpened sticks meant which I saw thrust into the trunk of the tree. I thought, "This looks as if our people have just had a circumcision ceremony." Later I found that circumcision was common to most of the islands of the New Hebrides.

Soon after we reached Tongoa, in July 1941, the people came from one village after another with large gifts of yams, taro and sweet potatoes. At first I thought that this was simply a very kind gift. The Tongoans had suffered severely from a hurricane in 1940 and food was not plentiful.

Meat was rarely eaten as few animals could be spared. But I observed that each gift of food was accompanied by a gift of meat, a piece of beef, or pork, or a few fowls, or even a large fish. No village brought only vegetables. Why was this? I began to think there must be a reason for these gifts. After reflection I was sure that the new yam festivals of the fathers were a combination of two of the Hebrew festivals of the Old Testaments — the feast of first-fruits (Num 28: 26-31) and the day of atonement (Lev. 16).

The new yam feast

On Tongoa in olden times the new yam feast began with a day of atonement for the whole village. Public and private sins were confessed through the mediation of the village priest, just as the sun was setting in the west. The priest climbed into the fork of a great *namalaus* tree. He turned his back to the setting sun as he confessed the sins the people had committed during the year that was closing. Each time he made a confession he hurled a throwing-stick over his shoulder into the dense bush, as if getting rid of that particular sin.

The people then returned from outside the village to the earthen ovens. The food was taken out. The *atavi* or priest ate a little of the sacred yams and blew a portion towards the sky, with the words *"Angi Supwe ni elangi!"* "for the High God!" He next blew out a portion to the ground saying, *"Angi Supwe ni navanua!"* "for the God of the land!" — the village chief. Pigs had been killed and by this ceremony the people's sins had been put away. All were reconciled to God and to one another. This

feast was probably the most important event of the year to the forefathers on Tongoa. It meant that they could have the continued favour of the High God and the renewed friendship of those in the tribe who had been on bad terms with them.

There are other customs which closely parallel the Old Testament and the religion of the Hebrews. Together they may help to indicate an answer to the question, "Where did we come from?"

CHAPTER FOUR

From the Ancient East to the Pacific

SOME OF THE people believed that their ancestors came from the ancient East, the cradle of the human race. It seems unlikely that traditions of such a migration should linger on in the New Hebrides, but I have found the results of my own inquiries verified by those of older and earlier scholars among our island peoples.

Ti Tongoa-roto was the chief government assessor on Tongoa when we arrived in 1941. He told me of a place on his island named Mitiken. He said that the name Mitiken was the same as the Midian of the Old Testament (Exodus 2:15). The people of Pele on Tongoa have a sacred stone which, they say, was brought all the way from the Tower of Babel (Gen. 11: 1-9). They prove this by writing on it with another stone and then rubbing the writing off without leaving a mark. They say this is proof of what God did to the nations at Babel!

John Geddie, in his journal, quotes a passage from the writings of the Rev. Walter Lawry, first Wesleyan missionary to Tonga in the Friendly Islands, in 1822. Lawry wrote these words about the people of the South Pacific after visiting both Tonga and Fiji one hundred and fifty years ago:

> "The general expression of their countenance and the dress are Asiatic: so is their language. . . . Some of their customs seem to be Jewish, such [as?] circumcision, the feast of the first fruits, and the cities of refuge; which show that from whatever part of the eastern family they spring, Jewish rites are strongly impressed on their national character . . . Might it not be possible that the ten Tribes, who broke off in the days of Rehoboam, and went towards the east carrying with them some of their neighbours the sons of Ham from Africa and proceeding by way of Hindostan (India) might reach the Malayan sea, and thus people the Pacific Ocean? . . . The Malay language and the language of these seas have relation to each other." [Misi Gete p. 139, 140].

These early ideas of Mr. Lawry were the subject of careful study by Geddie's son-in-law, the Rev. Dr. Daniel Macdonald who settled at Havannah Harbour, West Efate, in 1872. He finally wrote two scholarly books, "The Asiatic Origin of the Oceanic Languages" (1894) and "The Oceanic Languages" (1907). Dr. Macdonald's books seek to show the development of our languages from the family of languages of which Hebrew was the best known, through Malay, to the Pacific and the New Hebrides.

CHAPTER FIVE

The Winds and the Waves Obey Him

WHEN WE SPREAD out a map of the world, with the Pacific Ocean in the middle, we quickly see how far we are from the countries which sent the first missionaries.

From England and Canada

From England they came in sailing ships by way of the Cape of Good Hope and Australia. From Nova Scotia, on the eastern seaboard of Canada, they came by way of Cape Horn and Hawaii. Some of the Nova Scotian missionaries found it better to cross the Atlantic to England and then travel by the Cape of Good Hope. These were long, uncomfortable and often dangerous journeys.

From Samoa

The Polynesian teachers who came from Samoa and the Cook Islands also depended upon the wind. The first of them came to the New Hebrides on the sailing ship "Camden" in 1839 with the Rev. John Williams. They continued to come to help until about 1871. A few teachers came in the 1870's from the Loyalty Islands near New Caledonia. All depended upon the winds and the sea, and above all on *tokolau*, the faithful trade wind of the South Pacific. I can find no reference to any early missionary teacher from Polynesia or from the West who lost his life at sea. God seemed to take them under his wing and bring them to Melanesia in safety.

From Scotland

The winds of the Spirit were blowing across the west of Scotland in the late 18th century and early 19th century. Some ministers and many of the common people began to pray and work so that the Good News would go out from Great Britain to the ends of

the earth. They gave warm support to the London Missionary Society when it was formed in 1795.

Many of the early missionaries of this Society were Presbyterians from the smaller Presbyterian denominations which broke off from the Church of Scotland in the 17th and 18th centuries. Three of these denominations of Presbyterians who sent us missionaries were the Reformed Presbyterian Church, the United Secession Church and the Relief Church. Later on the Free Church of Scotland also sent men. None of these early Scots missionaries came from the Church of Scotland. The "old kirk" refused to commence a Foreign Mission for many years after 1795. In that year Dr. John Erskine sought unsuccessfully in the General Assembly of the Established Church of Scotland for such a work to be commenced. At that time missionaries and evangelists found no official encouragement in that Church.

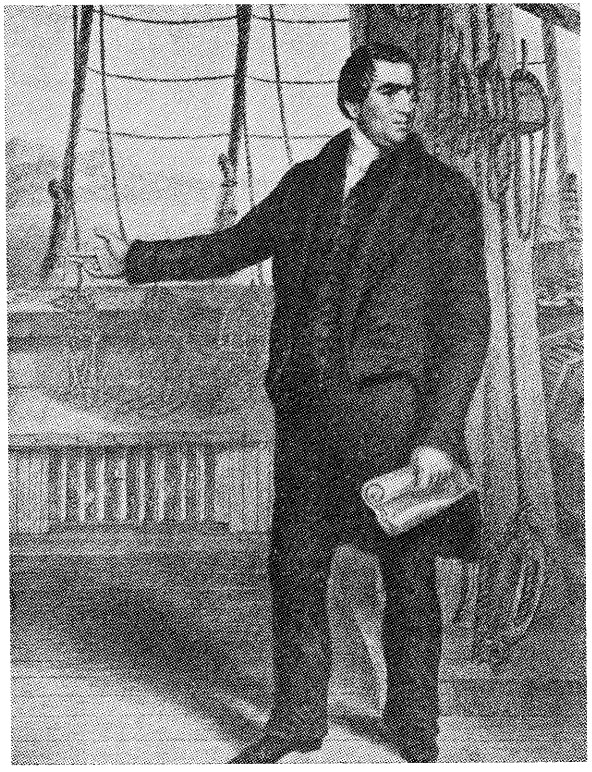
The English Baptist Missionary Society was formed in 1792 to support William Carey in India. Carey's missionary zeal was fired by his reading of James Cook's discoveries in the Pacific.

The London Missionary Society (LMS) was the parent of the New Hebrides Mission. The LMS was formed in Great Britain to give Presbyterians, Congregationalists and other non-Baptists a chance to work together in world-wide missionary outreach. In 1796 the LMS sent its first ship "The Duff," to the Eastern Pacific to begin its main mission on Tahiti.

John Williams

The Rev. John Williams joined the LMS in 1817. He proved to be God's key man in the evangelization of the South West Pacific. As a youth he worked in a hardware store in London. He was converted to Christ at the age of seventeen, began his training at eighteen and was ordained at twenty. He then married a bride of nineteen and they sailed for Polynesia.

Williams proved to be good at languages. He was friendly with the people and a man of courage, vision and faith. In 1818 he settled at Raiatea in the Society Islands. The Christians grew rapidly in number and began to set about the evangelization of other heathen islands. God blessed this work and gradually the Polynesian evangelists of the LMS advanced across the islands of central Polynesia. From 1823 to the time of his death Williams



THE PIONEERS OF THE L.M.S.

John Williams on the L.M.S. ship "Camden", 1839.

made voyages to the Cook Islands, Samoa and Tonga. Last of all he sailed to the New Hebrides where he was killed in 1839.

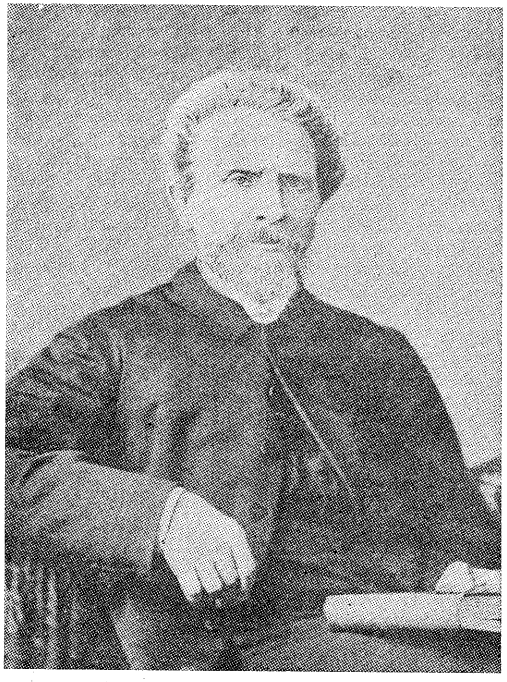
The Polynesian teachers

Williams achieved this rapid expansion through the use he made of the new converts as co-workers. First he evangelized an island. He taught the people to read. He thus brought each new area to literacy and the knowledge of the Scriptures. Then he trained leaders for missionary outreach as evangelists to other islands. When Williams sailed from Samoa in 1839 he was burdened for the savage islands of the New Hebrides. He brought

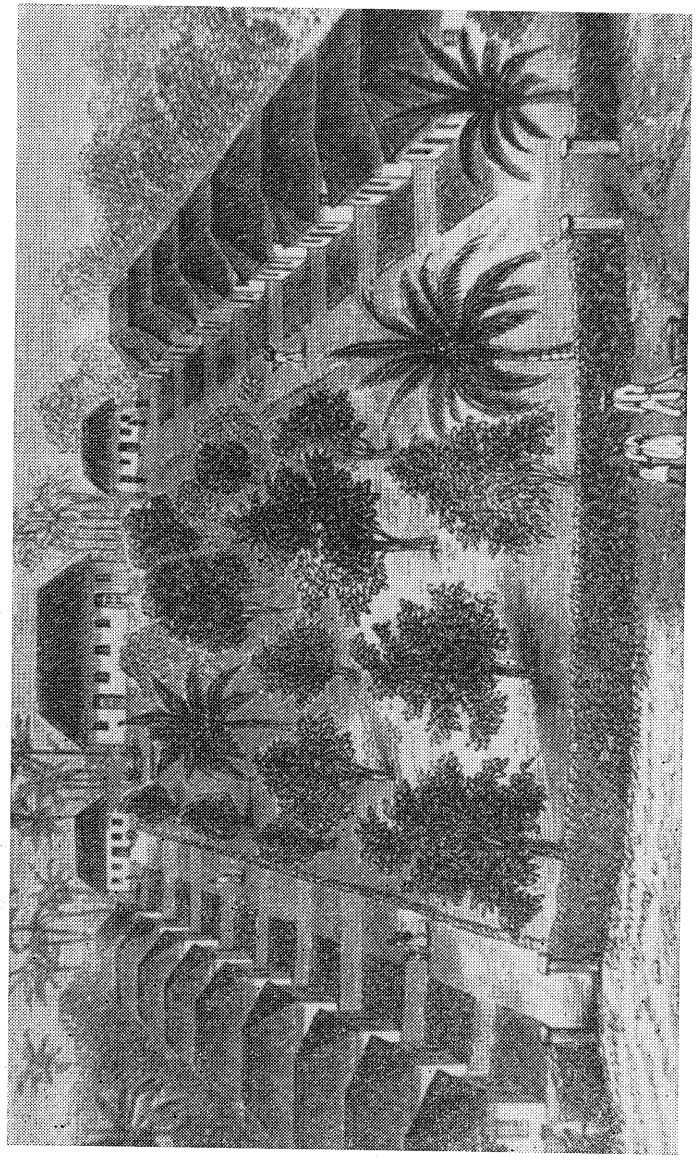
a team of twelve Samoan evangelists. When he was killed others were ready to carry on the task.

Training institutions were begun in Samoa and Rarotonga. From these a steady and eager stream of evangelists flowed out to other islands. They were the pioneer bearers of the Good News to the New Hebrides.

There are true stories of Polynesian canoes which have been blown more than a thousand miles across the South Pacific and have made landfalls in the New Hebrides. Descendants of some of these people are found in such Polynesian areas of the New Hebrides as Makatea on Emae, and Fila and Mele on Efate. Others have mingled with the Melanesian inhabitants to form the cultural groups that we find on Tanna, Tongoa, Paama and elsewhere. Here is the true story of one of these canoes which was blown to our islands about the year 1820.



Dr. George Turner who, with Henry Nisbet and their wives, were missionaries on Tanna 1842-1843. Later he was head of Malua Training Institution, Samoa.



Malua, where many of the Polynesian missionaries to the New Hebrides were trained, and some New Hebrideans. School and students' houses, 1850s.

CHAPTER SIX

The Winds Blow Sualo to Erakor

The canoes from Samoa

A FEW YEARS before the Good News reached Samoa a defeated war-party of about one hundred Samoans left their island for Tonga, over five hundred miles to the southwest. Contrary winds took them out of their course. Many of the Samoans died before the canoes reached land in the New Hebrides. The survivors went ashore at Tongoa opposite Ewose Island. Fighting drove them away. They tried to sail east to Samoa, but the wind forced them back. They finally came ashore on Efate near Erakor.

Sualo at Erakor

Efate was then populated by many warring tribes. Sualo and his friends were tall, strong and experienced warriors. The chief of Erakor received them and adopted the Polynesian title Pomare, written as Bomal in the local language. Sualo soon became respected among the bush tribes of South Efate as a powerful fighting man. Pomare gave Sualo his daughter for his wife. Thus the Samoan warrior gained power and influence on South Efate at a time when there were many people. He was still a heathen. He had not heard about the Lord Jesus Christ.

In 1845 the LMS ship "John Williams" lay at anchor at Dillon's Bay, Eromanga. The ship had hoped to place Polynesian teachers on Eromanga. This was the kind of outreach that John Williams would have wished for. But because of the lawless sandalwood trade the position was too risky. The LMS missionaries were wondering what they should do. Just then Captain Lewis of the small sandalwood vessel "Ariel" came on board the "John Williams."

He told the LMS missionaries of some Samoans at Erakor who wanted Christian teachers. Captain Lewis said that he had spoken to the Samoans about the new religion which had come to their

home islands. He told them, through a Maori interpreter in his crew, that the worship of the old gods had ceased on Samoa. The worship of Jehovah had been everywhere received with joy. A new day had broken for the whole of Samoa. Sualo and his Samoan friends were excited. They asked Captain Lewis to try to get some Samoan teachers for Efate. Sualo promised the captain that he would assist the teachers to spread this message on Efate.

First Samoan teachers, 1845

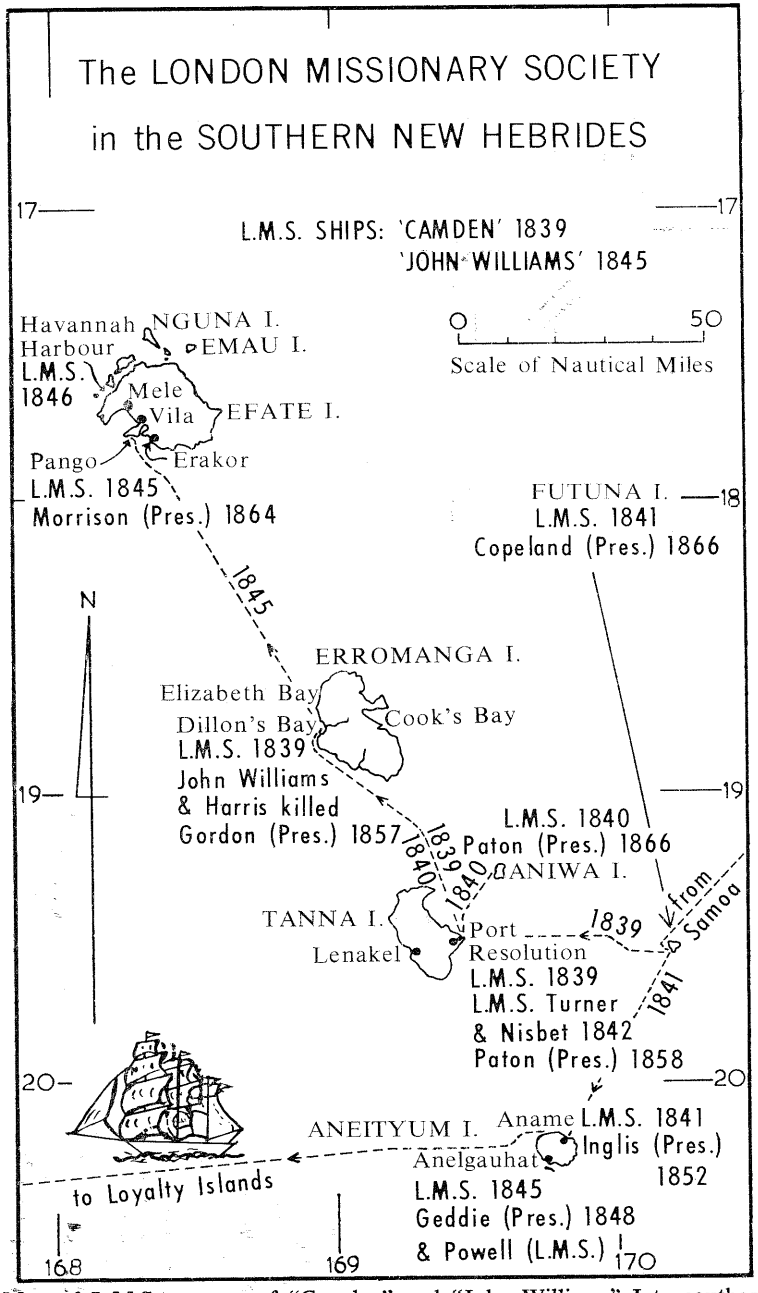
The "John Williams" sailed to Efate, reaching Pango Bay on 1 May 1845. The missionaries found Sualo. Pomare the chief of Erakor promised to protect the Samoan teachers. Four teachers were landed. Two commenced work at Erakor and two at nearby Pango village. Pomare, the chief, remained strong and faithful through all the ups and downs and opposition of the heathen. He died in the epidemic of 1861, a Christian. This was just before the Erakor church was constituted.

Sualo goes home

Sualo was less firm. Perhaps he grew a little jealous of the growing influence of the Samoan teachers. In 1854 he asked to be taken home to Samoa and was given a passage on the "John Williams." At that time the Christian mission to South Efate was in ruins. Sualo may have felt that all was lost. He was probably about sixty when he left. The centenary of the coming of the teachers was observed in 1945. Every year the anniversary of the arrival of these teachers is remembered with thanksgiving by the churches and villages of South Efate. [On Sualo see William Gill, Gems from the Coral Islands, 1855 p. 55ff].

PART TWO

John Williams and the London Missionary Society



Map of L.M.S. voyages of "Camden" and "John Williams" I to southern New Hebrides, 1839-1861.

CHAPTER SEVEN

John Williams in Scotland

SCOTLAND HEARD the stirring addresses of John Williams in 1836, while he was on furlough in Britain. The Christians of the smaller Presbyterian denominations were greatly encouraged and began to plan their obedience in the support of Christian missions.

The United Secession Church

The United Secession Church gave Williams five hundred pounds — a large sum of money in those days — to secure for that church a mission field in the Western Pacific. New Caledonia was then suggested to them and the idea stuck in their minds. But later the Church chose a field nearer home in West Africa. They transferred their interest in the Western Pacific to their daughter Presbyterian Church in Canada, called the Church of the Lower Provinces of British North America. This Church had a growing missionary interest because of the vigorous work of a young minister the Rev. John Geddie. Geddie was then in his first parish in Prince Edward Island. Geddie's family had close links with the LMS. Geddie read the Society's magazines with interest. We shall learn later how God called him as the first missionary of that church to the New Hebrides.

The Reformed Presbyterian Church

The second Scottish church to feel the impact of John Williams' visit was the Reformed Presbyterian Church. That church had been prepared by missionary-minded ministers from 1828 onwards. In 1838 the Rev. Alexander Duff of the Church of Scotland was home from India and stirred up the Scottish churches for foreign missions.

The Reformed Presbyterian Church agreed in 1838 to commence such a mission. They chose the Maoris of the Manawatu district of New Zealand as their field. James Duncan was their

first missionary and John Inglis was their second. In 1852 Inglis was transferred by his Church to the New Hebrides Mission, the first of many excellent men from the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Scotland. The best known of them was John G. Paton who reached the islands in 1858.

The Relief Church

The third Scottish Church to feel the impact of John Williams' visit was the small Relief Church. Two of its students for the ministry offered for service with the LMS. They were Henry Nisbet and George Turner. Both proved gifted, devoted and long-lived men, in the service of the LMS in the Pacific. The LMS in London appointed Nisbet and Turner to Tanna. They and their wives landed on Tanna late in 1842, making their station with the Polynesian teachers at Port Resolution. After a few months the opposition became so severe that all were forced to escape by sea. They were taken to Samoa on a whaling ship, the "Highlander." Turner became the Principal of the Training Institution at Malua, Samoa, and kept a close link with the New Hebrides through the men he trained as evangelists to our islands. Both he and Nisbet came back from time to time as missionary deputies to see and encourage their Polynesian teachers in the New Hebrides.

The Polynesian teachers

We now turn to the most remarkable work of all those early years. This was the eager and costly service of Samoan and Cook Islands men and women as evangelists to the New Hebrides. It was largely through the devoted lives and deaths of these new converts from the Polynesian islands that the people saw, for the first time, the meaning of the Christian life. They saw that Christians could live well and die well. The Polynesians were bigger and stronger than our people, but refused to fight to preserve their lives. They trusted their God in every trouble and loved and cared for the people of the islands. They were the brown angels of the Western Pacific.

CHAPTER EIGHT

After the Death of John Williams

EARLY ONE MORNING in 1943 old Tom Maraki of Tongoa came up to see me at our home at "Ere." He was sobbing with grief. I was silent for a while and no words were spoken. Then he showed me an old crumpled picture. It was a drawing of the murder of John Williams by the chief Auwi Auwi at Dillon's Bay, Eromanga. There was Williams, falling at the mouth of the river, struck down by a club. Tom Maraki's heart was heavy because the first missionary to come to us was killed by us. He seemed to feel a personal sense of shame and sorrow, more than a century after Williams' death. God used the death of John Williams to awaken the churches to their missionary duty. In other parts of the world people heard of the distant New Hebrides and began to pray for the conversion of their people. Young men like Geddie, Turner, Nisbet, Inglis, Gordon and Paton had their thoughts turned to the South Pacific and to the New Hebrides.

The first Polynesian teachers

Nearer at hand, in Polynesia, the leaders among the first generation of believers on Samoa had begun to train for Christian service. They were ready to go as evangelists to heathen islands, or as teachers among their own people. These men had all known the power of darkness and the liberty of their new life in Christ. When they heard of Williams' death they longed to go and launch the work in the New Hebrides, the Loyalty Islands and New Caledonia.

The following chapters will tell briefly the long-forgotten story of these faithful, brave, unselfish Samoans and Rarotongans, both men and women.

Look first at the map of the southern islands of the New Hebrides (p. 20). This shows the direction from which the LMS ships "Camden" and "John Williams" came to us from Samoa. The

date is given for the year in which the first Polynesian evangelists landed on each of these islands and on Efate.

From 1839 to 1861, with the help and guidance of a few missionaries, these men and women sought to carry the Good News to Tanna, Aniwa, Eromanga, Futuna, Aneityum, Efate, Epi and Santo. More than one hundred of these men, most of them married, came to help. Most were experienced men who had completed their studies and served for a time in their own islands. They were physically strong, socially mature, stable in character and well-established in their Christian faith and life. They needed these qualities in the testing and discouraging conditions which they met in these islands. They had many advantages over European missionaries. They could live in island conditions without much difficulty because they were accustomed to the food, houses and climate. They understood local thinking and customs. They thus avoided mistakes and were able to respect the *tapus*.

Their difficulties

Some of them learned the language of their islands. Others failed. All faced a problem of health because of malaria. They had no resistance to this disease, common in the New Hebrides. They quickly caught fever. Many of them died. Others were so weakened that they could do little work for long periods of time. Very few gave in to these conditions. They struggled on in the face of the most terrible privations. Dr Inglis of Aneityum says that by the year 1856 the number who had died was more than fifty. A few were murdered; some were injured for life with clubs and other weapons. Some were killed by the superstitious heathen when they saw the teachers delirious with malaria.

A famous convert to the Christian faith during the Roman persecutions of the Church in the second century, Tertullian, saw that the Church cannot be destroyed by persecution. He wrote, "The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church." This was to prove true many times over in the savage New Hebrides.

The LMS ships

The Polynesian evangelists did not work alone. They had the guidance, encouragement and practical help of the Samoan Mission. The LMS missionaries took it in turn, usually two at a time, to accompany their ship on its visits to the Western

Missions in the New Hebrides, the Loyalties and New Caledonia. On these visits the missionaries brought the evangelists food and other supplies. They removed any who were ill or in need of a change, placed new teachers where there were openings, and closed stations where work was no longer possible.

The LMS missionaries

The LMS missionaries were able and sincere men, well-skilled in the Polynesian languages and customs. They had a deep sympathy for the teachers in all their perils, loneliness and suffering. Through their careful record of all that took place we can now picture the lives and work of the Polynesian evangelists clearly. The Rev. A. W. Murray's books are "Missions in Western Polynesia" (1863) and "The Martyrs of Polynesia" (1885). Earlier than this the Rev. William Gill of Rarotonga published "Gems from the Coral Islands" (1855). These three books give accounts of many of the early Polynesian stations and martyrs in the islands.

We shall now follow the order in which the LMS ships first made contact with the New Hebrides, and carry the story of the LMS as far as 1861, when the New Hebridean Church was strong enough to supply most of the evangelists and teachers. A few Polynesian and Loyalty Islands men continued to help until the 1870's. In 1903 Dr. H. A. Robertson of Aneityum and Eromanga paid tribute to The London Missionary Society as "that noble society which began the New Hebrides Mission and then generously passed it over to the Presbyterians." [Erromanga The Martyr Isle, London 1903]. The following chapters are the tribute of the Presbyterian Church of today to the London Missionary Society and all its devoted workers.

CHAPTER NINE

Futuna, Island of the First Four Martyrs

John Williams' visit on the "Camden," 1839

JOHN WILLIAMS HAD made plans to visit the New Hebrides in 1830. Not till 1839 did he have the ship to make his mission to the New Hebrides possible. When the "Camden" sailed from Samoa in 1839 John Williams seemed to feel that danger and death lay before him. His wife felt the same way and tried to persuade him not to go on this voyage. He preached a farewell message from the words of Acts 20:36-38 and lingered over the passage about the Ephesian elders "sorrowing most of all for the words which he spoke, that they should see his face no more." All were deeply moved. At midnight he said goodbye. He seemed to know it was his last farewell.

Just before the ship reached Futuna, the most easterly island in the New Hebrides, Williams wrote in his last letter:

> "I have just heard dear Captain Morgan say, that we are sixty miles off the Hebrides, so that we shall be there early to-morrow morning. This evening we are to have a special prayer-meeting. Oh, how much depends upon the efforts of to-morrow! Will the savages receive us or not? . . . I brought twelve missionaries with me; two have settled at a beautiful island called Rotuma; the ten I have are for the New Hebrides and New Caledonia. The approaching week is to me the most important of my life."
>
> [Memoirs of Rev. John Williams, Prout, p. 381].

John Williams' missionaries were all light-skinned Polynesians.

The "Camden" reached Futuna on Sunday morning 17 November 1839. Canoes came off from the rocky island, but their occupants would not go on board the "Camden." The "Camden's" boat was lowered and Williams' men pulled towards the shore. A canoe came alongside and a Futuna chief leaped into Williams'

boat. The chief asked to be taken aboard the "Camden." There Williams was able to talk with the chief by using Samoan and Rarotongan words. The chief promised to look after any teacher who might be settled on Futuna. The people on shore refused to allow any of their number to go off to the ship.

Williams felt that the visit had done good.

He wrote in his journal:

> "Although we were not rich enough in teachers to spare two for this island, it will be occupied as soon as possible, and indeed we gave them to understand that we should visit them again shortly . . . to settle teachers as soon as we can possibly spare them."
>
> [Memoirs of Rev. John Williams, Prout, p. 382, 383].

John Williams never saw the island again. Three days later, on 20 November, he was killed on Eromanga. The LMS leaders remembered his pledge to the Futuna chief, and honoured it.

Teachers landed, 1841

In March 1841 the "Camden" returned to the New Hebrides with the Rev. A. W. Murray on board. He was to have a long association with the New Hebrides Mission and was to write the history of the LMS work in Western Polynesia. On board were two Samoan teachers for Futuna, Apela and Samuela. They were settled on the north-west of Futuna among the Imounga people. The chief of this tribe was Kautiama. He promised to look after the teachers and protect their lives. He also offered to go with the "Camden" to Aneityum and help the LMS to settle teachers there. A crowd of Futunese took this rare chance to make a quick trading trip to Aneityum. There they bartered their mats and baskets for food. The "Camden" was successful in settling teachers on north Aneityum and was back at Futuna a few days later. The teachers seemed safe and well, and the ship sailed away.

When the "Camden" returned in June 1842 it brought Samuela's wife and daughter to join the mission party on Futuna. All looked promising and the teachers were content to remain. The tide soon turned against them when sickness broke out on Futuna.

Meanwhile the ever-expanding mission of the LMS in the South Pacific required a better ship. In 1842 the "Camden" was sold and a fine new ship, the "John Williams," took her place, named after the martyr of Eromanga. These delays meant that no LMS ship called back to Futuna until 1845. In the meantime tragedy had overtaken the work on Futuna.

A high sea was running when the "John Williams" approached Futuna in April 1845. The ship stood in as close as possible and lowered her boat. The boat's crew attempted to land at Imounga. There were armed crowds on the shore, and no women or children about — a bad sign. When the crew asked where the teachers were they were told that the teachers were busy in their gardens.

The murder of the teachers

There was nothing for it but to sail on to Aneityum. There the crew learned the full story. When sickness struck Futuna the Polynesian teachers were blamed for it by the *tapu* men of the island. Some Tanna men visited Futuna at that time and told the Futunese how the Tannese had stopped the sickness on Tanna by killing the LMS teachers. This advice seemed to confirm the thoughts of the Futuna people of the Imounga tribe. They decided to kill their teachers.

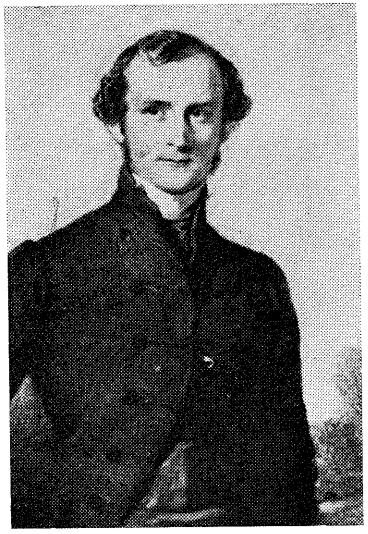
Apela and Samuela and his daughter had gone off to their gardens in the morning, leaving Samuela's wife at home. The people of Imounga, armed with spears and clubs and shouting their war cries, attacked the three in the bush garden. Samuela was speared; then he and Apela and the girl were clubbed to death.

Excited warriors rushed to the house where they found Samuela's wife alone. The leader of the murderers, Nasaua, offered the woman her life on the condition that she become his wife. She refused and tried to satisfy the men with gifts. Kautiama, the chief of Imounga — the chief who had promised to protect the teachers — then took the club from Nasaua's hands and struck her down.

The bodies of the four martyrs were cooked but the Futunese did not like the taste of their flesh. They then buried the bodies in the sand and later used the small bones for fish hooks. All the teachers' goods were taken and their house burned. In defiance of the Christians the people of Futuna used to deck themselves at their heathen dances in the clothing of these Christians.

We honour the memory of these four martyrs, the first LMS evangelists to lay down their lives at the violent hands of the New Hebrides people. The deaths on Tanna were all from

THE ANGLICAN PIONEERS



The Right Reverend George A. Selwyn of England, first bishop of New Zealand, who first visited New Hebrides in 1848. Portrait at the time of his consecration at the age of 31.

The Rev. John Coleridge Patteson of England whom Selwyn trained as his successor in Melanesia; consecrated first Bishop of Melanesia in 1861 at the age of 34.

sickness, which the heathen Tannese said was caused by their gods.

The Imounga chief, Kautiama, by his leading share in this murder, undid all the good he had done in 1841 by welcoming the teachers to Futuna and by helping to prepare the way for the teachers on Aneityum. The Rev. Dr. William Gunn said many years later that the district of Imounga became one of the hardest places in the New Hebrides to win for Christ. Kautiama lived and died a heathen.

The Melanesian Mission

The Melanesian Mission grew out of the missionary vision and voyages of Bishop George Augustus Selwyn, first Bishop of the Church of England in New Zealand. He and his successor Bishop John Coleridge Patteson will often appear in these pages as close friends of the New Hebrides people and of the missionaries of the LMS and the Presbyterian Mission.

In 1851 Bishop G.A. Selwyn of the Melanesian Mission called at Futuna and obtained two lads for training in New Zealand. They were Saliva and Yarai. When he brought them back at the end of the year the two lads refused to return to New Zealand. Saliva later went to Fiji where he was killed in a fight. Yarai remained on Futuna to help the work of God. He was a slow learner but assisted the work in two ways. He sold land to the first missionary, the Rev. Joseph Copeland, for a mission station. Later Yarai was the first Futuna man to give up an important heathen ceremony.

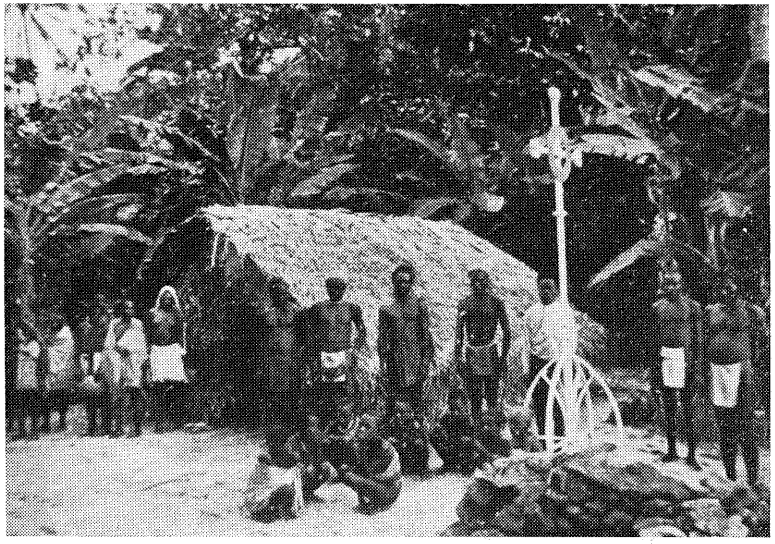
The Aneityum church sends teachers

In 1853 a new attempt was made to take the Gospel to Futuna, this time by the Presbyterian Church on Aneityum. This young church began its missionary outreach by sending Waihit and Iosefa to Futuna. They were placed on the island by the "John Williams" and were later strengthened by other Aneityumese and LMS teachers.

We know the names of two of these later Polynesian teachers. One was Kakita of Rarotonga. Another was Ru, whom the LMS in 1859 placed at Ipau, near the north-eastern point of Futuna. The people stole his chest of personal goods and would have killed him. But Konafia, the heathen priest of Ipau, and his son

Popoina, pleaded for Ru's life to be spared. These two Futuna men then joined the worship and Popoina became the first Futuna man to profess his faith in Christ, in the time of the Rev. Joseph Copeland. Mr. Copeland first visited Futuna in 1860. He resided on this island from 1866 to 1881 with two breaks due to his wife's illness and death.

The full story of the mission of the Aneityum church to Futuna is told in chapter twenty-two.



Memorial Cross, Nukapu, Santa Cruz Islands, to commemorate the place where Patteson was killed in 1871.

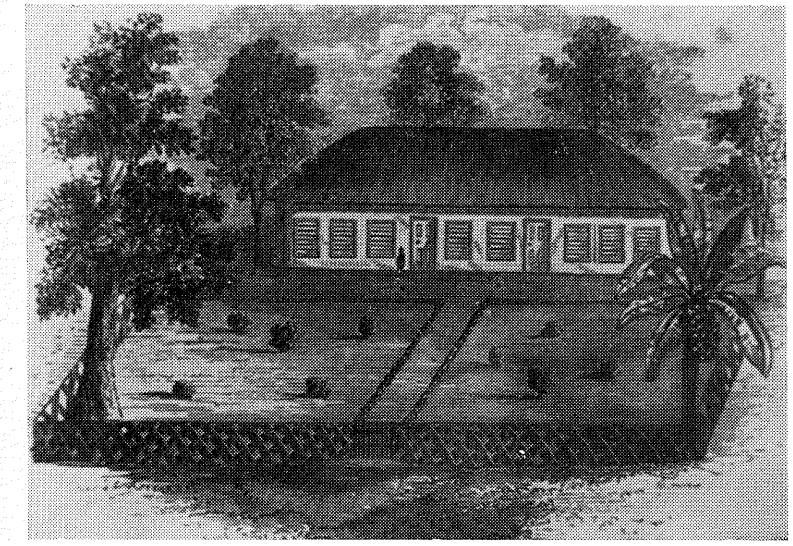
CHAPTER TEN

Tanna, a Life and Death Struggle

PORT RESOLUTION ON the south-east of Tanna was named by Captain Cook in 1774. He called it after his ship "Resolution," which found a safe anchorage there. The word resolution means strong purpose or determination. That exactly describes the amazing story of the Polynesian teachers in their first efforts to win Tanna for Christ.

John Williams' last work was to land three Polynesian teachers at Port Resolution on 18 November 1839. They spent a night ashore among the Tannese people and told their friends on the

A Tannese family, about 1850.



Mission house of the Turners and Nisbets, Port Resolution, Tanna, 1842.

"Camden" next morning that they felt safe to remain there. The "Camden" sailed north to Eromanga where Williams and his young friend Harris were killed.

Polynesian teachers, 1839

The first teachers were three Samoans named Lalolangi, Salamea and Mose. In 1840 two more Samoans were added to the team, Pomare and Vaiofanga. The first teachers were well and happy in their work. All looked hopeful. Then all five teachers took ill, and were soon too weak to care for themselves. The Tanna people had given them a welcome and had begun to listen to the Good News. They showed the Samoans every kindness. After six weeks Salamea and Pomare died. They were buried by their Tannese followers. The other Samoans were too sick to help.

When the three survivors recovered they found that the Tannese were no longer on their side. The sickness of the Samoans was believed by the Tannese to be because their heathen god Alema was angry with the messengers of the Good News. The Tannese said that Alema was stronger than the Christians' God. That was why the teachers died, they said.

The Rev. A. W. Murray was on board the "Camden" when she called in April 1841. A few people had returned to the side of the teachers. Mr Murray held a meeting with the chiefs who lived in and near Port Resolution. They said that they were still in favour of the worship and wanted the teachers to remain. They would like missionaries to come and live among them.

Turner and Nisbet, 1842

When the "Camden" reached Sydney the Rev. George Turner and Henry Nisbet were awaiting transport to the New Hebrides. After they had spent some months in Samoa the "Camden" brought them to Tanna in June 1842. The missionaries were given a good welcome by the chiefs and the people around Port Resolution. Both were married men from Scotland, working under the LMS. These two missionary families remained only seven months on Tanna. At first they made good progress. After three months they could use the language well enough to get their message to the people.

The heathen priests had great influence on Tanna. As soon as they saw that people were beginning to trust the words of the missionaries and teachers they became jealous and hostile. When the next sickness broke out these priests blamed it upon the the servants of God and tried to get them driven off Tanna or killed. Friendly chiefs tried to help the Christians. Opposition grew and all the Christians were threatened. War was declared against them and every day seemed likely to be their last.

The escape to Samoa

Turner and Nisbet had a gun. The Tannese friends asked them to use it in self-defence. The missionaries refused. They decided that they should escape to sea in their boat. This would not only preserve their own lives and the teachers' lives but might remove the cause of the savage opposition to their Tannese followers. They spent a terrible night in their whale-boat in a rough sea.

Next day a whaling ship from Hobart appeared off Port Resolution. Captain Lucas took the whole party to Samoa where they arrived in February 1843.

Tanna was now without Christian teachers. But there were some fruits of that difficult time. In 1845 the LMS in Samoa printed two little books in the language of Port Resolution. These were long thought to be the first Scripture portions in any language of the New Hebrides. They were probably the work of the first Samoan teachers, prepared under the guidance of Turner.

Mrs. Watt of South Tanna wrote in 1884, "The Eastern Island teachers never learned to speak Tannese properly. Even after fourteen years chattering away in this tongue I have difficulty in making out the few sheets of Samoan-Tannese which I have seen." [Agnes C. P. Watt, p. 218].

New Polynesian teachers, 1845

The new LMS ship "John Williams" made her first voyage to the New Hebrides in April 1845. Both A. W. Murray and George Turner were on board. Tanna was much in their thoughts and prayers. At Aneityum they were cheered to learn that the Tannese were now more favourable to Christianity. As soon as the ship anchored at Port Resolution the missionaries were welcomed both by their old friends and by their former enemies.

The tide turned in favour of the new worship when a sickness carried off many of the heathen who had opposed the Christians. The little group of Tannese believers had kept up their worship on the Lord's Day. A *tapu* was put on the mission property and gardens to protect them and no one dared to break it.

The missionaries had a meeting with the chiefs from near and far. These chiefs united in asking the missionaries to return, or else to leave some teachers on Tanna. Three Rarotongan and four Samoan teachers were landed and given a hearty welcome. They were placed at three separate stations, centred on Port Resolution. But troubles soon broke out more fiercely than before. Mr. Nisbet and Mr. Gill were on the LMS ship when next she called at Tanna in September 1846. They found that for a few months good work had been done by the strong band of teachers. Opposition arose against them when a new epidemic spread on Tanna. The Christians were blamed and plans were made to kill

them. Only the strong support of a chief named Viavia saved them until the danger had passed.

The teachers began their work again. When disease again broke out on Tanna one of the teachers was attacked and clubbed and left for dead. His name was Ioane. He recovered but bore the scars till his death. Then the Tannese tried to burn down the teachers' station.

Murder of Vasa

A few days later teacher Vasa was attacked and killed while he was praying in the bush. Though a number of Polynesian teachers and European missionaries have laid down their lives for the Good News on Tanna, Vasa is the only martyr in the history of the Tanna church who came from beyond the New Hebrides. We honour his memory. The lives of the surviving teachers and their families were saved when a ship called the next day at Port Resolution. The captain agreed to take them all to Aneityum. Thus Tanna was left desolate again.

New beginnings, 1847

Two of the Polynesian teachers were left at Aneityum with instructions to re-occupy Tanna when a chance arose. In March 1847 a chief of Port Resolution sent his son to Aneityum to seek for teachers. The two Polynesian teachers returned to Tanna with him. The LMS ship kept up its visits and found some encouragement in 1848 and 1849. A third teacher was added in 1848. Opposition closed the out-station. All the teachers were brought together at Port Resolution where they planned to build a grass church. But this was forbidden by the heathen.

Smallpox

In May 1852 the work was broken up again. This time the occasion was the visit for three weeks to Port Resolution of the American ship "Edward" with smallpox disease on board. The Polynesian teachers showed kindness to the sick passengers and the crew. They were the first to catch the disease. All three teachers at the head station died, and the wife of a teacher. Only Pita of Samoa was left. He was one of the two teachers who returned to Tanna from Aneityum in March 1847. He was working at a different part of the port.

The disease infected the Tannese people when they began to plunder the property of the dead teachers. Smallpox spread to other places. This angered the heathen against the Christians and four Tanna women who were friendly to the worship were killed.

Teacher Pita borrowed a boat from a trader and escaped with his family to Aneityum. Again the island was without workers. At that time the LMS introduced vaccination for smallpox for all their workers.

Teachers from Aneityum

The next part of the story of Tanna belongs to the outreach of the Aneityumese church. When the LMS ship called in October 1854 they found that the report of the transformation of Aneityum by the Good News had reached Tanna. Two canoe loads of Tannese went to Aneityum to see if the reports were true. They were astonished to find an island full of people living without war, vengeance and murder. The result was that these south Tanna men asked for Aneityumese teachers.

The first two such teachers were placed at Anuikaraka (Waikaraka), South Tanna, on 14 October 1854. The mission ships "John Williams" and "John Knox" (of the Presbyterian Mission) had work to do in visiting these teachers and keeping the links with their missionaries on Samoa and Aneityum. But from this point onwards the Tanna mission was carried on as the outreach of the Presbyterian Mission and the Aneityumese church. They soon had to face new trials and new setbacks.

Aniwa

In March 1840, on the second voyage of the "Camden" the LMS placed Samoan teachers on the island of Aniwa. They were withdrawn a few years later because of the difficulties. The work began in earnest only when the Presbyterian Church on Aneityum sent its own teachers to Aniwa. This story belongs to chapter twenty-two.

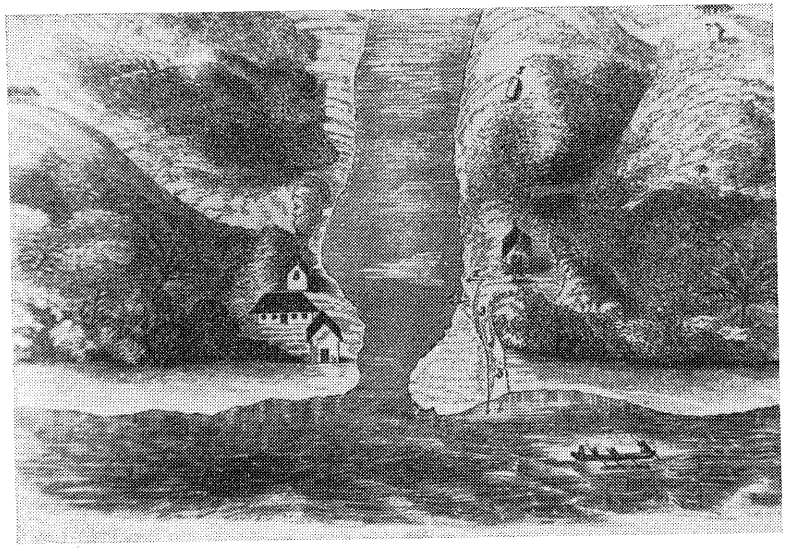
CHAPTER ELEVEN

Eromanga, Island of Blood and Martyrs

AS THE LITTLE Islander plane came in to land on the high ground above Dillon's Bay I was watching through the passenger's window. The afternoon sun lit up the great valley, the bold cliffs and the silver river.

The death of John Williams

Here the "Camden" lay at anchor on the night of 19 November 1839. John Williams could not sleep. He carried a burden for



An early drawing made in 1859 of the scene of John Williams' and James Harris' violent deaths, Dillon's Bay, Eromanga, 1839. Sandalwood traders' buildings on left; teacher's house on right; Rev. G. N. Gordon's cottage and church top right. Figure 2 shows where Harris was killed, fig. 3 the path down which Williams ran, fig. 4 the place where Williams was killed.

Eromanga and he was weighed down with the task. He knew that the sandalwood trade had made Eromanga a dangerous place for foreign ships. This was what stopped his planned visit of 1830.

Williams did not know that only a few weeks earlier a clash had taken place on the beach at Dillon's Bay. In this clash the son of the chief Auwi Auwi had been killed. The "Camden" was the first mission ship to anchor at Dillon's Bay. The Eromangans had no way of knowing that these Europeans on the mission ship would be any different from the crews of the sandalwood ships.

Williams went ashore in the ship's boat accompanied by a young man named Harris. Harris was not a missionary but a Christian who hoped to prepare for missionary service. Captain Morgan was most careful and watchful. The people on the beach showed signs of friendship by bringing drinking water to Williams. He then persuaded Captain Morgan to let him step ashore. Williams mingled with the Eromangan children as he tried out the Samoan numerals on them. Suddenly there was a shout. Harris was running for the water. Williams was slow to run. Both men were struck down and beaten to death before the eyes of the boat's crew who could do nothing to save them. The bodies of Williams and Harris were taken away and were later eaten.

In Samoa, Mrs. Williams heard the news of her husband's death through a messenger. Before the messenger had a chance to break the sad news Mrs. Williams asked,

"Is all well?"

"Yes, all is well," was the quiet reply.

Mrs. Williams knew exactly what he meant. She had pleaded with her husband, before he left Samoa, not to land on Eromanga. He was only forty-three years old and in the prime of his great powers.

The monument at Apia, Samoa, reads:

> "Sacred to the memory of the Rev. John Williams, father of the Samoan and other missions, aged 43 years and 5 months, who was killed by the cruel natives of Eromanga, on the 20th November 1839, while endeavouring to plant the Gospel of Peace on its shores."

The Presbyterian Church in the New Hebrides sees in John Williams the servant of God who longed for the land's salvation. He planned the New Hebrides Mission of the LMS. He sealed

this high purpose with his blood. He will never be forgotten by the Christians of the New Hebrides.

The first Samoan teachers

The LMS felt a new concern and compassion for the people of Eromanga. In May 1840, just six months after John Williams' death, they sent the "Camden" back to Eromanga. Mr Heath of the LMS placed two Samoan teachers, Lasalo and Taniela, on Eromanga near to Dillon's Bay.

When next the "Camden" called in 1841 the ship had great difficulty in rescuing these teachers from the tribe which had promised to receive them. This tribe had treated them as captives. They wanted the teachers to die of starvation. God moved a heathen man, named Vorevore, to feed them secretly in their hut every night for five months. In this way Vorevore preserved their lives. They were removed by the "Camden" to the Isle of Pines in New Caledonia, where the LMS was opening new work, and were murdered there soon afterwards.

On each trip of the LMS ship to the New Hebrides a visit was made to Eromanga to see if the way was open to re-commence the work. In 1845 the "John Williams" had on board some teachers whom the LMS hoped to settle on Eromanga. They found that the island was still too dangerous. The teachers were settled instead on South Efate.

Eromangans go to Samoa

In 1849 a new and encouraging event took place. Four young men from Dillon's Bay swam out to the "John Williams" while she lay at anchor. They asked to be taken to Samoa for training. Their names were Joe, Mana, Nivave and Nibore. All four were placed in the Teachers' Training Institution at Malua and remained there for nearly three years. The ship returned with them in May 1852. Nivave died on the voyage. He was a quiet youth who seemed in earnest as a Christian.

On arrival home Mana immediately began to speak about Christ to his Eromangan friends who swam out to the ship. He was pointing to his hands and feet as he spoke to them of the crucifixion of Jesus. Mana was thus the first Eromangan to witness to his own people in their language.

The two head men at Dillon's Bay, Naiwan and Auwi Auwi

agreed to take teachers and promised food and protection. They sent two more young men for training in Samoa. Mr. Murray of the LMS was sure that this invitation was due to the presence of the three Eromangans already trained in Samoa.

Firstfruits

On Tuesday 25 May 1852 two married teachers from Rarotonga, Va'a and Akatangi, were welcomed ashore at Dillon's Bay by a crowd of one hundred and fifty Eromangans. They, with Mana, made their station at Dillon's Bay, the home of Mana.

Mana at Dillon's Bay and Joe at Elizabeth Bay remained loyal teachers to the end of their lives. Nibore returned to heathenism while still just a youth. Mana and Joe were baptized by Geddie as the firstfruits of Eromanga.

John Geddie's help

John Geddie was on board the ship on this trip around the LMS stations. He watched from the deck, with tears of joy, as the crowd of Eromangans carried the boxes and bundles of their new teachers into the bush.

On the Lord's Day, while the ship was lying at anchor, Geddie preached on board from Numbers 14:21, "But as truly as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord." He wrote in his journal, "There is hope for Erromanga when God has pledged his own existence for the evangelization of the nations of the earth . . . I had longed and prayed for the day when the messengers of salvation should land on Erromanga and the time has come at last." [Misi Gete, p. 126, 127].

From this point onwards the Aneityum Presbyterian Church took a share in the mission to Eromanga. Geddie prepared a literacy primer in the Eromangan language for the use of the teachers.

In 1853 the "John Williams" called in October and found the teachers safe but hungry. The teachers were compelled to sell sandalwood to the traders in order to buy food. On this visit the first missionary service was held by Europeans. Geddie and the LMS leaders went inland to the village of Naiwan the high chief of that part of Eromanga who had received the teachers.

When the "John Williams" returned in 1854 she had two new missionaries of the LMS on board for Eromanga. But for reasons

that are not clear they were settled on Mare in the Loyalty Islands. Four more Samoan teachers were placed on Eromanga. There were signs of progress. A church had been built at Dillon's Bay. Sixty-seven people professed to have given up heathenism and were regular attenders at church and day school.

Sickness of LMS teachers

Sickness overcame these devoted Polynesian teachers. Geddie's journal for 24 February 1855 tells the story:

> "The schooner "Marian Watson" arrived here from Erromanga. She had on board Isaaka a Samoan teacher his wife and child, all very low with fever and ague. This family with three others was stationed on Erromanga in October last. The whole party were laid down with fever and ague a few weeks after they were left. Before Isaaka left one man, two women, and one child had died. The poor family presented a most heart rending sight when they arrived here." [Misi Gete p. 199].

Three months later on 14 May, Geddie adds:

> "The barque "Jane" arrived from Erromanga. She brought from that island Maili his wife and child, Samoans. They had suffered much from fever and ague and have come here on account of their health. They along with other Samoans were stationed on Erromanga in November last. Of that number one only remains, the others having died or removed." [Misi Gete p. 205, 206].

But the work was felt to justify the next important step.

First missionaries, George and Ellen Gordon

In 1857 helpers came to the New Hebrides Mission from Nova Scotia and England. They were the Rev. George N. Gordon from Prince Edward Island, Canada, and his wife Ellen from England.

The LMS and Presbyterian missionaries at first thought of placing the Gordons at Port Resolution, Tanna, but decided to try Eromanga. The chiefs of Dillon's Bay pleaded to have missionaries. When the Gordons were landed there John Geddie was present to assist in their settlement with the Presbyterian Mission ship "John Knox. This little ship now made possible the care of the southern islands by the Presbyterian Church on Aneityum. The LMS ship from Samoa and the Melanesian Mission ship from New Zealand continued to call and encourage the workers. From 1857 the supervision of the New Hebrides Mission passed into the hands of the Presbyterian missionary conference.

LMS missionaries were always welcomed to the meetings as partners in the work.

A lesson needs to be drawn here from the unhappy experience of the teachers who worked with the Gordons. Two Rarotongan teachers were placed with them to assist them at Dillon's Bay. They were Taevao and Toka. The following year they asked to be taken away and were settled in the Loyalty Islands by the LMS ship.

Geddie's view of George Gordon and his teachers

After the murder of the Gordons in 1861 Mr. Geddie felt it to be his duty to write to the Missions Committee of the Presbyterian Church in Nova Scotia. He told the committee that Mr. Gordon had adopted strange views about native teachers and had carried on the work without their help. He lived long enough to see his error but not long enough to correct it.

An Aneityumese chief, 1840s.

CHAPTER TWELVE

Aneityum, Foothold for the Church

ON 22 MAY 1941 my wife and I woke to find the Burns Philp steamer "Morinda" anchored in Anelgauhat Harbour, Aneityum. This was a pleasant introduction to the land which was to become our home.

A Catalina plane appeared and, after circling, settled on the quiet waters of the harbour. A dinghy came across to the "Morinda" and I heard someone asking for me. He was Mr. Bernard Blackwell, the assistant Resident Commissioner from the British Administration in Vila. After a word of introduction he remarked. "I understand that you are to be stationed on Tongoa?"

There was a pause.

"We should like to place a coast-watching unit there. Would you be willing to take charge of it?"

We did the coast-watching on through the months before and after Pearl Harbour until the first units of the U.S forces arrived in mid-1942. They then took over the job.

"Morinda," Catalina, coast-watching!

What a contrast to the circumstances of the arrival of the first missionaries on the "Camden" exactly one century before us!

The Mission to Ipeke

Aneityum was the last of the five southern islands to receive Polynesian evangelists. After settling Apela and Samuela on Futuna the men on the "Camden" were influenced to settle teachers on Aneityum by the unexpected offer of the Futuna chief, Kautiama. He said he would speak favourably for the Mission to the Aneityumese. Kautiama's allies were on the north side of Aneityum around Ipeke. So the "Camden" made her way to that point and not to the fine harbour of Anelgauhat which later became the station of the Geddies, in 1848. Anelgauhat had become, much earlier than that, the base for the trading ships and whalers.

The LMS ship reached Aneityum on 30 March 1841. This was her third voyage to Melanesia. The Rev. A. W. Murray was in charge. Many years later Dr. John Inglis told the story of the vital part that three heathen leaders took in the beginning of the mission to Aneityum. Yata was the strong chief of Ipeke. He had a brother Nu-umsi who had gone off on a trading ship — the first of his people ever to do so. The trading ship finally dropped him on Futuna where Nu-umsi had a good friend in the chief of the Imounga people Kautiama. When the "Camden" placed Apela and Samuela on Futuna these two men, Nu-umsi and Kautiama, were keen to travel on the ship to Aneityum. They offered their help in getting the Ipeke people to agree to take teachers. As a result Yata promised protection for the LMS teachers. In this way the mission was established on the northern side of the island.

The first teachers

Mr. Inglis had a copy of the old LMS magazine which showed a picture of that eventful day.

> "There is the ship's boat, Captain Morgan at the stern and Mr. Murray in the bow; two strong natives are each carrying one of the chests belonging to the teachers, while the teachers and their wives are wading ashore, and a wondering crowd are standing on the beach giving them a cordial welcome." [Inglis, Bible Illustrations from the New Hebrides p. 246, 247].

Like all of the early teachers, these two couples lived under the peril of sudden and violent death. Nearby was a strong secondary chief named in later years Luka. When he noticed that his young men were paying attention to the worship of the teachers he went with his spear one day to murder the Samoans.

The two Samoans and their wives heard of his evil purpose. They barred their house and took their fears to God in prayer. Luka broke down the door and told them he had come to kill them. The Christians faced him calmly and said that they were not afraid to die, but that God would certainly avenge their deaths. Luka lifted his spear. He attempted to throw it. His finger slipped out of the cord and the spear fell to the ground. Luka seemed unnerved and powerless. The teachers spoke to him about the Lord Jesus and then prayed with him. He left quietly. He was soon regularly attending worship. He was among the first to be baptized by Mr. Inglis in 1854.

As an old couple Luka and his wife went as evangelists to Kwamera, Tanna. The heathen tried to shoot him. A bullet knocked his hat off, another bullet passed through his shirt and others fell short into the ground. But his life was spared and he died on Tanna, faithful to the end. Luka's wife was killed by a Tanna chief's wife who gave her poisonous fish to eat.

The first teachers on Aneityum were Tavita and his wife, and Fotau-yasi and his wife. Tavita and his wife died on Aneityum in planting the Gospel. Fotau-yasi was spared to return to Samoa. On later visits of the "Camden" other teachers were added, Apolo and Simeona, Poti and Apaisa. They had their full share of difficulties and suffering.

When the "John Williams" called on her first trip, in 1845, things were looking better. Many adults and young folk had been drawn to the worship and eight or ten determined young men had cast in their lot with the Christians. They came daily for Christian teaching. A few had given up heathenism. The chief Yata had kept his promise to protect the teachers but he was still a heathen and a bad man. His coveting of a man's wife led to the next incident.

Discouragements

Wumra had early shown his interest in the worship. He was married to a young wife Singonga. Yata wanted her. Wumra feared for his life. In 1845 he asked the LMS missionaries to take him and his wife to Samoa for Christian training. When Wumra returned in 1848 he dared not risk going back to Ipeke. Instead he stayed with the Geddies at Anelgauhat. Wumra and his wife proved great helpers to the infant mission. It was from Wumra that Mr. Geddie got some of the most important words for his translations, including the words for sin and soul.

When the "John Williams" called again in 1846 things looked very bad. The Tanna mission had again collapsed and the survivors had taken refuge on Aneityum. The words of the Tannese stirred up the superstitions of the Aneityumese against the Christians. Some of the LMS teachers on Aneityum took ill and some of their wives and children died. The heathen claimed that their own *natmasses* or spirits of the dead, of whom they were in constant fear, were angry and were fighting against the Christians' God who had no power to help the teachers.

Pita and Simeona stay on

In 1846 the danger was so great that all the teachers asked to be allowed to leave Aneityum and return to Samoa. The missionaries spoke quietly to encourage them. Just as the "John Williams" was about to sail two of the teachers, Pita and Simeona, offered to remain. From these two faithful and brave men the Aneityumese church sprang. Two teachers had been placed on the south side at Anelgauhat it 1845, thus opening up a second station. It was here that the two LMS teachers Pita and Simeona made their new beginnings in 1846.

The LMS missionaries invited the local chief and some of his people to come on board the "John Williams." A meeting was then held to decide the future of Christianity on Aneityum. Petero, Simeona and Upokumanu, teachers from Samoa and Rarotonga, acted as interpreters. Should the Christian teachers remain or must they leave? The teachers were willing to risk their lives if the chiefs would pledge protection.

The final decision of the local chief was: "Let the teachers remain; I will do my best to protect their lives so long as they dwell in *my* district; but if they rove abroad into other tribes they will be murdered." [William Gill, Gems from the Coral Islands p. 159].

The chief told the missionaries that they should take a lesson from the sandalwood ships and come back more often to encourage their workers. The "John Williams" returned two years later!

In spite of this long absence of the Mission ship the work prospered. A nearby tribe began to listen to the Good News. Some of the Anelgauhat people became Christians. The first burials in the ground took place at that time. Previously the bodies of the dead were cast into the sea. Only chiefs were buried in the ground. Thus the time was ripe for a permanent missionary when Geddie and his party reached Aneityum on 29 July 1848. This is the birthday of the New Hebrides Presbyterian Mission.

Tributes to the work of the LMS

Geddie was foremost in saying that the Aneityum mission was built upon the devoted work of the LMS teachers. He told the LMS missionaries, in 1852, when the island was turning to Christ, that

what they then saw was the fruit of the work of the native Christians, both Polynesians and Aneityumese. Richard Lovett, the historian of the LMS, justly claims:

> "Humanly speaking, but for the existence of the Samoan Mission, the support and advice rendered by the missionaries resident there, the visits of the the missionary ships of the London Society, and above all the courage and consecration of the native workers trained at Rarotonga and Samoa, the work accomplished by Messrs. Geddie and Inglis and their colleagues and successors in the group would have been much more difficult, even if at that period not impossible." [History of the LMS, R. Lovett I 406 407].

With Mr. and Mrs. Geddie came Mr. and Mrs. Archibald from Nova Scotia, and the Rev. Thomas Powell and his wife from the Samoa Mission. We shall return to the Aneityum mission later. It is right to say here that for the whole time of Geddie's service in the islands he looked upon the LMS missionaries as true brothers, wise counsellors and affectionate friends. He never forgot his debt to them for the way they welcomed him to Samoa in 1847. It scarcely occurred to him that they were two different missions. They worked as one in harmony, mutual trust, practical aid and common obedience.

Mr. Powell was glad to return to Samoa in 1849 after prolonged illness with malaria. The LMS ship and the LMS teachers gave splendid aid to the Aneityum Mission so long as this was needed. Nowhere in Geddie's journal is there a hint of rivalry, still less of difficulty between the two missions. The LMS missionaries, as the writings of Geddie and Inglis show, were men of unusual gifts, deep humanity, unswerving devotion to Christ and His Church, and unaffected love for the people of the Pacific.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

South Efate, the Memory of the Just

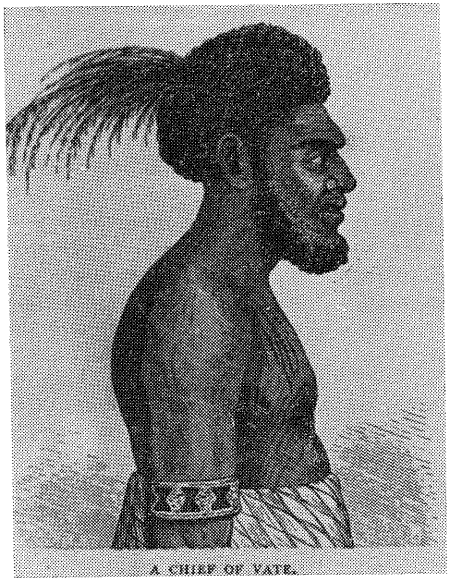
On 1 May 1845 the "John Williams" arrived at Efate from Eromanga with news of Sualo's request for teachers. She anchored near Pango in the lee of the land. Two Samoan teachers, helped by a Maori guide, sought out Sualo. Sualo came on board dressed as a heathen warrior. Pomare, the chief of Erakor, promised to receive and protect the Polynesian teachers. Four teachers were settled, Setefano and Mose at Erakor, and Taavili and Sipi at Pango.

Social conditions

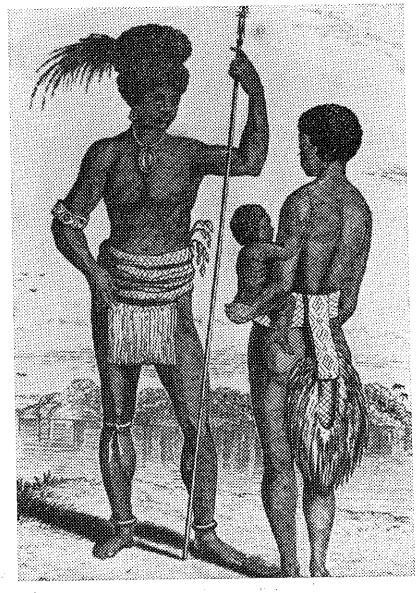
Those were dark days. Inter-tribal wars were going on much of the time. Cannibalism was part of the life of the people both in war and peace. The sick and the aged were buried alive in shallow graves. Their relatives and friends wailed and screamed to drown the groans and cries of the helpless victims. Women worked hard in the gardens and destroyed most of their children before or just after birth. Two or three children were all they wanted. For this or other reasons the large population was already falling steadily before the arrival of the first missionaries. One bush chief, whom Donald Morrison visited in the early 1860's was said to have one hundred and twenty wives. This chief murdered any man who showed the least interest in any of these women.

Efate had also earned a bad name among trading ships. Ships had been captured and crews butchered and eaten. The trading ships had often provoked these actions by their brutalities, robberies and treacheries.

Amid all the deaths and disasters to the mission teachers during the years 1845-1861 Erakor remained the centre of Christian light and witness. Pomare the chief never wavered in



A chief of Efate, 1840s.



An Efatese family, 1840s.

his faithfulness to his first promise. We shall follow first the story of South Efate, then the story of Mele and Fila, and finally that of West Efate around Havannah Harbour.

Pango and Erakor

When the "John Williams" made its second visit in October 1846 the LMS missionaries Gill and Nisbet were astonished at the signs of progress. Gill's eye-witness account mentions how the two nearer teachers came on aboard and sobbed with gratitude:

> "Praise be to God! Praise be to God for His great love!" [William Gill, Gems from the Coral Islands, p. 64].

Sualo had supported them. He was still a heathen but was keen to see Christianity established. Each teacher used his house as his schoolroom and church. The Lord's Day was observed by many as a day of rest and worship. Daily literacy classes were held for children and adults. More than a hundred people at Pango and at Erakor had put away their heathenism. Some from other villages attended worship. The teachers were trying to discourage the people from eating their victims of war and from burying alive the sick, the aged, and their new-born children.

A service was held on board the ship crowded with Efatese people. The chiefs and teachers sat close to the missionaries. The local people asked for more teachers. Four more were settled and were asked to travel about Efate and choose the most likely villages as new stations. A young married couple was placed on Mele. Almost two years passed before the "John Williams" was able to return in July 1848. This delay proved a setback to the work. During the interval three teachers and some members of their families died. A strong heathen reaction set in.

Eratap

Olatapu (Eratap) had been opened up from Erakor. Mose and Sepanaia were working well there. A Sydney whaler, the "Royal Sovereign," was wrecked on East Efate in May. The Olatapu people pretended to care for the large crew and then killed and ate them. The teachers tried to save the crew. For this and other reasons the village turned against the teachers. Here is the note which the only surviving European crew member handed to Mose in the hope, no doubt, that someone would repay him for saving a white man's life:

"This is to certify that Mose and his partner left Olatapu on the 16th of May; we had to run for our lives to get clear of them. J. Jones was the only one saved out of the crew; they killed them all. Mose, and I, were saved, and I beg of you to give him something. He is a good man. He ventured more than any man would think, and, after all had to run. I hope the Lord will pay him for his trouble with me."

John Jones.

[William Gill, Gems from the Coral Islands p. 80].

The Geddies, 1848

The 1848 visit of the "John Williams" was important for other reasons. The LMS now hoped to settle a missionary on Efate. Geddie and his party were on board for this purpose. Mrs. Geddie has recorded what happened:

"We were all very anxious to learn the state of affairs at this island, and we waited with a great deal of anxiety until we learned from the teachers how things were going on. Their account was far from favorable. . . . This affair (the massacre of the crew of the "Royal Sovereign") as well as several other things, led the brethren, after asking divine assistance, to come to the conclusion that a mission could not be commenced at the present time. We all deeply regretted leaving a place where there appeared to be such scope for missionary labor." [Letters of Charlotte Geddie and Charlotte Geddie Harrington, Truro, Nova Scotia, 1908 p. 19].

And so it came to pass that Aneityum in the far south was the gateway for the Presbyterian Mission in the New Hebrides, and not Efate in the centre of the group.

From bad to worse

Things went from bad to worse on South Efate. The ship returned in September 1849. The LMS missionaries on board learned that Pango was back to heathenism and fighting a bush tribe. The Pango heathen talked of capturing the "John Williams" and looting her.

All the teachers and their wives had been ill, including those on other parts of Efate. Three of them had died and three of their children. The remaining teachers were in such bad health that the ship resolved to remove them all. Only Erakor was left with the veteran teacher Mose, and a new teacher Vaaru. But even at Erakor only Pomare's family and a few stragglers remained loyal to the teachers. The Lord's Day was given up.

The root of all this reaction seems to have been much sickness among both pigs and people for which the heathen blamed the Christians. No classes and public worship were possible. All the teachers were under threats of murder. Their gardens and houses were destroyed. Their lives were saved by their taking refuge in the houses of the chiefs.

Before the "John Williams" sailed away the missionaries asked the friendly chiefs to come on board. The missionaries explained why they must take the sick teachers away and thanked the chiefs for protecting them. The chiefs received gifts in return for their kindness. The missionaries promised to try to bring more teachers to take the places of those who were being removed because of sickness.

Erakor, island of peace

By May 1852, when the "John Williams" called again at Efate, there had been a turn for the better. Mose and Vaaru were well. Erakor was an island of peace amidst warring tribes and violence. About one hundred people were at worship on sabbaths, the word then used for Sundays. Small groups of seekers came in from nearby villages on sabbaths. The teachers had some outstations. Best of all Pango had returned to the worship and as many as two hundred gathered in church. Even Olatapu had a Christian chief named Talipoa, who protected two boats' crews from being massacred by the murderers of the crew of the "Royal Sovereign." The teachers thought that the visits of the HMS Fly and HMS Havannah had helped to change the mood of the heathen. Both captains had acted wisely with the people.

By October 1853 the progress was continuing, in spite of threats to the lives of the Erakor teachers. Because of these threats they withdrew for two weeks to the Havannah Harbour station of the LMS. More than two hundred and fifty people were at worship on the sabbath at Erakor and the service was quiet and orderly. The Rev. A. W. Murray of the LMS was there to see for himself.

"Here is a congregation of two hundred and fifty already collected, who would receive a missionary with open arms . . . Their desire for a missionary is very great." [A. W. Murray, Missions in W. Polynesia p. 252].

Pomare and other Erakor men took part in the service. Erakor

was now outwardly Christian. But there would be no baptisms until 1861, by which time the good chief Pomare was dead.

Pango treachery

Pango was a different story. In March 1852, twenty-nine Moso people visited Pango for trade. The Pango people treacherously attacked them when they were off guard and killed twenty-two of the Moso people. Seven escaped by canoe. Twenty-one bodies were distributed among the heathen and eaten. Only one victim was buried. Olatapu was also in disorder. Would the Moso people avenge this crime? They too were listening to the Good News. Their destinies were closely bound up with those of the South Efate tribes.

Sualo leaves for Samoa

By 1854 all seemed lost. Of the LMS teachers on South Efate and Havannah Harbour only one survived and the widow of another. The LMS deputation on the "John Williams" decided to close the work on Efate and removed the two survivors. Even Sualo asked to be taken away, in spite of all his influence and help in the past to his own people. The little companies of Efatese Christians were left like lambs in the midst of wolves. If brave Sualo fled who would be able to stand?

The tide turns

Three years passed. In June 1857 the "John Williams" was back. The missionaries on board were surprised to find the Christians keeping up their worship, observing the sabbath, and longing for the return of teachers. This interval saw the turning of the tide. The three years without any outside influence had shown that the response to the Good News was more than skin deep. The people of South Efate had made up their minds to stand for Christ with or without help from others. The power of God had shown itself in a remarkable way. There was a church at last, and it sprang up from the blood of the Polynesian teachers.

Teachers from Aneityum

When the LMS missionaries called in July 1858 they had a new and important proposal to make. They believed that Aneityumese teachers would be better suited to the climate and should in future staff the Efate Mission. Geddie and Inglis replied

that they had no teachers to send at that time. But by 1860, when next the ship called, she had two Aneityumese teachers on board. Three Rarotongans and their wives had recommenced the work at Erakor in 1858. They were Teamaru, Teautoa and Toma. Teautoa died of fever and his wife died in childbirth. The remaining two Polynesian teachers wanted to leave the work to the Aneityumese. They agreed to stay on with them for one more year. The Aneityumese teachers who thus became the first Presbyterian teachers on Efate were Thevthev and Vathea with their wives. The date of this new beginning was 18 October 1860.

The visitor to Erakor and Pango will stand with respect and admiration before the simple monuments built by these villages to commemorate the coming of the first Polynesian teachers to South Efate. A cross surmounts the memorials and underneath are the words of Proverbs 10.7:

THE MEMORY OF (THE) JUST IS BLESSED.

The church is formed at Erakor

When next the "John Williams" called in 1861 Geddie was on board. He with the LMS missionaries, the Rarotongan teachers, the Aneityumese teachers, and fourteen South Efate converts took the Lord's Supper together for the first time on that island. The date was 13 September 1861. Thus the second island of the Group to have its Christian church was Efate. This church was the fruit of eleven missionary visits by the LMS ship, and the devoted labours, lives and deaths of more than twenty Polynesian teachers, teachers' wives and their little children. The seed sown in weakness was about to be raised in power.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

Mele and Fila Islands

TWO VIGOROUS TRIBES lived secure on their small islands in Vila Harbour. They had little intermarriage with the Efatese people and maintained their own Polynesian language, culture and vigour.

Even as early as 1870 visiting ships noticed that many of their men had been away in Fiji or Queensland and had guns in their houses, and that their women were shamelessly bold.

First teacher to Mele

When the "John Williams" called on her second visit to Efate in October 1846 among the many who requested teachers was the old chief of Mele named Ngos. The missionaries said that they had no teachers to spare beyond the four who had already been promised. The chief was very sorry about this. So was a young Rarotongan deacon on board, named Tairi. He was about twenty-four years of age. He had been listening to the conversation between his missionary and the Mele chief. He went to his missionary the Rev. William Gill and said,

"My wife and I spent last night in prayer for these people. Will you please consent to our going as teachers with this old chief?"

Tairi was the son of a cannibal warrior of Rarotonga. His father had been among the first to become Christians on that island. Tairi had become a Christian at the age of about eighteen and had later trained as a teacher and served on the island of Mangaia. Tairi returned home, gave up his land and prepared for the work of a pastor. He and his young wife told Mr. Gill that they had said a final farewell to their families. To prove this Tairi's wife brought from her cabin a basket of tapa-cloth mallets.

"See, I have prepared this basket of mallets so that I may teach the women to make their own tapa-cloth clothing!"

The missionaries were surprised but still hesitated.

Tairi then said, "My father has already agreed to this. He said to me when I left Rarotonga, 'I, and your fathers before me, have done much service for Satan . . . Go, my son, I give you up. Go, and may you be a good warrior in the service of Jesus Christ.' "

Gill and Nisbet felt that they could no longer withhold their consent.

Death of Tairi and his wife

Tairi and his wife were taken to the little island of Mele. A strange thing happened on the beach when they arrived. The son of the chief Ngos took the hands of Tairi and his wife and pretended to eat them. He was only joking, and he reassured them saying, *"Yu no frait! Mifala no save kakai yu!"* (Don't be frightened! We're not going to eat you!)

The work on Mele island began well. Soon a company of Mele people gathered daily for teaching, and every sabbath for worship. Then Tairi caught malaria. In May 1847 he died, leaving a widow who was waiting for the birth of their first child. Tairi had been on Mele seven months. Before Tairi's wife could join another station where Polynesian teachers would take care of her, the people of Mele said she must be given to the chief as one of his wives. She continued to refuse. They came to take her by force. She ran to the sea and was drowned in the narrow strait between Mele island and the mainland. [See William Gill, Gems from the Coral Islands p. 69-76 for facts of Tairi and his wife].

We know little about the threats, injuries and sufferings of the wives of the Polynesian teachers. After a long period of malaria a woman was often too weak to give birth to her child. This was a frequent cause of death among the heroic Polynesian wives.

A Mele war-party

A reaction against the Good News seems to have followed this tragedy. The Mele people decided to kill the Polynesian teachers at Havannah Harbour and stop the spread of their message.

Thirty Mele warriors arrived at the teachers' house and were joined by some local heathen. They watched day and night for a chance to kill the teachers. All this time the teachers were friendly and continued to feed the Mele men. Then the warriors

came and slept in the teachers' house with their axes ready for use.

The next evening at the time of family prayer these warriors, each with his axe ready, sat down beside the teachers. One of the warriors, with his axe over his shoulder, sat behind the teacher who was leading the worship. The teacher guessed his purpose and quietly removed the man's axe. The warrior quickly grabbed it again.

The teachers were thoroughly alarmed. They overheard what the heathen were saying in the Mele language. The Polynesian teacher said to his friends, "Keep your eyes open during prayer!"

As worship went on the heathen suddenly raised their axes to kill the teachers. But they were unable to strike. Their hands trembled and their courage failed. This happened not once, but several times. The teacher suddenly stopped in the midst of worship and ordered the men out of his house. At first they refused to leave. The teachers rose to show their authority. Suddenly the thirty warriors bolted out of the door to their canoes. They escaped that night and were seen no more. God had restrained them from their murderous plan.

A Fila war-party

When the thirty warriors returned to Mele they were unable to explain their failure. The Fila islanders heard what had happened and laughed at them. The Fila warriors then fitted out a war-party of sixty strong men in six canoes. They set out for Havannah Harbour sure of success, twirling their paddles and waving their weapons in great excitement. About two-thirds of the distance had been covered when a storm arose at sea and drove the canoes on a rocky headland near the entrance to the harbour. The Fila warriors barely escaped with their lives.

The Polynesian teachers learned what had happened and declared, "God alone saved us." The Mele and Fila people, and all the tribes on Efate who heard about these events, recognised that they were proof of the power of the Christians' God.

Almost thirty years would pass before the Good News would be welcomed by the people of Fila island. Not for forty years would Mele be opened to the worship.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

The Empty Houses at Havannah Harbour

IN 1850 THE Rev. John Inglis travelled through the New Hebrides on HMS "Havannah." As this ship of war lay in the lovely harbour which now bears the ship's name, Inglis noticed the empty white-washed houses at Samoa Point and the rotting canoes of the Polynesian teachers on the beach. The teachers had died of malaria.The story of the LMS mission to West Efate is one of almost total tragedy, but of heroic and quiet loyalty to Christ, in life and in death.

When the "John Williams" placed four new teachers on Efate, at Erakor, in October 1846, they were instructed by the missionaries, Gill and Nisbet, to explore the whole of Efate and find the best places for new stations. They seem to have settled on Havannah Harbour as the ideal centre for extension of the Good News. They formed two stations which were, I judge, at Samoa Point and at Moso.

The re-arrangement of teachers brought Sipi, one of the first four teachers of 1845, and another teacher into the team at Havannah Harbour. Sipi's friend died, probably of malaria, and Sipi was very ill with the same disease. He was weak from his illness and all alone when some of the villagers came and killed him with heavy blows. They later told the LMS missionaries that this was their local custom where a sick person became delirious.

Mrs. Geddie says that in 1848, when the ship again called, they found that five of the nine teachers had died of fever. Three more teachers were left on West Efate "where the people received the teachers with apparent pleasure."

Tongalulu goes to Samoa

When the "John Williams" returned in September 1849 the disasters at South and West Efate compelled the Mission to

withdraw all remaining workers, leaving only one station open, at Erakor. This decision closed Havannah Harbour. But fortunately a chief, Tongalulu, of Havannah Harbour, with another man, asked to be taken to Samoa for training. This was done. They were brought back in the "John Williams" in 1852. The wind-makers among the heathen claimed that they had prevented the ship from ever coming back. The people of Tongalulu's village had already held his burial feast. There was great excitement when he stepped ashore, and the ship and Mission were welcomed back to Sema.

The people asked for teachers to come again and offered two more of their young men for training in Samoa by the LMS. Then followed the massacre of the Moso people at Pango. This may have had something to do with the later massacre of teachers on Lelepa. In the meantime, however, the Christian worshippers had grown in numbers and strength in the villages around Havannah Harbour. The nearby heathen were less fierce. A church had been built. Regular services were well attended. Some of the people were holding family worship in their homes. The teachers had pushed out into heathen tribes in the mountains and were always listened to and well received there.

The martyrs of Lelepa Island

In October 1853 the LMS ship returned to open up the Harbour with fresh Polynesian teachers. Out of all the possible places they chose the small island of Lelepa as the most promising station. This was done partly because Lelepa appeared to be more healthy than the mainland where the earlier teachers had died of fever. The LMS had received invitations from two of the Lelepa chiefs, one of whom was Marifatu. Amidst great excitement two teachers and their wives and the son of one of the couples were landed. The Rev. A. W. Murray of the LMS was an eye-witness.

> "When we took the teachers on shore, the joy of the people seemed to know no bounds. Men, women and children crowded around us. . . . We never saw teachers . . . meet with such an enthusiastic reception." [A. W. Murray, Miss. in W. Polynesia p. 254, 255].

The LMS missionaries hoped that these two new teachers would be able to care for the growing work at Samoa Point and Sema, and supervise the many new opportunities which were arising in West Efate.

A young man from this village was brought back on this trip after training in Samoa. This was felt to be a hopeful sign. Geddie was present on this occasion and wrote freely of the welcome given to the LMS teachers. Nineteen days later the teachers and their wives were murdered and eaten. The little boy was saved because the people wanted to keep him. He kept crying for his parents. So the villagers tied a stone to his neck and dropped him into the sea. The martyred teachers' names were Kavavili and Pikika. The LMS missionaries heard this tragic news when they returned in October 1854. No one could find any clear explanation for the change in the hearts of the people of Lelepa.

Very soon after the murder of the teachers a sickness broke out on Lelepa Island and took about one hundred and fifty of the population of one thousand. The disease spread to the mainland and struck down great numbers of people. When Peter Milne came to Nguna in 1870 the West Efate heathen were still talking about this sickness as a judgement upon the people who killed and ate the teachers, the servants of the living God.

The Polynesian teachers were always ready to face death. But it was malaria which destroyed the Havannah Harbour stations of the LMS. In later years the teachers were supplied with quinine. Mr. Milne found the later LMS teachers unable or unwilling to look after their health. He was not the kind of man to complain, but he records that they were a great burden to him and to Mrs. Milne. [Peter Milne of Nguna p. 119].

As one walks today along the soft white sand of Samoa Point — so named for the early Polynesian teachers — and looks across to the progressive Lelepa community at the entrance to the Harbour one joins hands with these devoted men and women who left their homes never to return. Their dust lies in the islands as the memorial of their faithful labours.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

The LMS on Epi and Santo

THE ANEITYUM CHURCH sent out its first missionary teachers in 1853. From 1853 to 1860 it grew in vision and obedience and sent teachers to all the southern islands. In 1860 two couples joined forces with the Rarotongans at South Efate. They saw the Efate church take visible shape in 1861.

The LMS work in New Caledonia was facing opposition from the French authorities. The leaders of the Samoa and Loyalty Islands missions of the LMS turned their thoughts to further expansion in the islands of the New Hebrides, north of Efate. Geddie shared this vision. Together they planned a voyage of outreach in the "John Williams." Geddie's companion was the veteran LMS missionary A. W. Murray. They were like brothers.

Team-work in South Efate

Before leaving Efate the missionaries divided the four teachers into two teams of two each. One Rarotongan and one Aneityumese were settled at each centre, Erakor and Pango. Erakor was strong and almost wholly Christian. Pango was heathen, except for four men and two women who had kept up their worship in the face of the chiefs and threats of violence. The chiefs now agreed to the two teachers recommencing the work in Pango. At Erakor were placed Toma of Rarotonga and Vether (Vathea) of Aneityum. Tokarua of Rarotonga and Thevthev of Aneityum went to Pango. This was a wise and far-sighted plan of work.

The missionaries saw that the time had come for a permanent mission station with a European missionary. The people were ready for the translation of the Scriptures, for training as teachers, and for outreach to the bush villages of Efate. In 1864 the first missionary couple, Donald and Mrs. Morrison of Canada arrived among them.

The Mission to Epi

On Efate Messrs. Geddie and Murray met an Epi man who

wanted a passage back to his island. He was willing to guide the missionaries to his own tribal area. His name was Atau and he was accompanied by his wife. The "John Williams" anchored off Epi at a place which Atau knew and near a village called Puluvale. My friend Samuel Aute tells me that this village was close to Votelo, South Epi.

Two Epi chiefs, Malanga and Faariu, gave the visitors a good welcome. The chiefs were willing to receive and protect teachers. That night the teachers slept ashore and felt quite safe. They said that they were happy to remain on Epi. Hundreds of Epi people, without weapons and under the orderly control of the chiefs, carried the boxes of the teachers inland to their village. The teachers' names were Iro and Pipi. Both were married men and both came from Rarotonga. Before the missionaries parted from the teachers a hymn was sung in Rarotongan:

"Our home is in heaven; our home is not here."

Then prayer was offered in Samoan. They parted never to meet again, dying on Epi probably of malaria.

Ambrym

The "John Williams" coasted along the south side of Ambrym seeking contact with the people. Two Ambrym men came on board and agreed to go with the missionaries and become friends of men who would later go to Ambrym as teachers. The New Hebrides Mission had the vision of the Loyalty Islands churches sending teachers to Ambrym. But little came of this plan.

Malekula

Then the ship sailed slowly up the coast of Malekula and met great numbers of canoes. Friendly people urged the missionaries to go ashore with them. The missionaries wanted some Malekula men to come on board, as the two Ambrym men had done. None would do so. So the "John Williams" sailed for S. W. Santo and anchored in the great bay beyond Cape Lisburn.

The Mission to Santo

That night two couples from Rarotonga and one couple from Erakor slept ashore. They were the first Christian teachers to begin to evangelize Santo. The Rarotongans were Lameka and Vaitali. The Erakor teacher was Taniela. The Rev. A. W. Murray

walked about four miles inland and was astonished to see the large, orderly "town" called Popoa. Its fine thatched houses had roofs which sloped right down to the ground, as the Santo bush houses do to this day.

Traders had given Santo a bad name for sickness. The teachers were supplied with quinine. The local chiefs, Naroi, Lepas and Meli, promised their protection and support to the teachers. This important day, 23 September 1861, is the date of the coming of the Good News to the Southern Land of the Holy Spirit, as Quiros had called the island in 1606.

Within one year death had sealed in silence this bold venture of faith. A minute of the New Hebrides mission conference of 10 October 1862 reads:

> "That this meeting feels under a deep obligation to Captain Burns and those in his employ for the removal of the survivors of the Santo Mission."

Which of the six pioneer men and women died we do not know. Their names are not recorded. But Santo was not forgotten. In 1870 another attempt was made at the same place, under the Rev. John Goodwill of Canada.

Partners in Mission

The Presbyterian Mission and the LMS agreed, in October 1862, to share the responsibility for the evangelization of the New Hebrides. The Presbyterian Mission would supply teachers for the islands from Aneityum to Efate. The LMS would supply teachers for the islands north of Efate. The LMS teachers were to come from the Loyalty Islands Mission.

Difficulties seem to have arisen in making good this plan. In 1863 the Presbyterian Mission conference asked the LMS for as many as twelve Polynesian teachers, preferring younger men. They hoped to place them on "the smaller islands of the Group, or on any large island that may be occupied by a missionary." Both Milne and Goodwill had the help of such men in 1871.

Eyes of LMS now on New Guinea

Meanwhile the eyes of the LMS were turned to further fields. In 1864 the thoughts of the Loyalty Islands missionaries were laid before the Presbyterian brethren in the New Hebrides for their

opinion and guidance. This is how the New Hebrides Mission replied to the LMS:

> "We think it would be extremely advisable to open up a mission to New Guinea beginning in Torres Straits . . . But we think the Loyalty Islands far too distant to be the basis of operations for carrying on such a mission . . . We think also that the mere fact of the Samoan and Rarotongan teachers being shut out from the Loyalty Islands is not a sufficient ground for leaving the New Hebrides group and opening a new mission at such a distance. We are satisfied that . . . all the younger teachers may soon be advantageously and safely settled on the New Hebrides. This is a large and important group, a great amount of preparatory work has been accomplished and the prospects of the mission are on the whole highly encouraging at present, more so than they have been for many years . . . Therefore, the more speedily and energetically that efforts can be brought to bear on this group the more will the interests of the mission be promoted." [New Heb. miss conf. Minute of 23 Nov. 1864].

In 1864 the first large Presbyterian Mission ship, the "Dayspring," arrived in the group to the delight and relief of all the mission staff. They knew that at last they had the means of regular supervision of lonely teachers and isolated stations. But tragedy had struck the LMS. The faithful "John Williams" was a total wreck on Niue Island. Her graceful lines would be seen no more, though her flag would soon fly on a second ship of the same name.

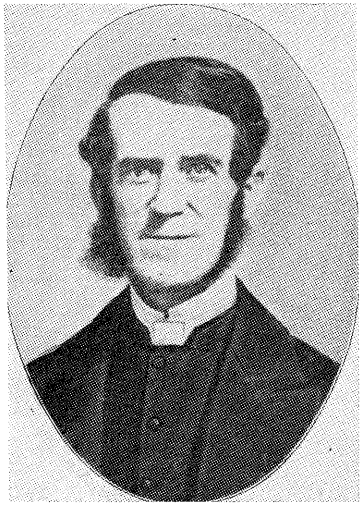
Last of the LMS teachers

The loyal and unwearied help of the LMS teachers in the evangelization of the New Hebrides was soon to close. The last LMS couple to leave the group seem to have been Ta and Wai of Rarotonga who came to Mr. Milne in 1871 and opened up Mataso to the Gospel. They returned home early in 1883 after influencing the whole of the Namakuran area, especially Mataso, Makura and the Makuran side of Emae.

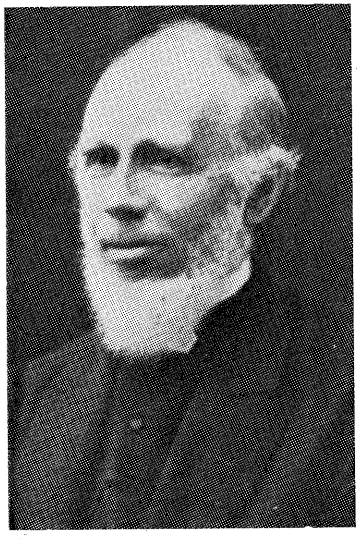
Our story now turns back to Aneityum and to the coming there of the first Presbyterian missionary, John Geddie.

PART THREE

John Geddie and the Presbyterian Mission



Rev. John Geddie D.D. and Mrs. Charlotte Geddie of Nova Scotia, Canada, who arrived at Aneityum 29 July 1848.



Rev. John Inglis D.D. and Mrs. Jessie Inglis of Scotland who served on Aneityum from 1852-1877.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

John Geddie, the Man God Called

WE NOW TRACE the life and work of the pioneer Presbyterian missionary, John Geddie, whose early years overlap with the story of the Polynesian teachers and the LMS.

With this new beginning comes the unfolding of the miracle on the "dark island" of Aneityum. Geddie saw Aneityum changed into a Christian island, its life renewed by the Good News. Aneityum was soon to share in the winning to Christ of other islands in the New Hebrides.

His boyhood

John Geddie was born in Banff, Scotland on 10 April 1815 and died at Geelong, Australia on 14 December 1872 at the age of fifty-seven. His father, also named John Geddie, and his mother, Mary Menzies, were mature Christians who lived in the midst of spiritual awakening in Scotland.

John was the only son in a family of four children. At his birth his life hung in the balance. His parents believed that John's recovery was an answer to their prayers. They secretly pledged their son to the Lord's service in missionary work.

The Geddie family migrated to Nova Scotia — New Scotland — on the cold east coast of Canada. Many Scots were settling there and were taking with them their Presbyterian worship and some evangelistic concern.

John grew up in the Presbyterian Church of Pictou where his father became an elder. In this church Pastor Titus Path of the New Hebrides and I saw the memorial tablet to Dr. John Geddie, and also a fine old 'grandfather' clock built by his father. Both were clock-makers. Pastor Titus Path visited Nova Scotia in 1966, the first New Hebrides church leader to go in person to thank that mother Church.

His preparation

At the age of nineteen John made his profession of faith in Christ, and was admitted to the fellowship of the church. He received his education at Pictou Academy and took his theological course under Dr. Thomas McCulloch, then the only professor of the Church of Nova Scotia. Illness worried Geddie at that time. Upon his recovery he dedicated his life to the Lord's service among the heathen. From then onwards he lived single-heartedly for that end. He was licensed to preach by the Presbytery of Pictou at the age of twenty-two.

There was no opening at that time for missionary service under the Presbyterian Church of Nova Scotia. Geddie accepted a call to a parish on nearby Prince Edward Island. There he was ordained and inducted on 13 March 1838. Seven years of rich and varied experience followed. Geddie was able to rouse the whole Synod to a sense of responsibility for foreign missions.

His marriage

His bride, Charlotte McDonald, was only seventeen when they married on 21 September 1839. She was then "very young and very beautiful" according to the verdict of her eldest daughter. Her father was a physician, Dr. Alexander McDonald of Antigonish, who was able to give Geddie good experience in medical treatment. This proved valuable later on.

The Geddies had eight children. Two daughters married New Hebrides missionaries. Lucy (Lucretia) married Thomas Neilson of Port Resolution, Tanna. Elizabeth married Daniel Macdonald of Havannah Harbour, Efate. In spite of long separations for schooling the family were closely knit and true partners in their parents' missionary task. Mrs. Geddie lived to the age of ninety-four and died in Melbourne in 1916, loved and honoured by all who knew her, and remembered as the mother of the Mission.

Influence of the LMS

John Geddie's missionary vision and preparation were helped by the magazines which reached his father's home, especially those of the LMS. These told of the rapid spread of Christianity through the islands of Polynesia. His heart became set on service in the South Seas. Williams' death in 1839 hastened missionary efforts in the South Pacific and in the New Hebrides. We have seen how

in 1841 the Rev. A. W. Murray first visited Aneityum in the "Camden" and left Polynesian teachers as pioneer evangelists. In far-off Nova Scotia Geddie read Murray's account of that visit and found the name "Aneityum" written on his own heart and prayers.

Minister and missionary candidate

The churches of Nova Scotia were small and poor and not inclined to see any hope of outreach in foreign missions. Geddie as a young minister, set himself to quicken his church to a sense of its missionary duty. In 1840 he was able to get Bible and missionary societies formed in the congregations of his Presbytery. They sent their first offerings to the LMS in London.

In 1843 Geddie published in the Church's magazine a series of well-planned letters dealing with the claims of foreign missions on the home churches. In 1844 the Synod set up a Foreign Missions Committee and the next year set about seeking a suitable field. The committee selected Western Polynesia, now called Melanesia. They left the choice of the particular island or area to the first missionaries, in consultation with the Samoa Mission of the LMS.

At first no one applied for service, so Geddie offered and was accepted. There was an outcry that he was not suitable. Some said he was too small and weak for such a demanding work, and that heathen people would not listen to him. Geddie went on quietly preparing himself, speaking in the churches of the Synod, and disarming criticism. His letters written at that time of testing prove the quality of this man of sincerity and steel. John Geddie was already skilled with his hands. He learned the printing trade, building and plastering, and elementary medicine. Nothing of this preparation was lost.

From Canada to the New Hebrides

On a cold day, 30 November 1846, the party sailed from Halifax. No other ordained missionary was available as Geddie's co-worker, so the committee appointed a catechist, Mr. Isaac Archibald, and his wife, as colleagues.

The long journey round Cape Horn on a small whaling ship took them to Hawaii. Later they reached Samoa where they spent seven months among the kind and practical missionaries of the

LMS. Geddie learned the Samoan language and closely watched the work of the Samoan Mission. The bond with Samoa remained to the end of Geddie's life.

The LMS missionaries were accepted as full members of the New Hebrides Mission, at least until 1866. Geddie kept this bond unbroken through all the twenty-four years of his service. He showed himself a man of strong and faithful friendships, of mature constancy and love. The New Hebrides Presbyterian Mission kept its Jubilee in 1889 dating the first fifty years from 1839, the year of the commencement of the New Hebrides Mission by John Williams.

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

John Geddie and the Island God Chose

The island of Aneityum

ANEITYUM IS THE southern-most of the eighty islands of the New Hebrides. It is a typical tropical island of the South Seas, with its fringing reef, sweeping mountains, protected harbour and lush vegetation. The island is about thirty-five miles in circumference.

The presence of malaria, the periodic hurricanes which devastated gardens and villages, and the savage ways of heathenism all told another story. Among European influences were the whalers and sandalwood traders whose code of conduct was often worse than that of the heathen.

The first missionaries found many more men than women — a ratio of about one hundred males to sixty-five females. This was due to the practice of strangling wives upon the death of their husbands, or destroying babies, especially baby girls, and of eating children as food. Wars were frequent. The victors devoured the bodies of the victims. The result was insecurity of life, bondage to the spirit world of witchcraft and "poison," coarse depravity and universal distrust. The sacred men held the power of life and death. Most of these were chiefs.

The Mission to Aneityum

The LMS and Geddie thought New Caledonia was a likely place for the Presbyterian Mission. The deputation on the "John Williams" decided to look at other places first. They remained for a day at Aneityum and then went north to look at the much larger island of Efate. Chapter thirteen has told how conditions were there and why the deputation felt unable to land the Geddies at Erakor. When the ship turned south her course was set for New Caledonia but foul winds forced them to Aneityum. They all

came to regard this circumstance as providential. When the "John Williams" anchored at Anelgauhat Harbour on 29 July 1848 all on board believed that they had come to the right place and that God had made the choice for them. This date is the birthday of the Presbyterian Mission — the first to the heathen from any of the British colonial churches of the Presbyterian order.

The mild climate, the splendid harbour, the single language and the nearness of the Loyalty Islands and Sydney all proved important factors in favour of the mission to this island. Today Aneityum is rather out of the stream of New Hebrides life. In 1848 is was about to become the centre of a great new revolution in these islands.

The Geddies' fellow-workers

The LMS in Samoa sent the Rev. Thomas Powell and family to assist the Aneityum Mission, but Mr. Powell suffered greatly from malaria and was glad to return to Samoa in 1849.

Mr. Isaac Archibald, the teacher-catechist, was placed on the north side of the island where the first Polynesian teachers had settled in 1841. He proved a failure. This was one of the heaviest burdens the Geddies had to bear.

Archibald joined the opponents of the Mission at the sandal-wood station, where he found work. The failure of Mr. Archibald gave great delight to the enemies of the Gospel. He and his wife finally left Aneityum in 1851 and went to Australia to teach.

Traders and whalers

Since about the year 1840 the people of Aneityum had come to know European ships and their crews. Anelgauhat was a safe harbour. Ships called there for fresh water, firewood and food, and made the harbour their base for trading operations on other islands of the group. Their grabbing of land, women, food and anything that took their fancy, made the people of Aneityum distrust and dislike the traders. The Europeans had firearms and could force their demands upon the people. The trading base of Captains Paddon and Underwood proved a thorn in the side of the Mission. The Mission also proved a thorn in the side of the trading establishment. Right from the start Geddie held a service on sabbath afternoons for any Europeans who cared to come to it. They came, in twos and threes.

The Geddies and Powells had their children with them. Their presence as families showed what Christian home-life was like. The Aneityumese had never seen European women and children. Their presence became a means of closer human friendships on Aneityum. This took away the fear of the people and created a relationship in which Mrs. Geddie was able to do good work among the women. There were no firearms in the Mission houses on Aneityum.

The short-lived Catholic Mission

A French Roman Catholic Mission had arrived at Anelgauhat Harbour three months before the Geddies. Their station was only a mile from the Presbyterian Mission. The priests and lay brothers built a strong two-storeyed iron building with cannon on top. This was both their mission house and chapel. They never went anywhere without firearms.

Geddie heard that the Frenchmen were suffering from malaria and paid them a visit. The priests showed their gratitude by giving Geddie a bouquet of flowers for his wife.

The Catholic Mission made no lasting contact with the people and the priests withdrew in 1852, victims of malaria and discouragement.

Geddie's feeling for the people

The Samoan teachers who had been on Aneityum for some time helped the missionaries to fit into their task, to learn the language and customs, and avoid cultural mistakes. *Tapus* clung to all sorts of places, peoples, seasons and things.

Together the teachers and missionaries used to visit the nearby villages. They "urged them to give up their superstitions and horrid customs, and receive the truth as it is in Jesus." [Misi Gete p. 33].

Geddie's party made a voyage round the island in their whale-boat. Most of the coastal chiefs were interested enough to ask for teachers to be sent to their villages.

In ignorance the missionaries broke some *tapus*. The people were angry and talked of burning down the mission houses. Geddie was very sorry about this mistake and apologised. He was able to quieten the people. "When they saw our disposition to yield to them . . . it had a softening influence on them . . . Natives may be drawn but they cannot be forced." [Misi Gete p.36].

Through all his later life Geddie showed this sensitive feeling for people. Even heathen people could understand him and respond to him.

In September 1848, one month after landing on Aneityum, the mission team broke up in order to open stations at different points on the island. Just before they parted they observed the Lord's Supper for the first time on Aneityum. Geddie preached in the Samoan language for the sake of the teachers who were present. His text was from 1 Corinthians 16:22. None of the Aneityumese took part at the Lord's Table.

The missionaries were working steadily at the Aneityumese language. Powell was able to preach in Aneityumese within four weeks of landing and Geddie within six weeks. The people were shy about giving away their language. They had to be bribed for words with ship's biscuits.

Two hurricanes in quick succession ushered in the year 1849. These ripped the sugar-cane thatch off the houses at the mission station. Three sailing ships were driven ashore. The heathen lurked about with their weapons, waiting to kill the crews. Paddon's men came to the rescue with guns; they saved the lives of the shipwrecked men and prevented the theft of the cargoes.

With the wet season came the mosquitoes and malaria. Geddie intervened in a tribal quarrel which could have brought war to the whole island. Not long afterwards, with great coolness and courage, he saved his boat's crew and himself from a plot to kill them at Ipeke.

Bishop G. A. Selwyn

The Rt. Rev. George Augustus Selwyn was feeling his way northwards from New Zealand on a missionary voyage of exploration. He called on Geddie in his little ketch the "Undine," the ship that gave Undine Bay, Efate, its name. After this visit in August 1849, Geddie wrote of Selwyn, "A very amiable and devoted man. I have seldom met with a man of more ardent missionary spirit." [Misi Gete p. 56]. They remained firm friends and loyal colleagues.

End of the first year

When the "John Williams" called back in September 1849, they "were pleased with our statement of progress," says Geddie.

With the ship went the Powells, leaving the Geddies alone. "Clouds thicken around us" he records in his journal. [Misi Gete p. 57].

Geddie refers in his journal to "persecution from our own countrymen. . . . Some of our enemies have urged the chiefs to drive us off the island and burn our houses." Geddie is sure that this hatred for the mission is due to "our efforts to arrest licentiousness, which, if unchecked, threatens the ruin of this poor people. The conduct of the traders here is too abominable to be described." [Misi Gete p. 59].

The year 1849 drew to a close with "much to discourage and also to encourage." [Misi Gete p. 59]. Geddie nearly lost his life in an attempt to stop the strangling of a widow but failed in his attempt. The tables were turned in January 1850 when, with the active help of the local chief Waihit, he prevented a strangling. He wrote in his journal:

"A most important event in the history of the island. The horrid system of strangulation has now received a check from which it will never recover." [Misi Gete p. 65]. The social life of the island was feeling the impact of the Good News.

CHAPTER NINETEEN

John Geddie and the Church God Built

WHEN BISHOP SELWYN called back in April 1850 Geddie accepted his invitation to take a change. Together they visited Tanna on the "Undine." Some Aneityumese heathen had been marooned there. Geddie was able to recover these men and rescue the remaining Polynesian teachers on Tanna. Two teachers had died and all had suffered badly from malaria. The Anelgauhat chief, Nohoat, was so excited to see his long-lost people brought back that he thanked the missionary. "The chiefs said I was to remain on this island, and leave it no more." [Misi Gete p. 69].

End of the second year

When Geddie came to review his first two years, in August 1850, he recorded that the attendance at church on the sabbath had risen from ten to forty-five. It was soon to reach eighty. The worshippers were mostly women and children.

In October he notes in his journal no "extensive movement in favour of christianity; . . . (they) come in one by one," mainly "women and young persons . . . very few of the men come to hear God's word." Mrs. Geddie was getting results from her work among the women and children. [Misi Gete p. 75].

As the response grew so did the opposition of the heathen. By February 1851 Geddie writes, "All manner of evil is spoken against myself as well as the native converts and many threats have been made against my life." [Misi Gete p. 81].

A month later he records, "Converts are . . . confined to the humble ranks, and the chiefs as a whole are opposed to us." [p. 82]. Kuku, the Rarotongan teacher, died of malaria. Geddie, in grief, wrote, "We are sowing in tears, . . . We are in the midst of enemies white and black." [p. 85, 87]. None of the first

converts had gone back under the threats and pressure of the heathen.

On 24 April 1851 Geddie wrote in his journal, "Our prospects brighten a little. The christian party are zealous in their efforts to do good among their countrymen. . . . I have had applications for baptism and could now comfortably dispense this ordinance to two or three persons." [Misi Gete p. 89].

End of the third year

When Selwyn again called in August 1851 he heartened Geddie with the words, "Go on as you have been doing, and by the blessing of God you will prosper!" [p. 95].

The loss of life among the LMS teachers convinced Geddie that he must train New Hebridean converts to take the Good News to their own people. He began by sending an Aneityum lad named Tupua to New Zealand with the Bishop, for schooling in Auckland. Geddie was quite sure, as were Selwyn and Patteson that "the Melanesian can be taught." [p. 96]. He believed that the Holy Spirit in the life of the new convert does something for the whole man, including his intellect.

As 1851 dragged on amid light and shadow Geddie began to notice that more and more chiefs and heathen priests were renouncing their heathen practices and coming for Christian teaching. This stung the heathen party to frantic opposition. They came together in a great display of power and laid plans to wipe out the mission and the converts at one blow. The local converts decided to defend themselves at the mission station. Geddie did not feel able to stop them in this, but refused to join them. He withdrew with his family to the house of Mr. Andrew Henry, a sympathetic trader. All prayed that God would intervene. The heathen could not agree among themselves as to the best method of attack, and melted away without a clash. This was the beginning of the end of heathenism on Aneityum.

When the Archibalds left for Sydney many heathen came openly to join the Christians. These included the important local chief Nohoat. By November only Paddon and Underwood remained to growl. The rest of the Europeans working on Aneityum had been lured to Australia by the discovery of gold. Inglis says that this gave the Gospel its chance. For the next twenty years no serious opposition was offered.

The long absence of the "John Williams," from 1849 to 1852, left the mission without enough food at a time when Geddie was frequently ill with fever. The sandalwood bosses forbade any of their ships to provision the mission. But a shipwrecked sailor hearing of this, sent Geddie some of his small ration of bread and biscuit when Geddie was near death.

Some heathen from a distant village came at night and tried to burn down the mission house. They were incited to this action by the bosses at the trading station. The effect of this action was to gain more sympathy for the mission.

End of the fourth year

In 1852, when the LMS ship returned, the deputation recorded that an amazing change had taken place since their last visit. In all the later history of the winning of the islands of the New Hebrides to Christianity it is doubtful if another case occurred of so swift, so united and so thorough a transformation of a whole society in so short a time.

Foundations for an indigenous church

Geddie had the New Testament pattern before him and the example of the LMS in Polynesia to encourage him. He set about building up the converts into the living organism of a self-governing church which would also be self-supporting and self-propagating.

Geddie believed that this goal required the missionaries to furnish the church as quickly as possible with the whole Bible in the language of Aneityum. Geddie toiled at his task with his later colleagues, Inglis and Copeland.

They added to the first primer of 1849 book after book of literacy aids, scripture portions, catechisms and hymnals, until finally the whole Bible was available in Aneityumese in 1879 after Geddie's death. The cost was met by the people themselves.

With Scottish caution and thoroughness Geddie made no hasty baptisms. It seems likely that the LMS teachers had seen true conversions among the Aneityumese before the arrival of the missionaries in July 1848. Almost four more years passed before Geddie felt convinced that the time had come to form a congregation of the Church on Aneityum. In 1850 he noted that there were converts waiting for baptism but added that delay was desirable.

This rule of unhurried admission to membership among converts became basic to the mission's policy. In some cases it may have been carried too far, as for example, on Futuna, where Joseph Copeland the first missionary never felt able to baptise a convert.

A year's catechetical instruction was later required by the Synod, to give converts a broad knowledge of the facts of the Gospel and time to show the pattern of a new life, which would commend the Good News and not betray it in the midst of heathenism.

Inglis was speaking for both Geddie and himself when he said, "Our first converts were always our best. They joined us from conviction. Intellectually and morally they were the best men; and they were the longest under instruction." [Inglis. Bible Illustr. p. 221, 222].

The first Christian congregation

The first congregation of the New Hebrides Church was formed at Anelgauhat Harbour, on the island of Aneityum, on 13 May 1852. This is how John Geddie describes that day:

> "An eventful day in the history of this island. A Christian Church has been formed. Some of the natives have long had a desire to profess their faith in Christ and obedience to his will; but I did not wish to act hastily in so important a matter and delayed until the "John Williams" should arrive when I could consult with the missionary brethren in her. She came a few days ago and the Rev. Messrs. Murray and Sunderland from Samoa were in her. I consulted these brethren about forming a Church and they strongly urged it. Thirteen natives were baptised, partook of the Lord's Supper and [were] formed into a Christian Church. This is the first Church that has been formed in Western Polynesia. It is the first dawn of brighter and happier days than have ever yet dawned on these benighted islands." [Misi Gete p. 123].

Murray and Sunderland of the London Missionary Society cruised regularly from Samoa to pioneer Melanesian missions. An LMS missionary says that these first thirteen church members were "well-known and long-tried natives," We do not know many of them by name. We know that seven of them were women and that two children of these converts were also baptized, though not admitted to the Lord's Supper.

The presence of seven women among the first members points to

the effectiveness of Mrs. Geddie's work, which many of our islands would follow. It also points to a very important social fact about the Church on Aneityum, which was not a mass movement dominated by chiefs, but a one-by-one entrance into the Kingdom of God, under the direct ministry of the Holy Spirit and by true conversion.

It is beautiful and moving to watch that first communion service at Anelgauhat. Breaking bread as one family in Christ were black and brown and white, women and men, older and younger, chiefs and those whom the island called small men. The barriers had gone.. These first converts were all one in Christ (Gal. 3.28).

Though this oneness may have been compromised or questioned since, in the New Hebrides Church it was fully recognized and effective in that first congregation in May 1852, the first Christian Church in the New Hebrides and in Melanesia.

CHAPTER TWENTY

Geddie, Inglis and the Work God Honoured

The arrival of Rev. John Inglis

SIX WEEKS AFTER the formation of the first congregation Bishop Selwyn arrived in his schooner the "Border Maid." With him were recruits for the Presbyterian Mission, the Rev. John Inglis and Mrs. Jessie Inglis of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Scotland. The small Church was about to play the main part in bringing the Presbyterian Churches of Scotland, Australia, and New Zealand into partnership with the New Hebrides Mission.

Inglis had spent some years among the Maoris of the Manawatu district of New Zealand, as a missionary of his Scottish Church. He asked to be transferred to the New Hebrides where he believed there was a needier field.

His time in New Zealand had given him the chance to see both Anglican (CMS) and Wesleyan Methodist Missions at work. Geddie had seen at close quarters both LMS and American Congregational Missions in the Polynesian Islands. These four missions were the Protestant pioneers in the Pacific. Both Geddie and Inglis felt that what they had been able to see of this wide variety of missionary work would benefit their own mission. Inglis adds, "We never slavishly copied any of their modes of working." [Inglis, In the New Hebrides p. 52].

Inglis came to Aneityum at the request of Geddie and just in time to relieve a difficult situation. Geddie had been dogged with fever and told Inglis that he could not have held on much longer. When Inglis came Geddie's spirits rose immediately and his fever left him as if by magic. During the years from 1852 to 1860 both the Geddies and Inglises kept good health. They set to work to develop the resources of the young Church on Aneityum.

On 24 October 1852 the Lord's Supper was first dispensed in Mr. Inglis' district at Aname. About four hundred worshippers were present, but only a few took communion. On 12 March 1854, at Aname, Mr. Inglis baptized nine persons. These, along with some others who had previously been baptized by Geddie, were formed into a church. In the afternoon they met for the Lord's Supper, witnessed by almost one thousand curious heathen and interested seekers.

Inglis records the complementary gifts which he and Geddie brought to the work: "In mechanical, medical and educational knowledge and experience both of us were, I believe, above the average of those commencing a new mission . . . Yet our views and principles in all the essentials of mission work were singularly alike . . . Hence . . . the work went smoothly on." [Inglis, In the New Hebrides p. 51, 52].

Inglis proved a splendid colleague. Both Mrs. Geddie and Mrs. Inglis were capable and wise partners with gifts and graces which complemented those of their husbands. The team worked well. Geddie cared for the south side, Inglis for the north of the island.

Education

They sensibly divided their duties. Geddie went on with translations, and with printing on a small press, which was later replaced by a better, with larger type.

Inglis developed Geddie's educational work. He began with village literacy classes and elementary education, and led on to a central vocational or industrial school for both young men and young women. Later on came a Teacher Training Institution, for Aneityum, and later for other islands evangelized from Aneityum in the wake of the LMS Polynesian teachers. Soon Geddie had to duplicate these teacher training facilities at Anelgauhat in order to keep up with the demand for teachers.

The Aneityumese became a literate people in an astonishingly short time. Graduated teaching aids were printed. Learning was induced by free award of further new text books. Community education was swift, general and complete.

Geddie and Inglis had a high view of the potential of each convert. They believed that traditional tasks and skills would be conserved, expanded, enriched, and elevated by Christian experience, in accordance with Bible teaching about the gifts which the Spirit of God grants to believers for the building up of Church and community. The missionaries knew that race, colour and culture make no difference to the reality of these Divine gifts and equipment. They set to work to develop these gifts through the structure of the indigenous church on Aneityum.

The first deacons

In 1856 the members of the church at Anelgauhat chose their first five deacons. Soon afterwards the members on Mr. Inglis' side of Aneityum did the same. Geddie and Inglis had the strength to keep their hands off the selection of these leaders. Geddie could happily add, "The selection . . . meets with my cordial approbation." [Misi Gete p. 212].

In addition to their normal tasks these deacons had to administer the property of widows who, in heathen days, would have been strangled. Under the old custom the deceased husband's property passed to his family. Now that these widows were left alive the deceased estates were looked after for the widows. The deacons became trustees.

The election of elders should normally have followed soon afterwards. Geddie and Inglis knew that the elder, in the Presbyterian system of church government, is the key to the tone of the church. They decided that they must first see that the congregations had enough of the Scriptures in their own language to enable them to form a right judgement on the duties of the office of elder and its place in the life of a young church. Again the missionaries refused to nominate their own elders. The choice must be by the Holy Spirit in fellowship with the Church of Aneityum.

The first case of discipline

An entry in Geddie's journal dated 4 April 1853 records the first case of discipline in the young church, "A meeting of the church members today. Terokia was suspended in the presence of all. She has fallen into sin. May God graciously lead her to repentance. This is the first case of discipline in our infant church." [Misi Gete p. 154].

Here we note that the missionary did not judge the case. No term of exclusion was imposed, as was often done in later years

in the Mission. Geddie knew that repentance alone can end the period of suspension. There was no legalism here, only tenderness and fidelity to the New Testament pattern.

The powers of the chiefs

The next step was remarkable. Geddie watched the social life closely under the impact of the Christian revolution. He was no destroyer, but lived and worked for the greatest good of the greatest number and saw the Gospel in all its breadth and depth. On Aneityum, in heathenism, rule was in the hands of hereditary chiefs. This rule went hand in hand with such powers as witchcraft, "poison," and constant slaughter. With the impact of the Gospel the chiefs lost much of their power. Witchcraft, "poison" and murder ceased. The position and authority of the chiefs were in danger of collapsing. Geddie saw that this would prove fatal to the social life of the island and to its biblical pattern of organization.

On 1 July 1854 a great gathering was held for the opening of the first large church at Anelgauhat. The chiefs were present as the recognized civil rulers of Aneityum. They were not put in office by the missionaries, but were the hereditary chiefs according to local custom. These chiefs now sat for the first time as a kind of local parliament to consider the moral and social good of the island.

Improved social conditions

A first law forbade any Aneityumese women to be sold to, or used by, foreigners. They had seen enough of this evil traffic at Paddon's establishment and in connection with the ships which made their calls at Aneityum. The law therefore aimed to suppress the slavery of women, to protect their self-respect, and to preserve home life on the island.

By 1853 the population was again increasing. War, infanticide, the destruction of life through strangling, "poison"-killing, private vengeance, pay-back and neglect were vanishing away. Conditions of peace soon brought better gardens, more food, stable home life and self-respect.

The place of the Bible, and of preaching

What was the chief means behind this reformation of a once

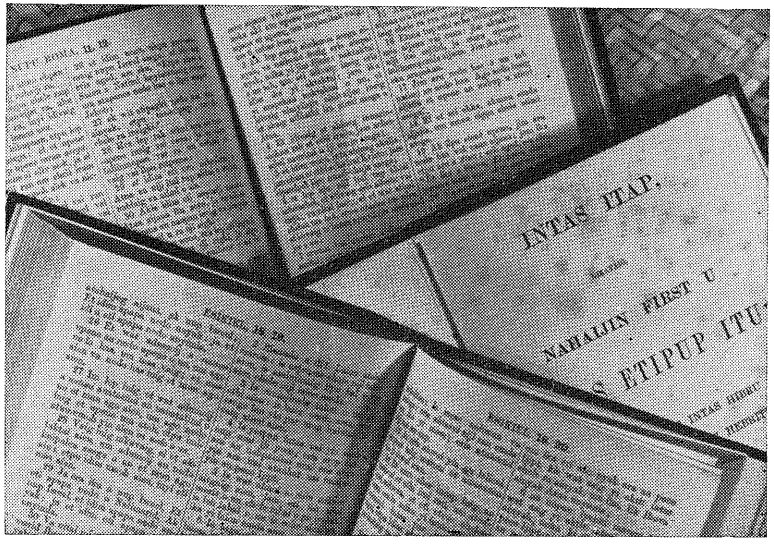
degraded island community? The answer is the Bible — translated, taught, read, preached, and practised.

Geddie spoke the language well, as did other missionaries of that era. His teaching, according to Inglis, was "plain, simple, clear, practical, earnest, and orthodox . . . We were wedded to the old Scotch theology and accepted, *ex animo* (from the heart) the teaching of the Westminster Standards. Whatever effects were produced, it was the matter, and not the manner of preaching, the Divine and not the human element in the service, that produced the result." [Inglis, In the New Hebrides p. 119].

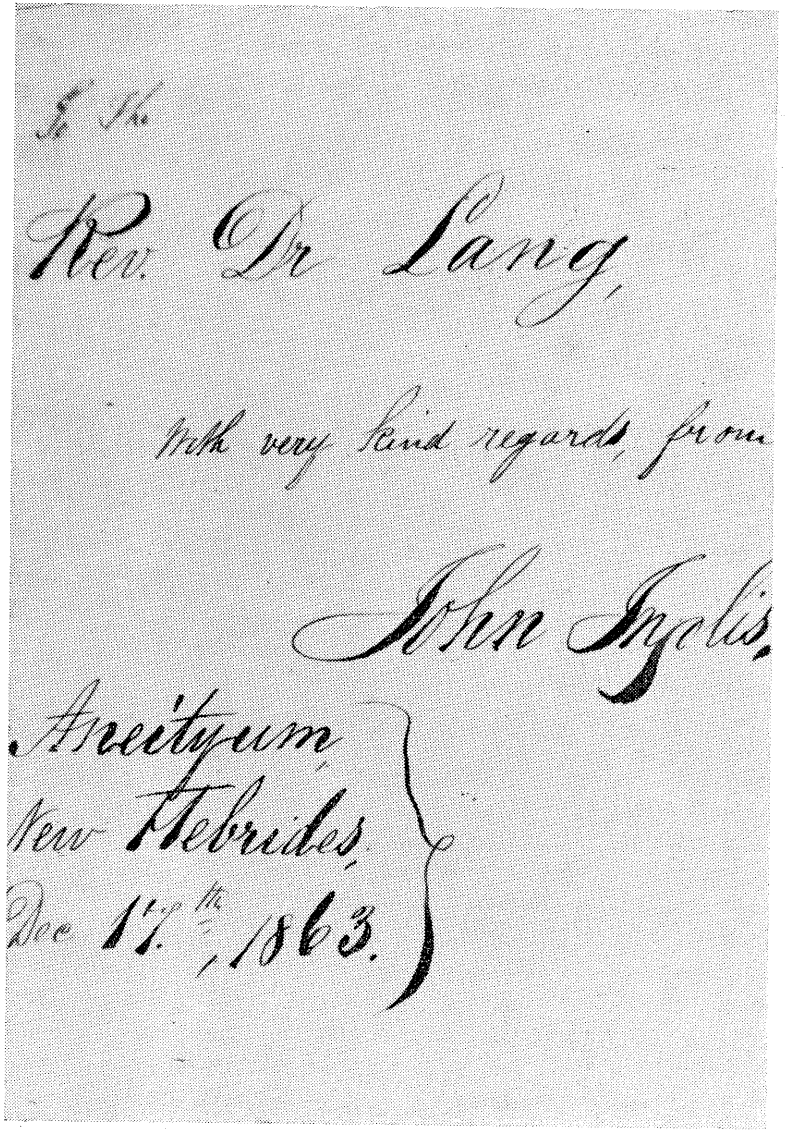
On 5 February 1854, Geddie wrote in his journal, "Meeting unusually large. To all appearances there is a growing attention to divine things. Endeavoured to preach Christ to my hearers." [Misi Gete p. 174]. There was a kindly wooing note in all his preaching which well suited his gentle, guileless and earnest nature.

Geddie gave prominence to the primary truths of the Gospel — sin and grace, the fall of man, the love of God, the atonement of Christ, the work of the Holy Spirit, the necessity of a new heart and a holy life. He showed Christianity to be not a code of restriction but a religion of privilege breathing nothing but blessings.

Geddie and Inglis made much of the Christian Sabbath, keeping



The 3 volumes in which the Aneityumese Bible was printed. NT (at back) 1863; Job to Malachi (at left) 1878; Genesis to Esther (at right) 1879.



The inscription in the copy of the Aneityumese N.T. presented by Rev. John Inglis to the Rev. Dr. John Dunmore Lang, of Scots Church, Sydney, first ordained Presbyterian minister in Australia (1823).

that time honoured word of the Scottish Churches, and never speaking of "Sunday". "I have no doubt", wrote Inglis, "that the steady and rapid progress of the Gospel on Aneityum was due, in no small degree, to the manner in which we emphasised the Scripture doctrine of the Sabbath, and established its observance." [Inglis. In the New Hebrides p. 73].

Healthy growth

By 1859 the population numbered 3513 and all professed Christianity. Those who were old enough were attending school. Almost all could read. The practices of heathenism had disappeared. The church was paying for its needs without the use of overseas funds from the home churches. The Aneityumese church could do this because of the system of voluntary teachers, the large production of arrowroot each year, and the community projects in the erection and upkeep of all church and school buildings.

The walls of Geddie's great stone church at Anelgauhat, built to seat twelve hundred people, are now in ruins, but they are magnificent. I once saw a bronze cannon on the island reef, reminder of the days of the sandalwood traders, now long gone. The sturdy walls of the church testify to the vigour of the first generation of Christians on Aneityum.

In 1859 the Aneityum Church numbered two hundred and ninety-seven communicant members and ten catechumens. There were fifty-six village schools, eleven area churches and sixty teachers and assistant teachers.

CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

John Geddie and the Vision God Gave

LIKE JOHN WILLIAMS, Geddie could never be content within the confines of a single reef. He saw two ways to reach the unevangelized islands of the New Hebrides; through missionaries, and through New Hebridean evangelists or "teachers" as they were then called.

Geddie never ceased to urge upon his home church in Nova Scotia the need for more missionaries; the response of that small church was amazingly good. Canada sent out thirteen ordained men, all married except James D. Gordon. Their labours extended from Aneityum in the south to Santo in the north. Some were martyred. Some died of fever, some of TB. Some lived to serve for more than forty years.

Geddie had learned from the New Testament the plan of evangelization through the consecrated spiritual gifts and zeal of the new converts. He had seen this plan in action in the LMS fields. He and Inglis set themselves to prepare such a "native agency," as it was called. They early established teacher training institutions following the pattern of Malua, Samoa. These were the forerunners of the Tangoa Training Institute, established in the New Hebrides in 1894, and opened in 1895. A Nova Scotian, Dr. Joseph Annand, was the first principal at Tangoa.

Evangelization of Aneityum

The year 1852 saw the beginning of the evangelization of the inland villages on Aneityum. Geddie says of them, "They are very wild and in a very degraded state." [Misi Gete p. 119].

On 16 February 1852 Nakoai was sent out to a village called Anniblidai. "He is our first Aneityum teacher, and we now regard the evangelisation of the inland merely as a question of time," wrote Geddie, "I hope to see the day when every village will have its own native teacher to teach them the wonderful

works of God in their own tongue." [Misi Gete p. 120]. Within a few years this vision was realized and fifty village schools covered the island.

Missionary vision of the first converts

The outreach from Aneityum was not purely the idea of the missionaries. The converts organized visits to their own heathen villages on Aneityum. When these villages were won they wanted to go to the nearby islands.

Geddie's journal for 30 October 1852 has an important passage on this subject:

> "Some of the natives are desirous to visit Tana. They applied to me for my boat to go there. Their object is to endeavour to introduce the gospel into that island. The voyage however is too hazardous to be undertaken in an open boat so I discouraged it. I told the natives that some of them should go to that island as teachers another day and urged them to study the word of God that they might be able to instruct others. This island will I trust in due time furnish many teachers for the dark islands around. It is delightful to see even now a missionary spirit in embryo, and by God's blessing its full development will be seen at no distant day." [Misi Gete p. 145].

Tannese heathen visit Aneityum

This eagerness of the Aneityum Christians had been stimulated by the visit of a canoe-load of south Tanna heathen in August of 1852. They came from Anuikaraka, the place where later the Mathesons settled, about twelve miles south of Port Resolution. Geddie records how the local chief Nohoat welcomed the canoe-load of heathen. He told them of the change which Christianity had brought to Aneityum.

These Tannese had not heard of Christianity and were astonished at what they were told about its truths and duties. They thought it must be a good religion to make people so happy. They said to the Aneityumese, "Be quick and learn the word of God, and come to our island and teach us!" [Misi Gete p. 139].

The head of the Tannese was an old chief named Yaresi whose mother was from Aneityum. Geddie advised him to take a tour of Aneityum and see what the Gospel had done. Most of the Tannese were afraid to do this but Yaresi went. Geddie told him there was no need for him to take any weapons. When Yaresi returned he went straight to Geddie's house. He burst into tears

and told Geddie that it was the first time he knew that any people could live without fighting. The Tannese begged that teachers should be sent to them.

When the Tannese left, Nohoat, the highest chief on Aneityum saw them off. Though he was still largely a heathen at heart, the Tanna men asked him to pray, and he did so. Then they asked him to pray again, saying that his prayer was too short. Nohoat gave them advice as they set out. If they met bad weather they need not throw offerings of food into the sea for the *natmasses*, but simply pray to God and He would take care of them.

The quality of the early Aneityumese teachers

The details of this missionary expansion from Aneityum will fill another chapter (ch. 22). We record here the kind of men who were chosen by the church for teaching on other islands. They had to be men from chiefly families. This gave them acceptance and protection among the heathen on other islands, and also added force to their words and witness. They must be married men, and preferably in middle age. The witness of their home would be closely watched, their family worship would be the first Christian church service that the heathen would see.

Inglis says that these men were active, diligent, reliable, courageous, consistent and workable. They were peaceable, well-behaved and industrious. They kept the sabbath, an early badge of the Christians.

For forty years or more Aneityum continued to supply teachers as evangelists to heathen islands. Aneityum also supplied practical men and women to assist new missionaries in their building and the running of their homes. The crew of six or eight men all the year round for the "Dayspring" was from Aneityum.

The teachers on Aneityum received no wages except an annual gift of clothing, but those on other islands were paid five pounds a year from the Native Teachers' Fund which John G. Paton established when visiting the home churches in 1863.

Fifty teachers were needed for the schools on Aneityum. Inglis says that there were usually between twenty and thirty Aneityumese couples absent as missionaries on other islands, an apostolic record for a small island church. The level of outreach was maintained until Dr. Inglis finally retired in 1877. [Inglis, Bible Ill. p. 219-233].

CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO

The Church Reaches Out From Aneityum

The island of Futuna

In January 1852 a Futuna man took refuge on Aneityum from a trading ship. The Futuna man pleaded with Mr. Geddie to protect him from some Eromangan refugees who said that they were going to kill him. The little Christian band at Anelgauhat took the scared Futuna heathen under their protection and looked after him. Geddie hoped that this might some day re-open the way for the Gospel into Futuna. By 1853 the missionary spirit of the young church was alight with zeal and purpose. They resolved to send two men to Futuna as the first of many Aneityumese missionaries to the heathen islands.

Waihit and Iosefa to Futuna

The 25 October 1853 is a day to be remembered in the Presbyterian Church of the New Hebrides. On that day the Aneityum Church sent off to Futuna Waihit of Anelgauhat and Iosefa of Aname. These two men were the Barnabas and Saul of Aneityum — the "Antioch" church of the New Hebrides.

The "John Williams" took them to Futuna. They were welcomed and settled at Imatangi and Iakana on the southwest side of the island, where there were then many people. The two men went to this task with the knowledge of the prayers and support of the church of Aneityum. Waihit was one of the first converts on Aneityum. He was a former chief and sacred man, feared for his power in heathenism. He was still respected for his office as a chief. Iosefa also came from a high family. This gave to both men a measure of protection on Futuna.

The Futuna people had a custom of offering human sacrifice in time of famine. They did this to please the spirits and secure

good crops. The chiefs used to meet and decide which man should be sacrificed. Waihit dared to stand against this evil custom. The heathen Futunese threatened him with death. Waihit had an answer "Oh, I am not afraid. They may kill my body, but they cannot touch my soul!"

The Aneityumese Church kept in touch with its missionary teachers. In November 1854 chiefs and people from all over the island met to send off the whale-boat, with the Samoan teacher Pita in charge. They went on a mission of inspection and encouragement to the teachers on Futuna and Tanna, and returned in two weeks' time with detailed and encouraging reports. Futuna seemed to be going ahead slowly. The teachers were safe and well. Tanna looked even more hopeful. The people at Port Resolution — in spite of all the earlier setbacks — were strong for the worship.

Iosefa's brother Filipa was sent to Futuna to replace Iosefa who was feared lost at sea. Iosefa turned up six months later after many adventures. Filipa was stationed first at Ipau and later at Upper Imounga. At this stage the teachers were rather poorly treated.

In July 1855 the Aneityum church sent out yet another mission of encouragement by whale-boat. Geddie's journal records what was happening on Futuna:

> "Futuna is divided into seven small districts under as many chiefs. Two of these chiefs have abandoned their heathen customs, others are favourable to christianity and two are strongly opposed to the word of God . . . The party [went?] round the whole island with the teachers and were pleased with what they saw . . . Waihit the teacher says . . . that the work of God on Futuna is much less difficult than it was on Aneityum." [Misi Gete p. 208].

Futuna men visit Aneityum

In 1856 the teachers tried a new way of winning the Futunese heathen. Waihit had a sick wife whom he took back to Aneityum. He also took ten Futunese men, all heathen, to see for themselves what God had done for the people of Aneityum. Geddie and Inglis saw the importance of this visit of the Futuna men and gave four days to the trip round Aneityum with them. The visitors were loaded with gifts and feasted with good food — a sign of goodwill which all the Futunese understood. A missionary rally was held before the men went home to Futuna. Piles of heathen

weapons were stacked up at the church to show that they were no longer needed on Aneityum.

The Futuna men said they could now see that their own heathen religion was no good. They said that they would give it up and try to get the others to give it up too. They returned to Futuna and quickly forgot these fair promises.

Meanwhile Geddie prepared and printed the first booklets in the Futuna language. These were meant to assist the Aneityumese teachers in their literacy work on Futuna. All heathen feared books and especially the Bible, the Word of the High God. Few of the Futunese were willing to learn to read.

Futuna asks for a missionary

The little mission ship "John Knox" now made it possible for the Aneityumese missionaries to keep in closer touch with the nearby islands. When Geddie made his next visit to Futuna the people demanded a missionary for their island. They promised that they would respect him, saying,
"Sipos mifala wont for kilim Misi, mifala save kilim planti taem finis!" "If we wanted to kill Misi, we could have killed him plenty of times!"

Yaufati and Talip to South Tanna

The island of Tanna was next supplied with two teachers, Yaufati from the south side of Aneityum and Talip from the north. These men were farewelled at a great missionary rally on 9 October 1854. They began work at the place from which the old chief Yaresi had come. This was where the Mathesons settled four years later in 1858, Anuikaraka (or Waikaraka). The work soon spread.

On December 13 1854 Geddie wrote, "The 'Juno' arrived from Tana . . . A number of Tannese came . . . to visit this island. One of them is the son of a chief at Port Resolution. His father sent him here to learn something about the new religion, and go back and teach him. It is encouraging to us to know that the influence of the mission on Aneiteum is being felt on other islands, and that the desire to know the truth increases." [Misi Gete p. 193, 194].

Abraham to Port Resolution

Geddie followed this up, Abraham, a chief, and perhaps

Geddie's most trusted teacher, went to commence the Aneityum mission to Port Resolution. He never faltered in the dark days of Paton's troubles and sorrows. Three mission families settled on Tanna in the years 1858 to 1860, the Patons, Mathesons and Johnstons.

In July 1855 the Aneityum boat in charge of Pita left Futuna for Tanna and made visits to Port Resolution and Anuikaraka. The chiefs at Port Resolution said that it was their wish to give up heathenism and take the worship, but that they were afraid of the heathen disease-makers. They agreed to receive Aneityumese teachers. One of the chiefs asked that the teachers should live with him, the man who sent his son some months earlier to Aneityum to learn all he could about Christianity.

The Tannese thought that it would be best to send a good number of teachers and scatter them in different districts, so that the heathen might be reached from many points at once. Geddie liked the sound of this plan.

At Anuikaraka the visitors found Yaufati and Talip well and the people kind. The heathen around them had begun to bring food, intended for their sick relatives and friends, to the little grass church. They had a superstitious belief that the food would then make the sick people better.

The "John Williams," which always visited Port Resolution when in the group, noted the good reception given to the Aneityumese teachers. The LMS missionaries noticed that the Aneityumese teachers kept better health than the Polynesian teachers.

The Aneityumese made good missionary teachers

In 1857 the LMS missionaries saw that the work was going along well at both places. They thought that one of the reasons for success was the fact that the teachers were respected because they were chiefs and had links with the Tannese. The LMS reports speak of six stations on Tanna occupied by Aneityumese teachers in the year 1857. The Tanna chiefs asked that no missionary be sent to them yet, but requested more Aneityumese teachers. The old chief Kuanuan, who had befriended Turner and Nisbet in 1842, was still the loyal friend of the Christians.

By 1859 the Aneityum church had eleven teachers and their wives on Tanna. One wife had died, the only loss since

Aneityumese teachers began work there in 1853. It became evident that New Hebridean teachers could live better than Polynesians in that climate and that Aneityumese teachers were more acceptable than Polynesian or European missionaries. The teachers slowly prepared the way for the return of the missionaries. Turner and Nisbet had left sixteen years before.

Aniwa — the murder of Nemeyin

The island of Aniwa in 1840 had received Polynesian teachers who had to be removed soon afterwards because of sickness. The Aneityumese church settled two teachers there in 1858. They were Navallak, from Mr. Geddie's side and Nemeyin, from Mr. Inglis' side.

Within a year both men had been clubbed in a plot laid by the people of Aniwa in revenge for the murder of a number of Aniwans on Aneityum thirty years earlier. Aneityum was then a heathen island. The Aniwans had kept their "pay-back" sticks, waiting for an opportunity to retaliate. The Aniwans found out that Nemeyin came from the side of Aneityum where the Aniwans had been murdered. They arranged with some Tannese men, then living on Aniwa, to avenge the earlier deaths. Though the Christian teachers came to bring life to heathen Aniwa, the law of "pay-back" now made them the victims under this heathen custom. The teachers were returning from worship on sabbath afternoon, when attacked. Nemeyin was clubbed to death. Navallak was terribly injured but recovered.

This martyrdom took place at the end of April 1859. A few weeks later the "John Knox" called at Aniwa. The Aneityumese crews were grieved to find what had happened to their two missionaries. Nohoat, now a firm Christian, and the high chief of Aneityum, spoke with great earnestness to the people of Aniwa. He was so exhausted and grieved that he died soon after his return to Aneityum.

The Aneityumese church now faced a test of its sincerity. The church could easily have refused any further help to Aniwa. But after a peaceful inquiry by the chiefs, the church replaced the martyred Nemeyin with another teacher named Nalmai and his wife. These came from a part of Aneityum which had close links with Aniwa. The action regained the lost ground on Aniwa and

finally prepared the way for the settlement of John G. Paton in 1866.

Aneityum helps Eromanga.

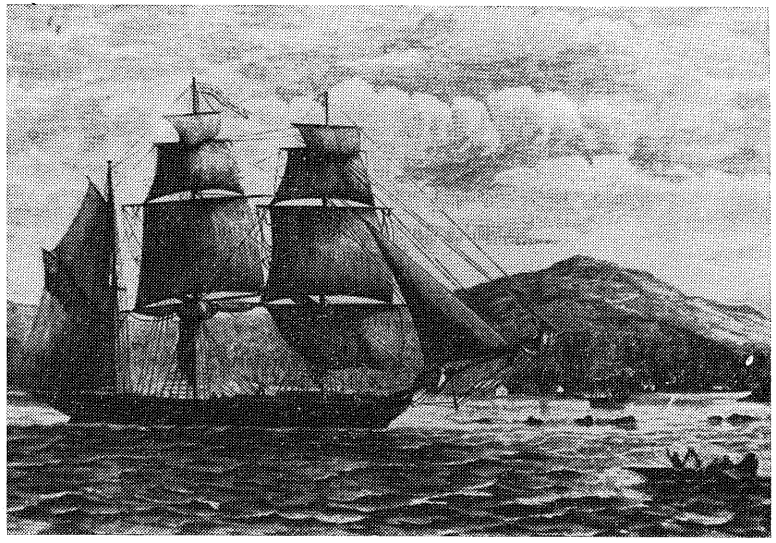
From the time of the arrival of the Presbyterian Mission schooner "John Knox" Aneityum could take a closer part in the mission to Eromanga. In January 1852 Geddie noted in his journal how he often saw Eromangans at Aneityum. He always tried to meet them and to treat them kindly. As a result he later learned from a sympathetic trader that the Eromangans were asking for a missionary. The arrival of the Rev. George N. Gordon and his wife Ellen in 1857 was an answer to Geddie's prayers. It was also the first response to his entreaties to his Church in Nova Scotia for more workers. Two Polynesian teachers accompanied Gordon to Eromanga. The Aneityum church sent three more.

But Mr. Gordon appeared unable or unwilling to work closely with the teachers. He seemed to have made up his mind to train his own converts to become his teachers. In this aim he and his brother James were successful. Dr. Robertson later reaped the benefit from the help of the young men whom the Gordons won for Christ and trained for the evangelization of Eromanga. But this plan of the Gordons gave an initial check to the outreach on Eromanga, and probably explains why no further Aneityumese teachers seem to have gone there. Geddie worried as he saw the direction that the work was taking on Eromanga.

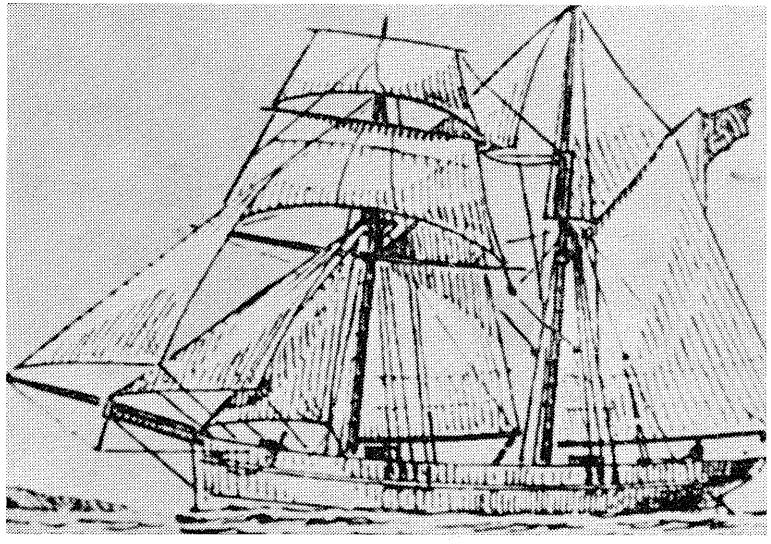
Aneityumese teachers to South Efate

Loss of life was frequent among the early Polynesian teachers on Efate. The survivors appealed to their LMS missionaries to replace them with teachers from Aneityum who could stand the climate. The LMS deputation in 1858 made the request to Geddie and Inglis, who felt that they could not, at that time, spare any men for Efate. By 1860 the position had improved and two Aneityumese couples were settled.

Two Polynesians agreed to remain as their partners for another year. Two of the four workers were stationed at Pango and two at Erakor. So the Erakor church can, in some measure, be called a daughter of the Aneityumese church. Erakor was quick to catch the vision of expansion. In the 1861 trip of the "John Williams"



"John Williams" I entering Huahine Harbour; "Camden" at anchor in background.



The Melanesian Mission's "Southern Cross" I, a schooner of 100 tons, built in England 1855; wrecked in NZ 1860.

the Erakor church sent Taniela and his wife as fellow-workers with the LMS teachers to open a mission station at Cape Lisburn, Santo.

Conclusion

We have now told the almost forgotten story of the expansion of the Good News through the early zeal and vital spiritual life of the Aneityumese church. The process was to be repeated again and again in the evangelization of the islands of the New Hebrides, but it never flowed so strongly again in the life of the church on Aneityum. The epidemic of 1861 reduced the population of the island by one third. From then on the population steadily fell. The people began to lose heart. The discouraged second generation Christians lacked the zeal and freshness which had marked the first flush of Aneityum's Christian church. Almost every young church in the New Hebrides has revealed the same early response and subsequent indifference.

CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE

John Geddie's Closing Years

THE SPIRIT WHICH drove St. Paul on to the "regions beyond" gave a restless eagerness to Geddie's later years. Aneityum was now established in the Christian faith and in the New Testament pattern of church life. The southern islands had been pioneered and supplied with teachers and missionaries. Geddie's thoughts turned to the islands of the central and northern New Hebrides.

The mission conference of 1861 met under the shadow of tragedy. A measles epidemic had devastated the southern islands and led indirectly to the murder of the Rev. George Gordon and his wife on Eromanga. John G. Paton lost his young wife and child in their first year on Tanna. Samuel F. Johnston also died there, though his widow was determined to remain as a missionary in her own right.

The missions to Tanna and Eromanga, after twenty years of life-and-death struggle, were hanging in the balance. Geddie would not accept defeat. Led by him the mission conference determined to press on to the unoccupied islands. In doing so they asked for the continued partnership of the LMS, and the help of their teachers and their faithful ship the "John Williams."

Geddie and Murray (LMS) in 1861 made a survey visit on the "John Williams" to the northern islands (page 62, above). For the next ten years Geddie lived and worked as missionary-at-large to the unevangelized northern islands of the Group.

Geddie's furlough in Canada

The mission conference set Geddie apart for this work. Inglis says that the missionaries noticed Geddie showing signs of strain. Since he had taken no furlough since his arrival in 1848, the mission prevailed on him to take a long furlough in Canada in 1863.

The Geddies' visit to their home congregations in Canada opened

the prospect of missionary partnership with two other Presbyterian Churches in Canada. They returned greatly refreshed in 1866. Geddie was surprised, and a little embarrassed, to receive a Doctorate of Divinity from Queen's College, Kingston, Ontario. But when he returned he was not the same man. The old buoyancy had gone. His father-heart bled for the thousands of New Hebrideans who had died in successive epidemics. The great stone church at Anelgauhat, would never again be full.

Geddie also grieved over the action of the mission conference, taken in his absence, to co-operate with the British Navy in investigating and redressing wrongs against the persons and property of its missionaries. Geddie disagreed with the prevailing opinion of the mission at that time, but he has been vindicated since.

Extension to the northern islands

Geddie pushed forward the frontiers of the mission. He was pleased to see his son-in-law, Thomas Neilson, settled at Port Resolution in 1868 to begin a new chapter in the evangelization of Tanna.

The Rev. James D. Gordon was eager to spend part of each year on far-away North West Santo. The mission conference was doubtful about his plan, but Geddie supported him. However, Gordon's plan was not well carried through. Gordon spent his first term on N. W. Santo in late 1869. Geddie was on the "Dayspring" in November 1869 when it picked up Gordon and returned him to Eromanga. On this voyage the two men worked well together. Their common concern for outreach made all the new contacts thrilling and rewarding.

The mission authorized Geddie to continue. They asked him in 1870 to spend as much time as possible on the "Dayspring," securing and settling teachers. Dr. Geddie was gentle and persuasive with heathen and Christian alike. A heathen chief recognized him ashore on Ambrym. He at once threw his arm around Geddie and conducted him proudly and safely among his warlike people. Contact with Tongoa and Ewose were made on this visit.

Geddie was delighted when the Rev. John Goodwill and his wife arrived from a sister Presbyterian Church in Nova Scotia. He wrote a warm letter to the convener of Goodwill's committee to

say how pleased the New Hebrides Mission was to have him. Geddie was a good encourager of missionaries and a master-diplomat with their Home Committees. Against the wish of the Mission Mr. Goodwill insisted on settling at Cape Lisburn, Santo, in 1870. In 1874 Goodwill left overcome by trials, the ill-health of his family and narrow escapes from death.

The Aneityumese Bible

Geddie was given the huge task of completing the Aneityumese Old Testament and seeing the Aneityumese Bible through the press in Melbourne. Inglis and Copeland made large contributions to the translation and checking but it was Geddie's grand passion to the end. He went to the New Hebrides for the Mission Synod in June 1872, the first time the mission conference was called the Synod. On 12 June a stroke paralysed his right side. The Synod immediately expressed loving respect and concern for the "venerable father of the Mission."

Geddie's death

Geddie's work was done. He returned to Australia. Toward the end of the year his weakness increased. He slowly sank into unconsciousness and died at the age of fifty-seven on the 14 December. He is buried at Geelong. The story of this Church has no missionary figure to compare with him for unswerving purpose, unselfish service, unwearying faith and hope and love. New Hebrides people honour his memory as the pioneer. Dr. John Geddie's own testimony is best summed up in the verse which he made the motto of his life and work: "Blessed be the Lord Who daily loadeth us with benefits, even the God of our salvation" — Psalm 68.19 (AV).

Dr. John Inglis was also a man of superior gifts, wise words and judicious pen. He was Geddie's close colleague for twenty years and well fitted to express a judgement on this great and good man of God. A chapter in his book "In the New Hebrides," does so in clear and sober language, as Inglis records that the governing principle of Geddie's life and character was his missionary spirit. "He was a man of strongly impulsive nature. When any object had taken possession of his mind his whole soul was thrown into it [p. 251]. He was an excellent translator . . . In general his renderings were clear, simple, elegant and

idiomatic. . . . He had a great genius for mechanical pursuits [p. 254]. He had great inventive power [p. 255]. He wrote a clear, distinct, beautiful hand, and filled page after page without a blot or mistake. . . . He was a man of simple tastes and frugal habits. . . . He was specially careful of the Church's funds" [p. 255]. He could turn to anything. He was ready, ever ready, for all manner of work, and for every emergency.

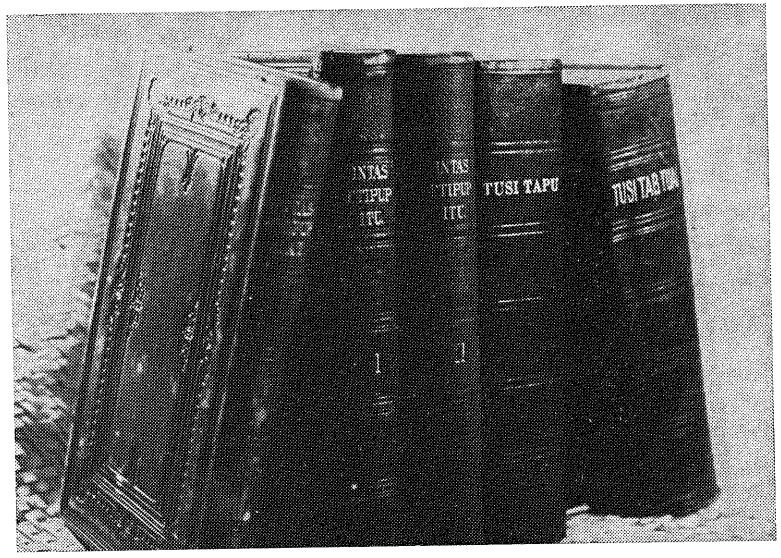
This was "little John Geddie" whose appointment in 1845 was so noisily challenged in the Synod of Nova Scotia. His critical brethren lived to regret their mistake and to rejoice in Geddie's success.

Dr. Robert Steel of St. Stephen's Presbyterian Church, Sydney, the first historian of the New Hebrides Presbyterian Mission, wrote the memorial epitaph inscribed behind the pulpit in Geddie's church at Aneityum. Part of this reads:—

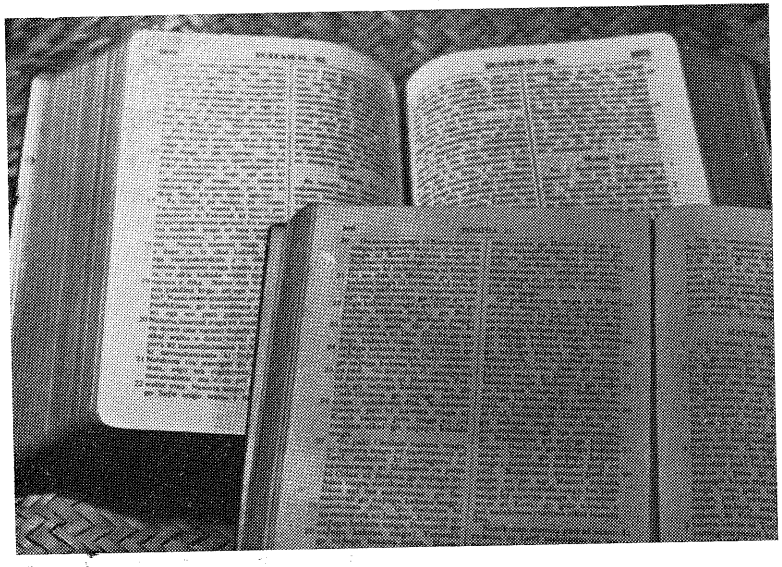
WHEN HE LANDED IN 1848 THERE WERE NO
CHRISTIANS HERE,
AND WHEN HE LEFT IN 1872 THERE
WERE NO HEATHENS.

PART FOUR

Topical Surveys



From left: the three volumes of the Aneityumese Bible (1863-1879); the Nguna-Tongoa Bible (1972); the Nguna-Efate OT (1908).



Nguna-Tongoa Bible (Tusi Tapu) open at Isaiah Chapters 52, 53; Nguna-Efate OT (Tusi Tab Tuai) open at Joshua Chapters 21, 22.

CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR

The Birth of a Literature

The rock carvings on Aneityum

ON THE NORTH side of Aneityum, about a mile inland from Aname, Dr. Inglis' old station, is a large volcanic rock covered with a variety of carvings. None of the people knew who wrote them, even as far back as 1852 when Dr. Inglis landed there. Some of the drawings look like birds, some like trees, one is like a turtle. These carvings are cut about half an inch deep in the rock and must have been the work of many people over a long period of time. The rock is about twenty feet long and twelve feet high. The carvers would have needed some kind of platform or scaffolding to enable them to do the work.

Dr. William Gunn, the scholarly missionary-doctor on Futuna and Aneityum, published a photograph of the rock drawings in the New Hebrides Magazine for January 1906. He wrote to Professor A. H. Sayce of Oxford who said he could not offer any explanation of the rock carvings. Sayce added, "It is one more proof that man is a writing animal all over the world." There are also rock drawings in caves at Lelepa in Havannah Harbour, Efate. Professor Henry Drummond drew his own impression of these Lelepa drawings when he visited the caves in 1890.

Symbolic writing

In the New Hebrides the ancestors had their own forms of writing, but these were limited to drawings, designs and symbols. The *siloa* or food bowl was often made to look like a turtle. A kava bowl of stone, from Big Bay, Santo, now in the Bible College museum at Tangoa, has the head of a flying fox. Both these creatures are totem-animals.

Tattoo marks and the designs on the outside of Santo clay pottery had meanings. Mats were woven into different patterns, each with its name and meaning. The faces on old idol-drums or

images and fire-signals by which messages were sent from island to island were also understood without written help. They were grasped more widely than local languages.

New Hebrides' languages

A recent language survey of the New Hebrides has shown more than one hundred separate languages among about one hundred thousand people. They are a treasure house of culture and must not be lost, neglected or despised. If our languages die so do proverbs, folklore and respect for the past wisdom and history of the people. In welcoming western culture people are tempted to let slip their own. Thus use and development of New Hebrides languages is important.

In 1939 the World Dominion Press published "The Bible Throughout the World." To that date one hundred and fifty-four languages of Polynesia and Melanesia had portions of Scripture in translation, including forty-one translations in the New Hebrides. Of these forty-one translations, thirty-four had been made by Presbyterian missionaries and their New Hebridean informants, seven by missionaries of the Melanesian Mission and the Churches of Christ. Others have been added since 1939.

Now, at last, the task is passing to local translators. Conferences are held regularly, made up chiefly of New Hebrides translators, under the inspiration and guidance of the Bible Society and its well-qualified staff.

The importance of Bible translations

The first missionaries spent so much toil, time and trouble on learning the languages and making translations because they saw that, without the Bible, the people would remain in ignorance of God's Word. Only in the Bible can we find God's way of salvation for man and his society. The early missionaries did not despise the local languages.

They regretted the growing use of the trade language, then called Sandalwood English and now called Bislama. They believed that this medium was crude, clumsy and ambiguous. Bislama could not take the place of the local and ancestral languages, however useful Bislama might prove in communication between people of differing languages.

Partly to avoid this use of a trade language the early Methodist

missionaries in Fiji selected one of the fifteen larger dialects for their translation work. They thus standardized a Fijian dialect for all the people. The Melanesian Mission tried to do the same by using Mota, from the Banks Islands as standard for their work.

Presbyterian translators

No such attempt was made in the New Hebrides Presbyterian Mission. Apart from Bislama, English, and perhaps French, the nearest approach to a common language, a *lingua franca*, in the New Hebrides is the use of Ngunese translations by the Efatese people as far north as South East Epi.

Translations required much work by many people. Translators needed a good ear to listen to new and strange sounds, a good choice of symbols to record those sounds accurately, and understanding of island thinking so as to unravel the principles of Melanesian languages. All this needed checking over many years.

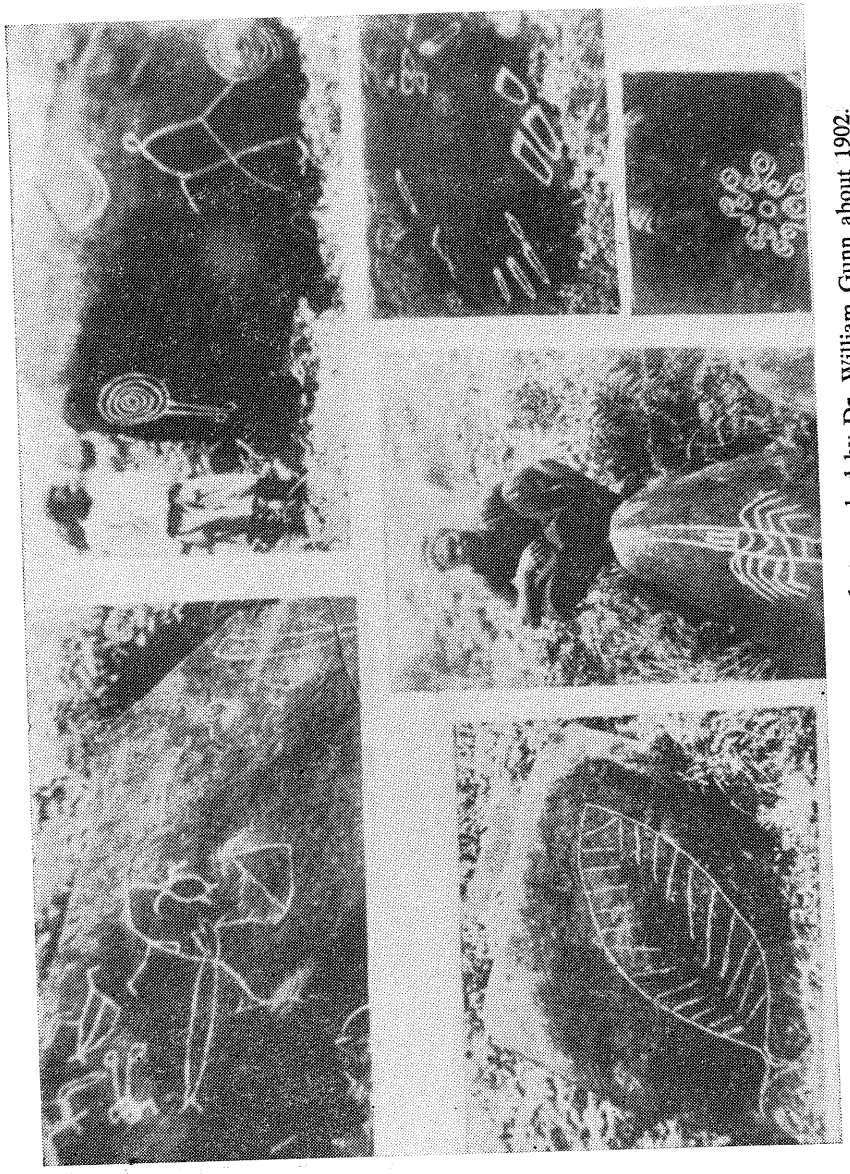
The example of Eromanga

George Gordon had been about three months on Eromanga when he printed the Ten Commandments in the language. A year later he printed Jonah. Then came Luke's Gospel, translated by Gordon, and written out by his wife Ellen, and printed on Geddie's press at Aneityum by an LMS missionary, the Rev. S. Ella.

Robertson says Luke's Gospel was translated before George Gordon was fully familiar with the language and so was not well done. His work on Acts was much better. This was the manuscript that his brother James was revising when he was murdered in 1872. James Gordon's translations, said Robertson, were "almost perfect." He far surpassed any missionary on Eromanga in his knowledge of the language. The people often told Dr. Robertson that James Gordon spoke the language like themselves and that he knew all the dialects.

Orthography

To save confusion among the early workers on the many languages the Mission Synod agreed upon a standard orthography, or list of letters for equivalent sounds. English-speaking people cannot easily pronounce sound like Mele (they say "May-lee"), or Nguna (they say "Noona").



The ancient rock carvings at Aneityum, photographed by Dr. William Gunn about 1902.

Literacy

The first steps towards literacy were taken when the early missionaries put letters on charts in front of the new learners. Many of the first charts were printed by the Rev. William Watt on his press at Kwamera, Tanna. The Mission seems to have been guided by primers and literacy charts used by the LMS in Polynesia. Many older people remember learning, in their First Reader:

a	e	i	o	u	
ma	me	mi	mo	mu	and so on.

The First Reader led to a harder reader, with simple words and and sentences, then to a Bible Story Book with favourite passages of Scripture, such as the Ten Commandments, the Lord's Prayer and the twenty-third Psalm.

Literature

The Bible, a library of sixty-six books, is the richest literature that this world has ever known. It has been translated into many more languages than any other book in the history of the world.

To our people this Book, or even portions of it, opened a whole new world of knowledge. Side by side with its message of salvation in Christ the Bible gave a course of higher education in universal knowledge. It enriched the people with a great variety of ideas, breadth of thought, nobility of character and direction of life. Here they discovered history, geography, biography, social behaviour, songs, proverbs, parables, miracles, life-stories, and wisdom. By this gradual process this sacred literature made the New Hebrideans the people they have become.

CHAPTER TWENTY-FIVE

A Broad Basis for Education

Bishop Patteson's views

WHAT IS A true and sound education?

John Coleridge Patteson, the first Anglican Bishop of Melanesia, wrote in 1866, ten years after he began his journeys among the islands at the age of thirty-eight:

> "Education consists in teaching people to bear responsibilities, and laying the responsibilities on them as they are able to bear them." [In a speech at St. John's College, Auckland. Life of Patteson, C M Yonge, II 159].

Patteson never married. He lived with his Melanesian students, ate with them, and cared for them when they were dying. He saw the gifts of the people and knew that intellectually they are not inferior to other races. He laboured to educate and build up an indigenous leadership. He died at Nukapu in the Santa Cruz Islands in 1871, believed by many to be the victim of "pay-back" for five men who had been stolen by a recruiting ship. The bronze cross on the beach at Nukapu states simply that his life was taken by the people for whom he would willingly have given it. He was then fourty-four. His life had been an object lesson in the principles of education for our Melanesian society.

Patteson showed by his life that example is the best language of education. This language was clearly spoken in life and in death by our pioneers, both Polynesian and European with medicine and hammer, pen and pulpit, with prayer and muscle.

Training in responsibility

The aim was not to fill the head, but to enlarge the whole life, head, heart, home and community. The demonstration lessons were given by the people themselves.

Dr. Inglis writes of the educational development in the first

generation of church life on Aneityum. Much the same pattern unfolded on Aniwa, Eromanga, Efate, Nguna, Tongoa and elsewhere. Failure in some areas, not named, was due to early deaths of the missionaries, the smallness of the tribe or language group, lack of available workers, rapid depopulation, or loss of vision. Few had the stature of Geddie, Patteson and Inglis.

Dr. Inglis Account

Here is the record in Dr. Inglis' own words:

> "On our arrival (1852) . . . we found what might be called a system of National Education hopefully inaugurated. Mr. Geddie had brought with him a small second-hand printing press, and a small font of half-worn type. He had prepared a primer, a small catechism, six hymns and a small selection of Scripture extracts. (By 1852) he had completed a translation of Matthew, (and had) proceeded to Mark." [Inglis, In the New Hebrides p. 75].

Mark's Gospel, printed in Sydney, "gave an immense stimulus to education all over the island." A new Bible book was thereafter printed about once a year. "We never gave a new book until pupils had mastered the old one."

Inglis says that women and girls excelled in memorising Scripture. In a competition to repeat Acts chapters 1-6, six women repeated the whole passage in the language of Aneityum without missing one word.

> "My plan was this, to make the school at my station as much of a model school as possible, and to aim at education being national, scriptural, free as far as fees were concerned, but compulsory as to attendance. [Inglis, In the New Hebrides p. 76].
> "I applied my chief strength, as far as education was concerned, to make the natives good readers . . . Our primary object was to teach them to read, that they might be able to read the Bible, and learn the will of God and the way of salvation for themselves." [Inglis, In the New Hebrides p. 78].

Text Books

Some may think that this was a one-book school, but the late Mr. Justice Ferguson's three-volume History of the New Hebrides Mission Press shows the astonishing number, range, breadth and usefulness of the school texts provided, one hundred and ten years ago, for the schools on Aneityum. The literature included hymn collections and a geography, printed in Aneityumese, in 1862

Slates were used for writing lessons until the pupils graduated to the Teachers' Institution, when they used pen and paper.

School and work

A happy rhythm was established for preserving the responsibility of all pupils to assist in the gardens and thus keep close to the land-based economy of the culture.

> "When the morning school was dismissed, the natives went all off to their work; they were not a lazy or indolent people, even in their heathen state, and Christianity, as it was embraced, greatly stimulated their industry." [Inglis, In the New Hebrides p. 78].

Teacher Training

"I opened an afternoon class for the teachers, their wives, and assistants, so that the whole teaching staff might be kept fairly abreast of their scholars. This was the germ of our Teachers' Institution, which bore good fruit in after days [p. 78]. We wished to raise up a large number of native agents (teachers) moderately qualified, to act as teachers to their fellow-countrymen, who should instruct them in the art of reading, so as to make them able to read the Bible." [p. 85].

Industrial Training

Mr. and Mrs. Inglis expanded what the Geddies had begun by giving vocational training to both young men and women.

In 1856 Bishop Selwyn called at Aname, with Patteson on board, and both went ashore to visit the Inglises. Patteson recorded his pleasure at what he saw in the co-educational industrial and vocational school.

> "(Mr. Inglis) showed us the arrangements for boarding young men and women — twelve of the former, and fourteen of the latter. Nothing could well exceed the cleanliness and order of their houses, sleeping rooms, and cooking rooms. The houses, wattled and plastered, had floors covered with native mats, beds laid upon a raised platform running round the inner room, mats and blankets for covering, and bamboo cane for a pillow. The boys were, some writing, some making twine, some summing, when we went in; the girls just putting on their bonnets, of their own manufacture, for school. They learn all household work—cooking, hemming, sewing, etc; the boys tend the poultry, cows, cultivate taro, make arrowroot, etc. All of them could read fluently, and all looked happy, clean, and healthy. The girls wear their native petticoats of cocoa-nut leaves, with a calico body (bodice). Boys wear trousers, and some had shirts, some waistcoats and a few jackets." [Life of Patteson, C. M. Yonge, I 158].

The effect of this vocational training was to make the teachers who went to other islands good evangelists and teachers, but also good builders of houses, boatmen who could replace planking and make a whaleboat seaworthy, good cooks, nurses, and general helpers. Geddie records the astonishment of some heathen from Futuna who saw Aneityumese men working as builders and masons on Geddie's new and strong mission house at Anelgauhat. They could not believe that this house could be built by men, still less by New Hebrides men. They said *natmasses* must have built it.

Curriculum

Inglis was busy every morning with his village school, but gave four afternoons a week to the Teachers' Training Institution, with two sessions of four months each year. The aim was to have enough teachers for the fifty or more schools on Aneityum and to provide Aneityumese teachers for the growing demand of the heathen islands.

The institution was well attended until Inglis left in 1877, with a record roll of nearly ninety, including a junior division of promising boys and girls.

Community projects

No village on Aneityum was left out. No child was more than one mile from a school. Every school was built by local community effort, without cost to anyone and in good materials. Aneityum became a strong, united island with a healthy, busy, peaceful, and progressive community life.

CHAPTER TWENTY-SIX

The Seeds of Self-Government

General Assembly Declaration, 1973

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY of the Presbyterian Church of the New Hebrides at Tanna in May 1973 passed an important unanimous declaration that, "representing more than half of the population of the New Hebrides, in this its 25th General Assembly as a self-governing Church, . . . it confidently looks towards the goal of responsible self-government of the New Hebrides people as a nation."

The Church said it saw the British, French and Condominium administrators as its partners in moving toward this goal and asked the local governments, the South Pacific Commission, and the United Nations to co-operate in achieving "self-government without delay, without violence, and with due preparation of our people for the duties, functions, rights and responsibilities of independent government."

It was fitting that this wisely worded Declaration should come from the Presbyterian General Assembly, for our Church is based on a biblical pattern of church government, which trains Christian men and women to use the gifts of the Spirit of God for the building up of Church and nation.

When the Presbyterian Church of the New Hebrides was inaugurated on 1 July 1948 there were still some people who doubted whether New Hebrideans were ready to accept the responsibility of self-government. This was, in fact, the first self-governing Church in the Western Pacific, though others soon followed.

Aim of self-government

Self-government was certainly the goal of the first Presbyterian missionaries. We have already seen in chapter twenty how the Church on Aneityum was furnished by God with its own deacons and teachers, and how the hereditary chiefs were able to

take increased responsibility in the unified government of the civil life of Aneityum.

The basis of Presbyterian Church government is the office of elder. The word for elder in the Greek New Testament, *presbyteros*, has given the name to the denomination. A Presbyterian Church is ruled by elders, through graduated democratic church courts. In these courts mature Christians chosen by the congregations for their spiritual gifts and experience are entrusted with ruling the affairs of the Church. They are thus trained in responsibility, accepting their duties as from God, and as a trust for the whole Church.

Our Church believes that the gifts of the Spirit are necessary for a self-governing Church. Such equipment as advanced education and overseas experience may be useful, but the gifts and calling of God are essential. Every convert and community has high potential. A missionary who believes this is saved from interfering in the direction of a young Church. He is there to help but not to run the Church. Geddie and Inglis saw this as their task as they looked to the future.

The first elders

Soon after the opening of the great stone church at Anelgauhat in 1860, Geddie wrote:

> "Seven men have been nominated for the office of ruling elders, and we expect to ordain them next week. . . . They are all persons in whom I have much confidence." [Misi Gete p. 255].

Later on 8 October 1860 Geddie added:

> "I am greatly assisted by seven elders recently ordained. Each one has a certain number of church members assigned to his charge, whom he visits, with whom he holds meetings for conversation, exhortation and prayer. At our meetings of session, each elder gives a report of the state of religion in his district." [Misi Gete p. 258].

Geddie felt that his people had enough of the Scriptures in their language to guide them in the choice of the right men. He did not choose them. God chose them, and Geddie trusted the Word and Spirit of God to guide the election by the members of the Church. If this pattern had been followed on all the islands the Church would have matured more quickly, more usefully and more responsibly. But this plan was followed only half-heartedly on some islands and not at all on others.

The LMS tradition

None of the four earlier Protestant missions in the Pacific followed the Presbyterian form of church government. The most influential mission, so far as the New Hebridean Church was concerned, was the LMS.

The LMS was founded in England in 1795 with the rule that no form of church government be laid down for converts, who must be free to choose the form of church government which appeared to them to be most agreeable to the Word of God. The LMS work developed with committees of missionaries presiding over the work in each area. The missionaries saw to the training and stationing of teachers and the opening up of new areas to the Gospel. The teacher became the key to the local work and witness, and was answerable to the missionary. The missionary was responsible to the Conference. Later the LMS trained and placed pastors in congregations. The LMS had no system of ordained elders. The Church government in LMS areas of the South Pacific developed along broadly Congregational lines.

Impact on the New Hebrides Mission

This also gradually became the pattern in the New Hebrides Presbyterian Mission, especially where the missionary did not establish a session of elders. The teacher became the key figure in the village and he was under the direct control of the missionary. The local church was robbed of its responsibility to encourage, support, guide and appoint its own leaders. The missionary was left without the counsel and conscience of the local church, and was cast more and more upon his own judgement in personal decisions.

This weakened the local congregation and robbed the church of the leadership for which God had made provision. It left the missionary in a position of isolation and one-man government of the church and gave the people the impression that the church was foreign, something which had arrived with the missionary and could not live without him and his western ideas, money and authority.

The early desire for Presbyteries

By 1860 the Presbyterian Mission was strong enough to meet in annual conference with six missionaries present. They decided

to make a request to their Home Churches for approval to set up a Presbytery or Presbyteries.

A Conference Minute of 17 July 1860 resolved that Geddie should write to the Board of Foreign Missions of his Church in Nova Scotia and Copeland to the Foreign Mission Committee of his Church in Scotland about forming a united Presbytery or Presbyteries in the mission.

Geddie was clearly feeling his way towards the next step in self-government within the Church. Aneityum had a session and he saw how well the Aneityumese church was developing in self-government. He wanted the New Hebrides Church to have a higher court to guide, unify, and encourage the new churches. Dr. Steel refers to this desire, but seems to imply that the Presbytery would comprise only missionaries. Geddie, however was thinking of the living Church of the New Hebrides, rather than the scaffolding of the mission.

At the next annual conference of the mission on Aneityum in October 1861 only two Presbyterian missionaries were present, Geddie and Copeland. Both men reported to the meeting that they had written to their boards of missions and been told the step proposed was "premature," a word commonly used to question and discourage the steps which led to the constitution of the Presbyterian Church of the New Hebrides in 1948.

The two home churches of 1860, thousands of miles away from the young New Hebrides Church and from each other, could not really understand the situtation in these islands. The idea of Presbyteries was kept alive until the 1870's, but the death of Geddie seems to have ended any hope of the New Hebrides Church finding representation on Presbytery or Synod.

The New Hebrides Mission Synod.

In 1872, as Inglis writes, the missionaries "found it convenient to apply the name Synod to the annual business meetings of the mission; and it has been universally accepted as expressing the corporate existence and the corporate action of the missionaries . . . No native elders sit as members." [Inglis, In the New Hebrides p. 157].

The name Synod described what was simply a council of missionaries. Inglis and Watt (for many years the clerk of Synod) when they were cornered used to say in effect, "By 'Synod' we

mean what we like." Inglis has written: "Our mission, which is the most abnormal of anything known, has a Synod, but no Presbytery . . . We are all most orthodox and loyal Presbyterians." [Inglis p. 157].

Inglis had become part of the corporate drift into missionary control of the Church. This situation continued almost unchanged until 1941.

The Mission Constitution of 1892

The Constitution of the Synod, adopted in 1892, gave it Presbyterial or Synodical powers over the entire mission in all its areas and activities, but made no further mention of representation from the New Hebrides Church. The vision of self-government had died. This was a tragedy for the Church, the mission and national development.

Fine New Hebrides leaders worked and witnessed through all the years down to 1941 when the tide began to turn. The relationships between them and the Mission were almost always healthy, positive and happy. We need only mention Sopi, Kalsakau and Kalorib of Efate; William Tariliu of Tongoa; James Kaum of Ambrym; Dete of Nokuku and Winzi of Malo. Every island had its loyal team even in the darkest days of our history — proof that God does not desert His people in their hour of need.

The John G. Paton Mission Fund was established in 1890, with its head office in Great Britain. Its aim was to hasten the evangelization of the heathen areas in the New Hebrides. Gradually, as the other and older home boards began to transfer their support from the New Hebrides Mission to the larger fields of Korea, India and China, the role of the John G. Paton Mission Fund grew more and more important. The time came when the Fund supported almost half of the work of the New Hebrides Mission. This was God's provision at a difficult time in the Church's history.

Unfortunately the John G. Paton Mission Fund did not represent any church. It was out of touch with the ideals and principles of a self-governing church. Non-Presbyterian missionaries were also sent and supported from the fund. These influences affected the character of the church, which tended to drift on rudderless into the twentieth century.

The late discovery of church ideals

In 1917 the Rev. J. Noble Mackenzie of Korea re-visited the New Hebrides and spent some time back in his old area of North West Santo. He spoke to the mission synod of what had happened to the Presbyterian Church in Korea as a result of biblical teaching on self-government and self-support within the young Church. The 1917 Mission Synod thereupon resolved:

> "While fully recognising the widely different material upon which missionaries have to work in the respective fields, Synod, after hearing Mr. J. Noble Mackenzie, who has worked in both, believes that with a view to laying the foundation for a stronger native ministry, the call has come . . . to make a larger use of native elders and pastors amongst the New Hebrideans."

The Synod's minute shows that the missionaries had fallen into the belief, common at that time among anthropologists, that Melanesians are on a lower intellectual plane than other races. This was not Patteson's view, or Geddie's view, but it still prevailed when Mrs. Miller and I came to the New Hebrides in 1941, and hindered the development of church and people towards self-government.

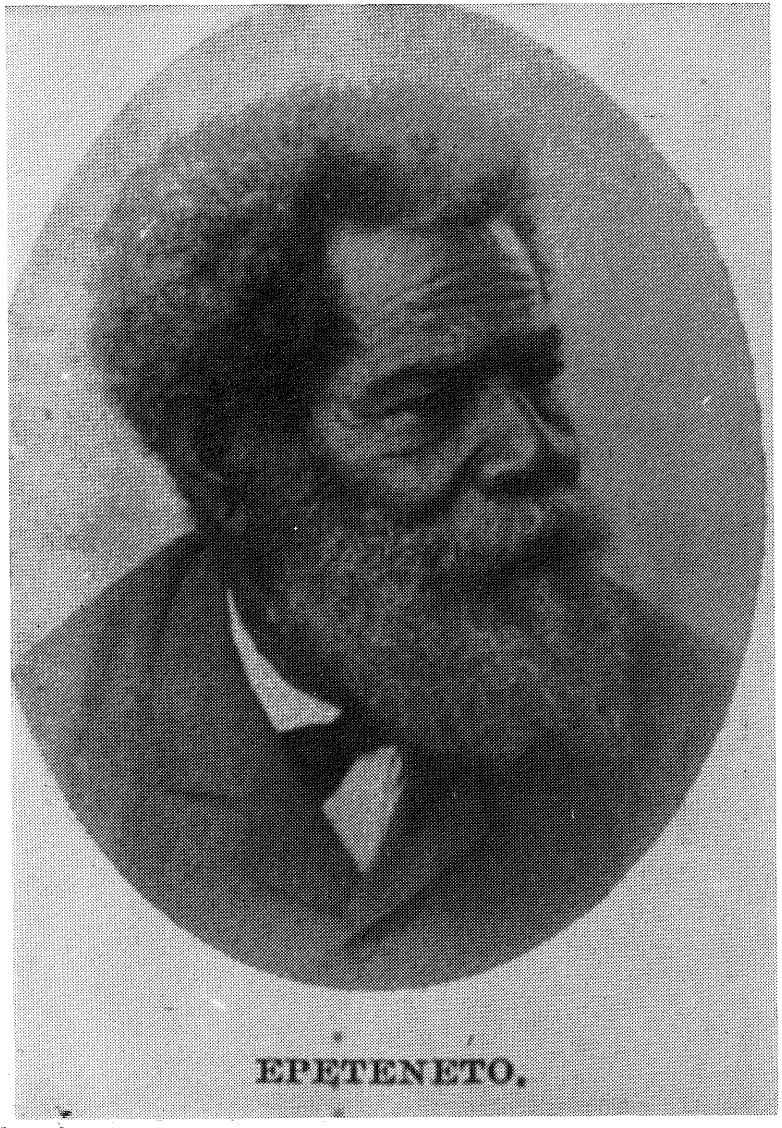
The ideals of church-growth, which steadily built up the Korean Presbyterian Church, were expounded in the writings of Roland Allen, "Missionary Methods, St. Paul's or Ours?" (1912) and "The Spontaneous Expansion of the Church and the Causes which Hinder it" (1927). The World Dominion Press of London did a great service to the younger churches when it began to print these books cheaply. These books enlarged my own thinking, and influenced what took place in the New Hebrides after 1940. They thus led indirectly to the preparation of our church for self-government.

Pastors

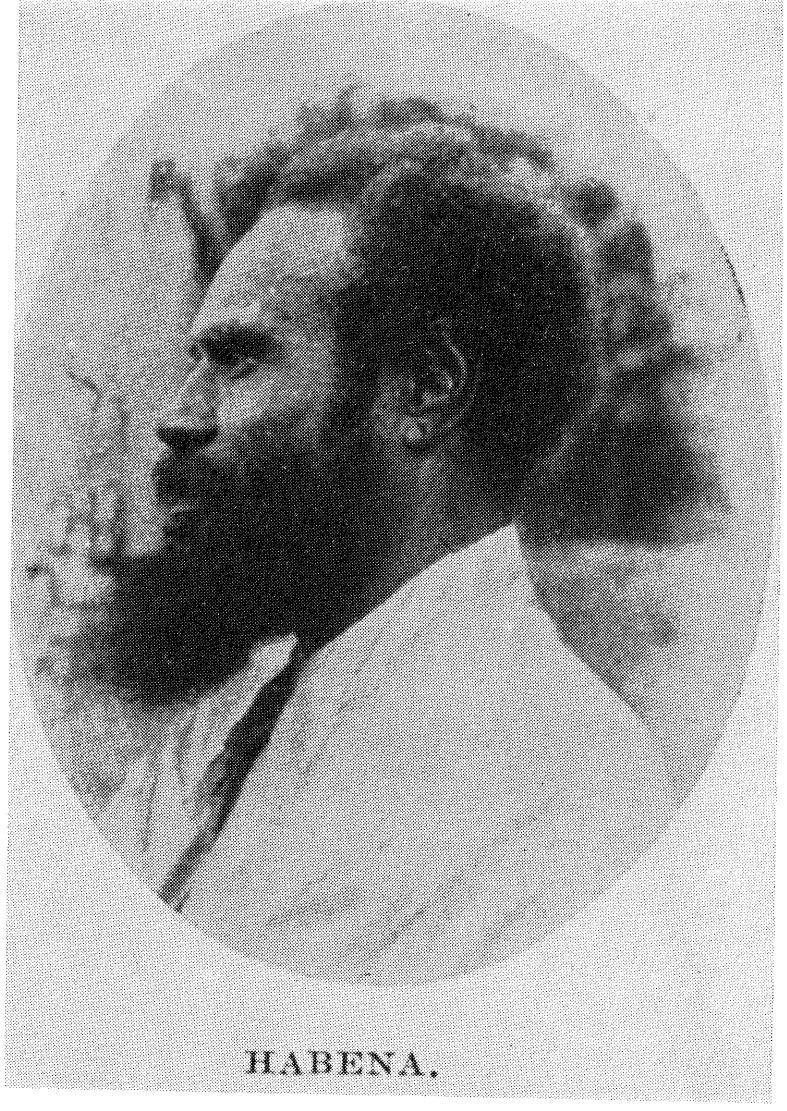
Meanwhile the Synod had tried, off and on, to face the need for leadership in the church life of the New Hebrides by appointing native pastors. The first of these was Epeteneto of Aneityum. He was ordained in May 1897 during the Synod meetings at Aneityum, and died in 1905 at the age of about 71. He was a "man of superior intelligence, a true Christian, and devoted to his master's work" reported Dr. William Gunn, his missionary and close friend.

The Dayspring Report for 1896 refers to Kamasitea "a native pastor of high order" on Aniwa. He was clearly in office before

Epeteneto, but without Synod's authority. His death took place about 1898.



Epeteneto of Aneityum, the first ordained pastor of the New Hebrides Presbyterian Church (1897-1905).



Habena of Futuna, the second ordained pastor (died 1917).

Pastor Habena, the next pastor to be ordained, worked on Futuna. He died about 1917. The Synod of 1917 recorded, on the subject of native pastors:

> "After Dr. Gunn had established clearly that the ordination of Epetineto, the first pastor ordained in these islands, was a truly forward step, he moved Synod to sanction the ordination of Habena as pastor of Futuna.".

Synod then recorded Dr. Gunn's tribute to Pastor Habena.

> "For about 17 years he was teacher on Futuna, and . . . pastor for

nearly the same period. . . . The Futunese trusted him, and the teachers took their orders from him and obeyed him."

This account of Pastor Habena's work stirred the Synod to think about J. Noble Mackenzie's words of 1917 being at least partly fulfilled by the ordination of more pastors. Owing to the first World War no Synod was held in 1918 or 1919. When it met in 1920 the idea of more pastors had germinated in the minds of the missionaries.

Synod "sat in committee to consider the ordination of certain teachers as pastors." The result was the approval by Synod for the ordination of Sopi of Efate, Judah of Onua, Malekula and Winzi of Malo.

The Synod also appointed a commission of six missionaries to act in further ordinations "to avoid delay . . ." David of Hog Harbour was ordained in 1934. I had the privilege of knowing all four men — well-tried leaders, from the first generation of converts.

Sessions; and Synod of 1941

Unfortunately there was no comparable concern for the growth of local church government through sessions. The first reference seems to be in the Synod Minutes of 1920 which authorize "the missionary *after consultation with the session*" to appoint or dismiss teachers.

About 1940, when World War II had prevented the Synod from meeting, the Rev. Dr. A. S. Frater of Vila ordained Saurei, and the Rev. C. K. Crump of Nguna ordained Robert Manamena, without authority from Synod. When Synod met in 1941 members wondered if these irregularities would make for difficulty, but the Synod gladly confirmed the two irregular ordinations.

Even more important was the decision of that Synod to open the way for final growth into self-government within the church; the Synod resolved that Dr. Frater, Mr. Crump and Mr. Miller should be the Committee to examine the proposal that Native Pastors be associated with Synod, and make recommendations.

The innocent-looking resolution led rapidly on to the inauguration of the Presbyterian Church of the New Hebrides on 1 July 1948.

The decisive influence behind this action was the oldest missionary present, the Rev. Fred J. Paton, MBE, who died after

forty-nine years' service, in December 1941. I shall never forget his parting words to the Synod. "I believe that this will be my last Synod; but I am happy to leave now." He saw further than we realised.

Since 1948 the people have been learning, through self-government within the life of the church, how to approach the similar question of self-government within the life of the nation. The first experience was the preparation for the second. So long as the life of the church is vital and responsible, so will be the exercise of self-government within the nation of the New Hebrides.

Freedom

On Wednesday 2 August 1949 I had the honour of presiding as moderator over the first meeting of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of the New Hebrides. My close friend Pastor Moses Manasakau of Tongoa came up to me with a smile, just before the meeting, and said, "A man stopped me on the mainland as I was walking down the street. He asked me, 'Is this the day we gain our freedom?' "

We both smiled at this confusion of two kinds of freedom and continued to smile as we sensed how apt that man's question was. A self-governing church is the preparation for a self-governing nation.

CHAPTER TWENTY-SEVEN

The White Wings of the Gospel

THE LIBRARY OF the Bible College at Tangoa has a valuable historical relic, the two wooden nameplates from the "Dayspring." It is a reminder to each intake of students that the Good News came to our islands on the white wings of the sailing ships. This chapter tells the story of these early ships.

The Spanish explorers

In 1606 the Spanish captains Quiros and Torres reached Santo in two high-pooped sailing ships. They were the "Capitana" of 150 tons under Quiros, and the "Almiranta" of 120 tons under Torres. The ships had Roman Catholic priests on board. Quiros and his men took possession of the new land in the name of Jesus Christ and the King of Spain. Their memorial in our islands is the name they gave to the land which they discovered, Tierra Australis del Espiritu Santo — the Southern Land of the Holy Spirit, Santo for short.

Captain Cook and his successors

Captain Cook's voyage of discovery in the New Hebrides took place in 1774 in the "Resolution," a naval ship of 462 tons. In 1777 Cook published in England the record of his voyages in a book famous for its careful observations, called "Voyages of Discovery," which opened the eyes of the civilised nations to the unknown island peoples of the Pacific and made Christian people begin to pray and plan to bring the Gospel to the islands.

Before long France, Britain, USA, Germany, Norway and other nations were venturing among the islands of the South Pacific. Whalers, sandalwood ships, and trading schooners followed. Then came ships of war and adventurers of all sorts. They brought firearms, tobacco, and liquor—all unknown before. The islands opened to the world. At that stage the white wings of the Gospel also appeared in the South Pacific.

The London Missionary Society's ships

The first LMS ship, the "Duff," of just under 300 tons, reached Tahiti in 1797 and settled the first Protestant missionaries in the South Pacific. Her commander was Captain James Wilson, a remarkable Christian man. The people of Tahiti, used to all kinds of crews were astonished at the decent conduct of the crew of the first missionary ship to visit them.

In 1817 John Williams arrived, the most adventurous of all the LMS sailors and missionaries in the South Pacific. Because he had no ship and wanted to move from island to island, he set to work and built the "Messenger of Peace," a sixty foot schooner. He kept asking his Society in London for a larger vessel.

In 1839 John Williams came out in the "Camden." She made her first voyage to the New Hebrides in November of that year, when Williams was killed at Eromanga. The ship sailed on. She had already landed the first Polynesian teachers on Tanna. Later she brought teachers to Futuna, Aniwa, Aneityum and Eromanga.

In 1845 the "Camden" was replaced by the "John Williams," a new ship, built in England, and fittingly named after the great sailor-missionary. She was a barque of 296 tons with three masts. Her figurehead showed John Williams with an open Bible in his hand.

This beautiful vessel served the LMS in Melanesia as well as Polynesia for twenty years until she was wrecked on Niue Island in May 1864.

A second "John Williams" was built in Britain. She nearly met disaster on her first voyage to the New Hebrides when she ran on a reef in Anelgauhat Harbour, Aneityum in September 1866. But the "Dayspring" was there and convoyed the stricken "John Williams" to Sydney. A willing crowd of Aneityumese men worked day and night at the pumps to keep the ship afloat. Soon afterwards she also was wrecked on the reefs of Niue Island.

In the two years from the arrival of the "Dayspring" until the repair of the second "John Williams" the Presbyterian Mission was able to repay a little of the kindness shown to them by making the "Dayspring" serve the LMS as well.

The LMS ships flew their own mission flag showing "three white doves with olive branches on a purple field." The flag was first hoisted on the "Duff" on 10 August 1796. The doves and olive

branches refer to God's covenant of peace in Genesis 8.11.

The Melanesian Mission ships

In 1848 Bishop G. A. Selwyn took a voyage through Melanesia in a warship, HMS "Dido." When he found the great number of heathen islands in Melanesia he decided to bring Melanesian students to New Zealand. He planned to train them for Christian work and witness and then send them back to their own islands.

In 1849 he set out in a small schooner of 22 tons, the "Undine," escorted by HMS "Havannah." They travelled through the southern New Hebrides to Efate, then to New Caledonia and the Loyalty Islands. The Bishop took five young students, but none from the New Hebrides.

Having begun this method of work, the Melanesian Mission needed a ship to pick up Melanesian students and return them to the islands during the New Zealand cold season. The "Undine" proved too small for this work and was replaced by the "Border Maid."

Then the friends of the Mission raised the money to build the "Southern Cross," a graceful sailing ship which made her first visit to the New Hebrides in 1856 with the future Bishop of Melanesia, John Coleridge Patteson on board. He soon learned to navigate her.

Throughout the years till 1871, when Patteson was martyred, the "Southern Cross" was known to Christian and heathen Melanesians as a safe ship, a "mission" ship. She often assisted the Presbyterian mission and took an interest in its workers.

The first "Southern Cross" was a schooner of 100 tons built in England. She was wrecked in New Zealand in 1860. Several ships were chartered until 1863, when the second "Southern Cross" came into service to be replaced by other ships of the same name, down to the present.

The ships of the Presbyterian Mission

At first Geddie and Inglis had only whaleboats, and the occasional assistance of a trading ship and the ships of the LMS. With the birth of the Church on Aneityum their people were eager to take the Good News to nearby islands.

Their first ship was the 5 ton ketch "Columba." Inglis says, "We named it 'Columba' after the apostle of Iona (Scotland),

as we were striving to make Aneityum the Iona of the *New* Hebrides. This boat served us for some time till we received from our friends in Glasgow a small schooner of 12 tons which we called the "John Knox," after the great Scottish Reformer. This enabled us to extend our visits as far as Eromanga. Beyond this we could not go. . . . [Inglis. In the New Hebrides p. 164, 165].

The money for the purchase of the "John Knox" was given by friends in Britain, Canada and Australia. Even the infant colony of New Zealand had a share in her support. She was only thirty-five feet long and was built for three hundred and twenty pounds. There was great excitement on Aneityum when she arrived. The people shouted "John Knokis he come!" Geddie built a cradle for her and she was able to be hauled ashore on rollers by three hundred men to be safe during the hurricane season. Geddie, as the captain of this little ship, often spoke of her splendid seaworthiness in gales and head seas. The "John Knox" served from June 1857 until the "Dayspring" arrived in 1864. She was then sold for one hundred and fifty pounds. But in the meantime she had been very useful to the LMS in the Loyalty Islands and had been used to open up the new LMS Mission to New Guinea.

The "Dayspring"

Three ships carried this famous name. The "John Knox" was too small for growing needs. In 1861 the Mission conference met at Aneityum with only two Presbyterian missionaries present. Paton's wife had died. Johnston had died. George Gordon and his wife had just been murdered on Eromanga. It was a time when everything seemed to be saying "finish." But that was far from the minds of Geddie and Copeland, and of A. W. Murray of the LMS. The London Mission in the Loyalties, which worked in close association with the Presbyterian Mission in the New Hebrides, sent a minute to the conference on 4 and 5 October 1861 and thus made the first move towards the building of the "Dayspring." They said that missionary work in the New Hebrides could not be safely and successfully carried on unless the teachers were more frequently visited, and that a vessel of not less than 60 tons was needed. As the London Missionary Society supported the "John Williams they asked the New Hebrides missionaries to appeal to the children of their home churches to raise the money.

The New Hebrides Mission Conference, in this dark hour, went forward in obedience. They agreed with the Loyalty Islands resolution and decided to appeal to the children of the churches in Scotland, Nova Scotia, Australia, and New Zealand to aid in raising funds to buy and support the ship.

John G. Paton, the man who raised the money

When the mission conference met at Aneityum on 11 February 1862 the outlook was darker than ever. The Tanna mission had just been broken up. Paton, now a widower, had fled to the Mathesons at Anuikaraka, South Tanna. The Mathesons had just buried their only child Minnie. Paton urged flight by ship which was standing by ready to evacuate them. Matheson and his wife were dying of T.B. God overruled this collapse of the Tanna mission in the decision of the mission conference to send Paton to the Australian colonies to bring the claims of the New Hebrides group, as a mission field, before the Presbyterian Churches there. He was also asked to invite the co-operation and aid of the Sabbath School children in the purchase and support of a missionary schooner.

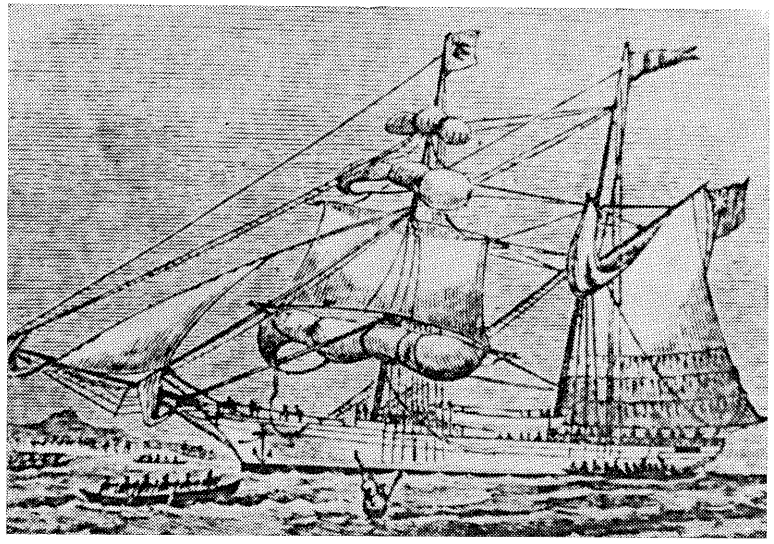
That resolution gave Paton his opportunity to exercise his gifts as a deputation speaker and money-raiser. He was God's man for the hour, and went about his task like an apostle. Till the end of his long life the names Paton and "Dayspring" went hand-in-hand.

The huge oil-portrait of Paton in the Assembly Hall, Melbourne, testified to the fact that he was as Dr. Robert Steel said, the means of creating a new era in the history of the Presbyterian Church of Victoria, and of infusing a missionary spirit into its new life. He travelled to New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia and Tasmania. The gifts poured in. He went to Scotland and Canada to look for more missionaries.

Altogether Paton raised over five thousand pounds. The ship cost three thousand eight hundred pounds after the addition of a new deck-house in Sydney. Paton secured promises totalling one thousand five hundred pounds a year towards the cost of running the ship. More than this came in, much of it from Sunday Schools.

The first "Dayspring"

Paton wished that the honour of building the ship should go to

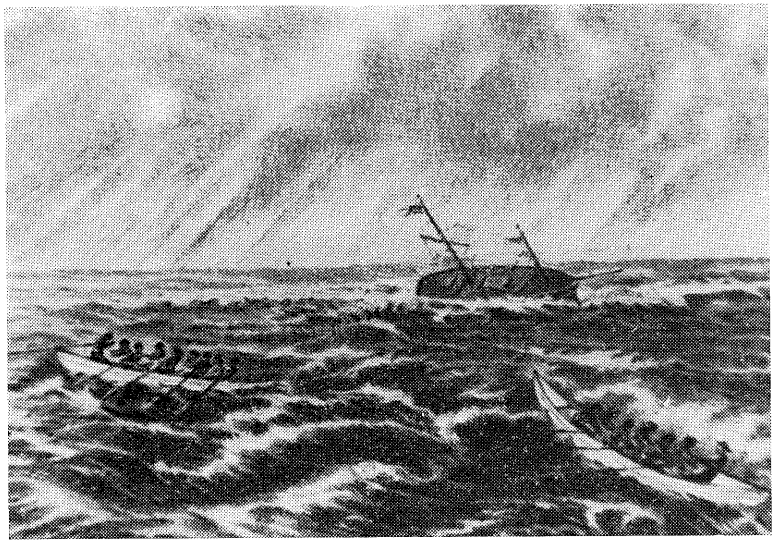


"Dayspring" I, a barquentine of 115 tons, built in Nova Scotia in 1863 for the New Hebrides Presbyterian Mission.

the country which sent the first Presbyterian missionaries. The contract was let to Carmichael and Co. of New Glasgow, Nova Scotia, in January 1863.

She had to be built of the best materials. She was of 115 tons displacement weight and 100 feet long. The planking was fastened with copper spikes. The knees were made of wrought iron. Local timber was used. The sails and rigging came from Scotland. She was painted white with a gold band round her gunwales, then launched, and dedicated on 22 October while still at New Glasgow. She finally sailed from Halifax on 7 November. The master was a Nova Scotian, Captain William Fraser, a man trusted, loved and honoured by all who knew him. The crew signed a promise not to use tobacco, liquor or bad language. One of the original crew was to become the Rev. Dr. H. A. Robertson of Eromanga.

The name "Dayspring" is taken from the Gospel of Luke 1.78 and is part of Zacharias' hymn concerning the birth of the Saviour ". . . the *dayspring* from on high hath visited us, to give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace." No name could have been more fitting, and no Scripture more prophetic of the mission of



The wreck of the first "Dayspring" during a hurricane, Anelgauhat Harbour, Aneityum, 6 January 1873.

the "Dayspring." On the first voyage every ship encountered was overtaken and left behind.

Dr. Geddie and family were delighted to see her in Melbourne on their way home to Canada for furlough. Three new missionary families came out from Canada on her first voyage.

The "Dayspring" brought new life and hope to the Mission in the New Hebrides. For the next ten years she was their life-line with the outside world. She always sailed under the direct instructions of the mission conference, visited each mission station with stores and mails twice each year, and carried all the missionaries to and from the annual conference. The "Dayspring" spent the hurricane season away from the islands, in Australia, for refitting and provisioning. Much of her success lay in the character of the captain and his devoted wife. They mothered the sick, loved the children of the mission and attended to the missionaries' orders in Sydney.

The wreck of the "Dayspring"

When in 1872 Captain Fraser, with his growing family, felt he must resign and return to Canada, the mission was very sorry to

see them leave the "Dayspring." Captain Benjamin Jenkins the mate, who was trusted as a man of Christian character was appointed master.

The ship was delayed in Aneityum until after the New Year. On 6 January 1873 a hurricane devastated the southern islands and drove the "Dayspring" over the reef in Anelgauhat Harbour. Inglis described her as "a total wreck." No lives were lost, but it was three months before her passengers reached Sydney by other ships.

Considering the risks to navigation in the islands the "Dayspring's" life of ten years was a good record. But her loss was like the death of a high chief. The islands mourned for her. She was insured, and the underwriters sold the wreck by auction.

A French company from Noumea who bought the wreck for thirty-eight pounds cut a passage through the coral reefs and refloated her, planning to use her for recruiting island labour. The mission was against the slave-trade for its violence, and ruinous effects on the people and the islands. The owners left the ship at anchor and went ashore to celebrate their success with a party. That night a storm arose and the "Dayspring" dragged her anchors. At dawn the Aneityumese saw her on the reef, this time with her back broken and beyond repair. John G. Paton's first thought was that she had served the Lord so long and would not now serve the devil.

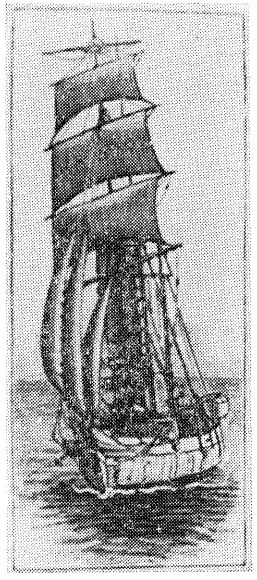
"Dayspring" II

Again through the efforts of John G. Paton, on behalf of the mission, enough money was raised for a second ship. A schooner called "Paragon," of 159 tons, was bought in Sydney for three thousand pounds. Later re-named the "Dayspring" she was slow but dependable. But the mission, as it grew in numbers, was concerned that this ship could not do all the work that was required.

Sea travel on the second "Dayspring" was not pleasant: In 1883 the Mission Synod passed a private minute calling the attention of Captain Braithwaite to the fact that the "pantry was in a very filthy state, smoking and shaving took place in the cook's galley, the toilet was not ventilated and the mattresses were never aired. Cockroaches, grubs and sections of various insects have been repeatedly found in the bread, porridge, soup, rice, butter, sugar and tea."

There were other nuisances. John G. Paton, in the "Dayspring" report for 1879, said "On reaching the islands in April, the escaping gases from the bilge water had greatly injured the paint, and were so sickening and injurious to all on board" that time had to be given for her to be "thoroughly cleansed" in Sydney.

In the late 1880's the Mission Synod decided to sell her, but could not agree on how to service the mission stations without her. Some wanted a steamer. Others felt that commercial shipping could do the work more cheaply and regularly. For some years the mission passed through turmoil on this vexed question. Dr. Robertson says of the first two "Daysprings," "For twenty-three years the 'Dayspring' has not had a single loss of life by drowning or other accident," a remarkable record. The faithful old "Paragon," — "Dayspring II" — had many close calls. Mrs. J. G. Paton was on board in April 1889 when she stuck on a reef in the entrance to Anelgauhat Harbour, Aneityum.



"Dayspring" II, formerly the "Paragon", was a schooner of 159 tons and the longest-lived of the "Daysprings".

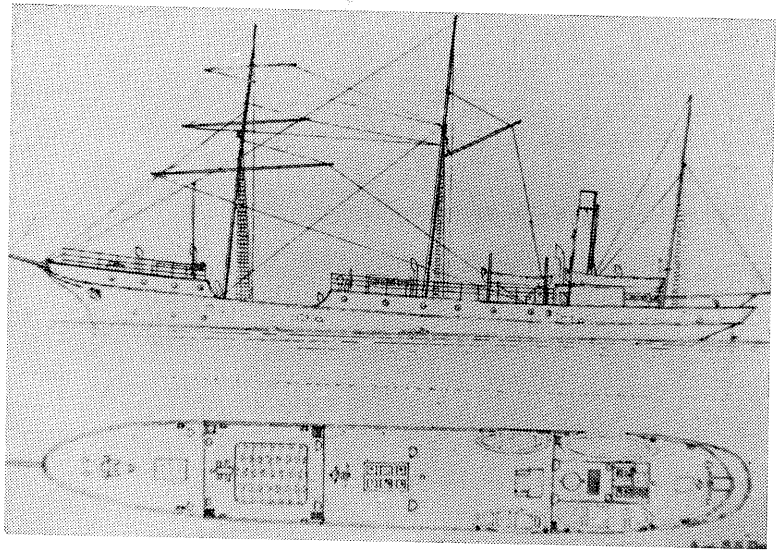
All hands toiled to free her as the tide rose. The missionaries could do no more and began praying. Suddenly they heard Captain Braithwaite shout "Hallelujah! She's off! She's off!" At

the next meal the Captain turned his grace into a prayer of thanksgiving.

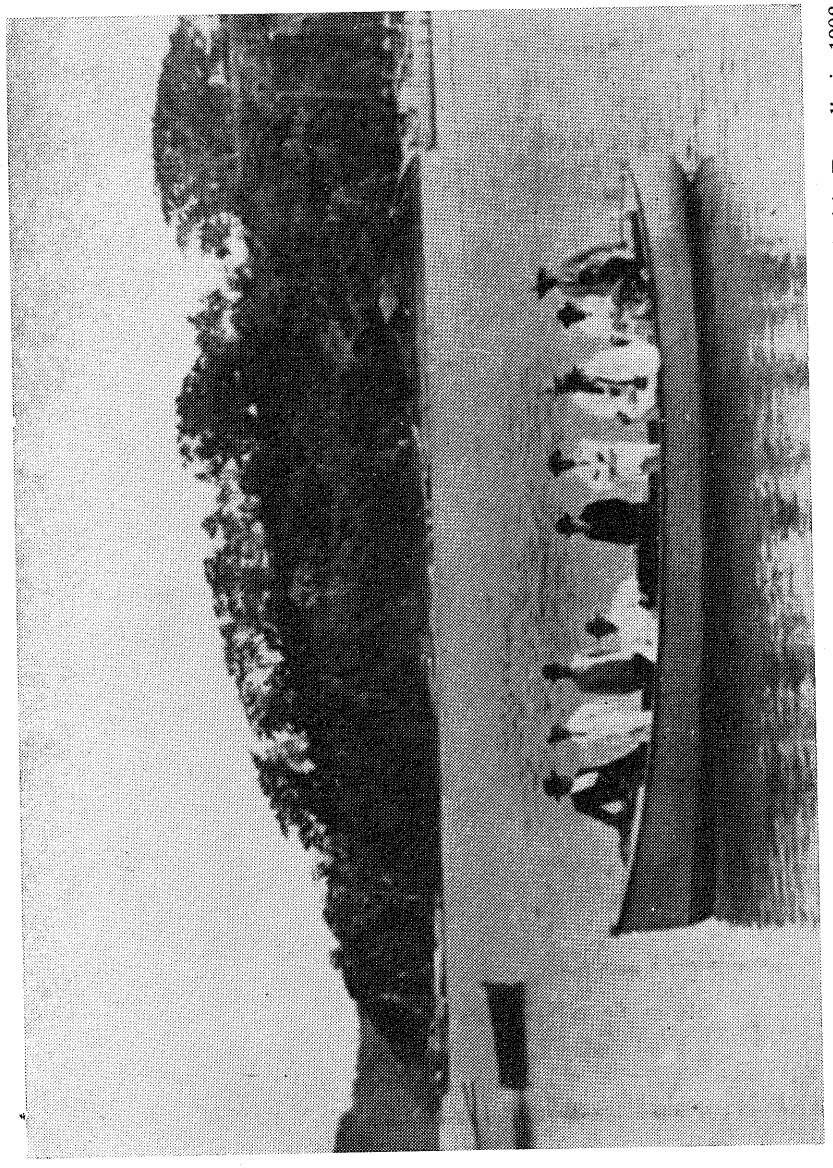
A mission flag was designed, painted by Mrs. J. G. Paton, and approved by the Kwamera Synod in 1889. This flag was to flutter gaily from the masthead of the Mission ships and launches for sixty years. It showed a white St. Andrew's cross upon a cloth of Presbyterian blue. The letters N.H.P.M. (New Hebrides Presbyterian Mission) were done in red on the four arms of the white cross.

"Dayspring" III

By 1895 Dr. John G. Paton had convinced the Mission Synod and the supporting Churches that a new ship, with steam power, was necessary. "Dayspring" III, the biggest and best of all the "Daysprings" reached Melbourne from Scotland where she had been built. She was 157 feet long and also carried sails. On her fourth voyage to the islands she struck an uncharted reef north of New Caledonia and was lost with all her cargo. The



"Dayspring" III was an auxiliary steamship which served from 1895-1896. She struck an uncharted rock off the north of New Caledonia and was a total loss.



The Mary Milne Memorial launch in memory of the wife of the Rev. Peter Milne who died in Dunedin in 1908. Vila Harbour 1909 with Iririki Island in background. Rev. Peter Milne at centre dressed in black.

passengers reached safety in two boats, one of which navigated all the way to Australia. No lives were lost. This was the end of the "Dayspring" era of over thirty years.

For some years the thought of another Mission ship lingered on. Commercial shipping was often unsatisfactory, but finally proved the only solution. Sir James Burns, of the Sydney shipping firm, Burns Philp and Co. was a well-known Presbyterian shipping merchant. The New Hebrides Mission trusted him for a fair deal and reasonable courtesies. World War II saw the end of these arrangements. The Mission Synod annually recorded its thanks to Burns Philp and Co. and to the captain and crew of each successive island steamer for their great assistance.

The early whaleboats

Almost all the early missionaries had a whaleboat as normal equipment at their stations. New Hebrideans made reliable and willing crews. The early missionaries speak of days and nights spent at sea under all kinds of weather conditions.

The smallest of these craft was about 18 feet, The longest, the "Yarra Yarra" of 35 feet belonged to James McNair at Dillon's Bay. It later became the hard-worked boat of H. A. Robertson of Eromanga, who often made trips to Tanna and Aniwa in rough weather and high seas.

The motor launches

The slow but faithful whaleboats were displaced in the early 1900's by motor launches. By 1910 every isolated missionary with a good anchorage at his station felt he needed such a launch for his work. Those who possessed one wrote gratefully of how they could do their work in half the time, and without the former risks. In 1913 there were sixteen launches in the service of the mission and the church.

Here is a paragraph from a letter of the Rev. Fred J. Paton of Malekula, who travelled 4,000 miles a year in his sturdy launch in spite of a twisted arm and a wooden leg. He encouraged, guided and directed the fifty teachers on that island, many of them on the edge of heathenism and under threat of muskets and death:

> "We ran on, having midday meal in the boat. Sea would have been too big for my boat. I have a native who takes charge of the engine . . . a really fine boatman and fairly reckless. We had

the dinghy tow-rope, a big one, part several times. I wasn't sure once or twice whether the launch would turn turtle. My own boatman was watching wave after wave come smashing over the hood, soaking us, and said with a beaming smile, "Suppose our boat, he drown finis!" (Our boat is as good as gone).
The tow-rope broke as we rounded into the Maskelynes, and I hesitated about retrieving the dinghy, the reef was so close. We managed it nicely. At night we anchored at Ahambe, and the natives had an old ship's anchor, which we fastened to the launch anchor. Next morning I rose between 2 and 3 as usual on boat trips, but sea was wild and we couldn't have seen to go into the next place, so we waited until an hour before dawn then risked it."

For many years the launches carried sails. With the advent of dependable diesel engines the sails were put away.

In 1974 there were only four large launches left, and one or two smaller craft. Inter-island planes have reduced the need for launches, and the bearing of responsibility by island sessions and pastors has meant the approaching end of the era of costly sea-craft. The Melanesian Mission still has its "Southern Cross" for the Solomons and its "Selwyn" for the New Hebrides, but they are very costly to maintain.

Many whaleboats, some launches, and one or two larger vessels have been lost in the service of the mission in the New Hebrides. But the writer knows of no missionary, pastor or full-time teacher who has lost his life at sea through drowning accidents in mission craft — a miraculous record.

The big ocean-going canoes

The white wings are folded now, and the white sails are seen only in pictures. The work of carrying the Good News from island to island in the group could not have been carried on without these ships and their crews, including the many fine sea-going canoes of the early years of the church in the islands.

I shall not forget Pastor Moses' *napakura* canoe, launched in 1941, in which I did most of my visitation of Epi, Tongariki, and Buninga while missionary of Tongoa from 1941-47.

This canoe's long life recalls such sea-faring pastors as Seulemanu of Tongariki, whose parish was the heaving ocean. By means of such giant canoes with spreading sails he shepherded the scattered islands, as far away as Mataso and Emae. What pastors they were, what seamen, and what canoes!

CHAPTER TWENTY-EIGHT

Roman Catholic Missions and the Presbyterian Church

An outline of the early Missions

WE HAVE ALREADY noted that the Spanish Roman Catholic explorers Quiros and Torres were the first to bring the name of Christ to the islands, in 1606. The French and British explorers who followed in the 18th century had no such aim.

We have seen that the first Protestant Mission to reach us was the London Missionary Society.

The Melanesian Mission came in 1850 under the inspiration of the first Bishop of New Zealand, G. A. Selwyn, who had already visited Melanesia twice before that date and laid plans for the mission.

These four Missions were the main Christian influences at work in the New Hebrides until the end of the 19th century.

From the mid-1860s we hear of Pacific Islanders who had become Christians and settled in the New Hebrides where they maintained a witness for Christ.

In the 1890s independent lay missionaries arrived to work as traders. The pioneer was Houlton Forlong of New Zealand. They were followed soon after 1900 by the pioneers of the Churches of Christ and Seventh Day Adventists.

We now turn to the effect of the Roman Catholic and Melanesian Missions on the work of the Presbyterian Church in the New Hebrides.

Roman Catholic Missions

When Spanish Catholics under Quiros and Torres arrived in May 1606 their ships anchored in Big Bay, Santo, and established a Christian mission staffed by priests.

Quiros was a native of Portugal and a loyal son of the Roman Catholic Church. Priests came with him to teach the Catholic faith. In a ceremony on shore he invested his men with the title of Knights of the Order of the Holy Ghost. Each received a blue cross as his badge. A little chapel was built and masses were said.

The men shouted "Long live the King of Spain! Long live the faith of Jesus Christ!" Their vision was splendid, but the mission was a failure.

Spanish conquests in Central and South America had forced Christianity on the Indians in the most brutal way with sword and gun. Quiros was a mild man but resorted to the same harsh methods. The Spaniards stole pigs and food and kidnapped some of the people. Fighting broke out. Some of the Santo people were shot. The Spaniards seem to have quarrelled among themselves. Quiros and Torres parted, and sailed away never to return. Their mission lasted less than two months.

Quiros tried to get his king to assist him to return. He told the king many wonderful stories about the island. He said that Santo was bigger than Europe, was rich in gold, and had no mosquitoes, all of which was untrue.

It was a bad omen for the future of Christianity in the islands that its first apostles came armed to fight and kill. The reasons for failure are plain.

French Roman Catholic Missions

In 1815 the Society of Mary, commonly called the Marists, was formed in France. The vast field of Oceania was set aside for its mission. In 1835 the Pope placed Western Oceania — or Melanesia — under the care of the Marist Mission. Another order was given the care of Eastern Oceania — or Polynesia.

In 1843 Marist priests landed in New Caledonia under the protection of a French warship. The people drove the priests out or killed them. In 1851 the Marists made a second and successful attempt to begin the mission, backed by French power. In 1853 France annexed New Caledonia and its dependencies, including the Loyalty Islands.

The Govenor of New Zealand, Sir George Grey, arrived at the Isle of Pines in 1853 with the intention of annexing New Caledonia for Britain. He had with him Bishop G. A. Selwyn, who had formed a strong interest in these islands and wished to evangelize them through the Melanesian Mission. They were just too late.

The LMS Mission ship "Camden" had first visited the Loyalty Islands in 1841. Two Polynesian evangelists were landed on the island of Mare, Taniela and Tataio. In 1854 Messrs. Creagh and Jones were settled there as LMS missionaries. In 1864 the first

Roman Catholic priests arrived at Mare. The people did not welcome them and their presence caused so much trouble that the Mare people were glad to see the priests leave in 1870. Others returned in 1875.

Lifu, the largest island in the Loyalties, received its first LMS evangelists in 1845. One of them, Pao by name, became the apostle of Lifu. In 1859 the LMS settled two missionaries there and the work prospered. In 1864 French soldiers were posted to a spot only half a mile from the Mission station. The LMS historian writes of what followed: Christian work was almost entirely stopped, the natives were oppressed, many were killed, many imprisoned . . . the English missionaries were not allowed to officiate in any public capacity." [Lovett, Hist. of LMS 1 414]

Uvea, a smaller island, was evangelized by LMS converts from Mare in 1856. In 1857 French Roman Catholic priests arrived. In spite of opposition the Protestant Church grew. An LMS missionary was appointed to Uvea in 1864 but the French authorities refused to allow him to land. He spent a year serving the New Hebrides Presbyterian Mission on Aneityum. In 1865 he was allowed to enter Uvea. He was the Rev. S. Ella.

It is easy to see the unsettling effect that these events in the Loyalty Islands would have on the New Hebrides Mission barely 150 miles to the east.

The minutes of the New Hebrides Mission conferences from 1864 onwards show growing anxiety for the LMS in their troubles with the French government and with the Roman Catholic priests. During these years the Loyalty Islands mission of the LMS was the closest of all missions to the Presbyterian mission in the New Hebrides. The "Dayspring," served both missions, which missions worked almost as one fellowship. The Loyalty Islands mission undertook to send some of their evangelists to open up Ambrym, but seem to have been prevented. Ambrym later refused to take the teachers when they did arrive in 1865.

These events in the Loyalty Islands influenced the thinking of the New Hebrides Mission. The Presbyterians viewed with alarm the growing possibility that France would move into the New Hebrides, annex these islands, and use the Roman Catholic Church as an ally in its political purposes. However the Roman Catholic mission, after its short-lived stay at Aneityum from 1848 to 1852, did not return to the New Hebrides until 1885.

CHAPTER TWENTY-NINE

Anglicans and Presbyterians

THANKS TO THE character of the fathers of the Presbyterian and Anglican missions in the New Hebrides, relationships between the the two churches were close, practical and constructive. They began their work about the same time. Whatever difficulties arose came with the later generation of missionaries after 1880.

George Augustus Selwyn was only thirty-two years of age when he was consecrated the first Bishop of New Zealand in 1841. The Colony was in its infancy, with growing problems between the Maoris and European colonists. Selwyn's instructions from the Archbishop of Canterbury placed the great spread of islands north of New Zealand under his care. Selwyn was young and vigorous and took the challenge seriously. By 1847 he had convinced the Synod of the Church of England in New Zealand of their duty to evangelize the islands of Melanesia. In 1848 a voyage of H.M.S. "Dido" gave Selwyn his first chance to see the islands.

The bishop met Captain Paddon at the Isle of Pines, New Caledonia. Paddon convinced Selwyn that Melanesian people respect fair play. Selwyn at once took the lesson to heart and soon earned the respect and trust of the people of Melanesia and made voyages in small schooners each year from 1849 to 1852.

In 1849 he was thrilled to take his first five Melanesian students for training at his college in Auckland, all from the Loyalty Islands. He planned to get young men from the islands, test them on board ship, then take them to New Zealand for seasonal training before sending them back to their own islands and people. He hoped to sustain them by regular visits of encouragement in the first "Southern Cross," provided in 1853.

This plan was like that of the LMS whom he seemed to follow in this matter. The idea was expressed in his words to the 1847

Synod of his Church in New Zealand: "A native agency is the great thing needed."

Selwyn had two basic principles: Never to begin Anglican work where another mission was already established, and never to encourage new converts to give up their own ways of life unless these clearly conflicted with Christian teachings. He went out of his way to call on Geddie in the first difficult years of Geddie's work on Aneityum, and in 1852 gave a free passage from New Zealand to Aneityum to the Rev. John Inglis and Mrs. Inglis. Inglis admired Selwyn as much as Geddie and called him a "man to whom the New Hebrides Mission was much indebted during the earlier years of its history." [Inglis, In the New Hebrides p. 308].

The first money contributions to reach the Presbyterian Mission from New Zealand were collected by Selwyn. Even the Anglicans in Dunedin gave thirty-four pounds sixteen shillings and four pence. "And mind you," said the Bishop, "I got only thirteen pounds for my own Mission." These gifts helped to pay for the upkeep of the little schooner "John Knox."

In 1861 Selwyn's young admirer John Coleridge Patteson was consecrated first Bishop of Melanesia. He built faithfully upon Selwyn's foundations. Together they had made missionary visits during the late 1850's.

Of that period Inglis wrote that Selwyn "Did everything in his power to promote the interests of our mission. . . . The greatest services that he and Bishop Patteson rendered to the South Sea missions was their example. As a missionary Bishop Selwyn stood unsurpassed for his self-denial, his energy and his enterprise. His modes of operation did not, however, commend themselves to the majority of South Sea missionaries." [Inglis, In the New Hebrides p. 310, 317].

Inglis is here probably referring to the failure of the Melanesian mission to settle resident missionaries. Because of this failure the fruits of the training programme in New Zealand and Norfolk Island largely disappeared. The island of Emae was one such failure, after long years of sacrifical labour by the Melanesian mission.

The Presbyterian mission returned the warm respect of the Anglicans. Inglis kept his Reformed Presbyterian Church in

Scotland in touch with the Bishop's kindnesses. The children of that small Scottish Church raised the fifty pounds for the first "Southern Cross" in 1853. They also raised three hundred pounds for the repair of the LMS ship "John Williams" in 1860.

When word reached the Presbyterian Synod of the death of Bishop Selwyn, Synod recorded "its sincere esteem and grateful rememberance of a high-spirited and noble worker in the Master's vineyard."

The Presbyterian mission thought just as highly of Selwyn's young colleague and successor Bishop Patteson who was able to "rough it" among the islands in a way that endeared him to Christians and cannibals alike. All who knew him trusted him. He loved the people and lived close to them in their troubles with the blackbirding ships. His students at the college were like his sons. They lived and ate as one family in Christ.

After 1865 Patteson's work suffered from the ravages of the recruiting ships as they traded in the bodies and souls of the people.

In 1872 the Presbyterian Synod declared that Patteson's labours had "greatly elevated the character of missions in the eyes of all classes in the colonies, and "conveyed unspeakable benefits to the degraded natives of Western Polynesia."

Two matters nevertheless complicated the relationships of Anglicans and Presbyterians in the New Hebrides.

Bishop Selwyn's high church convictions

Dr. Inglis wrote: "When he (Selwyn) brought my wife and me to Aneityum, he said to me, 'Now Mr. Inglis, you know that owing to the different principles of our respective churches, I can not hold any ecclesiastical fellowship with you; but in everything secular, I shall be always happy to do anything in my power to assist you and your mission.' " [Inglis. In the New Hebrides p. 312].

The bishop, as a high churchman, could not recognize either the ordination of Mr. Inglis or the sacraments dispensed by him. Mr. Inglis could not expect to receive the sacrament of the Lord's Supper from the bishop and his clergy.

A Presbyterian finds this difficult to understand, as for a hundred years after the reformation of our two mother churches, in Scotland and England, the two churches accepted each other's

ministers and each opened its tables to communicants from the other.

The partition of the islands between the two Missions

Some years after the death of Patteson the son of Bishop G. A. Selwyn was consecrated as the second Bishop of Melanesia.

Bishop J. R. Selwyn wrote to the Presbyterian mission Synod asking that some plan of joint action be arranged for the two missions in the New Hebrides — the Melanesian mission and the Presbyterian mission.

The Presbyterian Synod in 1880 dealt with this request and referred Bishop Selwyn to the terms of his fathers plan of 1853.

This plan, contained in a letter from Aneityum to the Samoan Mission of the LMS, of 12 August 1853, proposed that the whole of the New Hebrides Group should be recognized as the field of the Presbyterian Mission and the LMS, while the Melanesian Mission should occupy other groups as named in the letter.

The Presbyterian Synod pointed out that the LMS had withdrawn and "the Synod has felt that this group of islands is the Presbyterian field by common consent."

Bishop J. R. Selwyn replied on 7 July 1880 and 23 April 1881 withdrawing as a Mission from Emae and drawing a boundary between the two missions whish left the whole of the New Hebrides to the Presbyterians, except Oba, Aurora (Maewo), and Pentecost, and the Banks and Torres Islands further north.

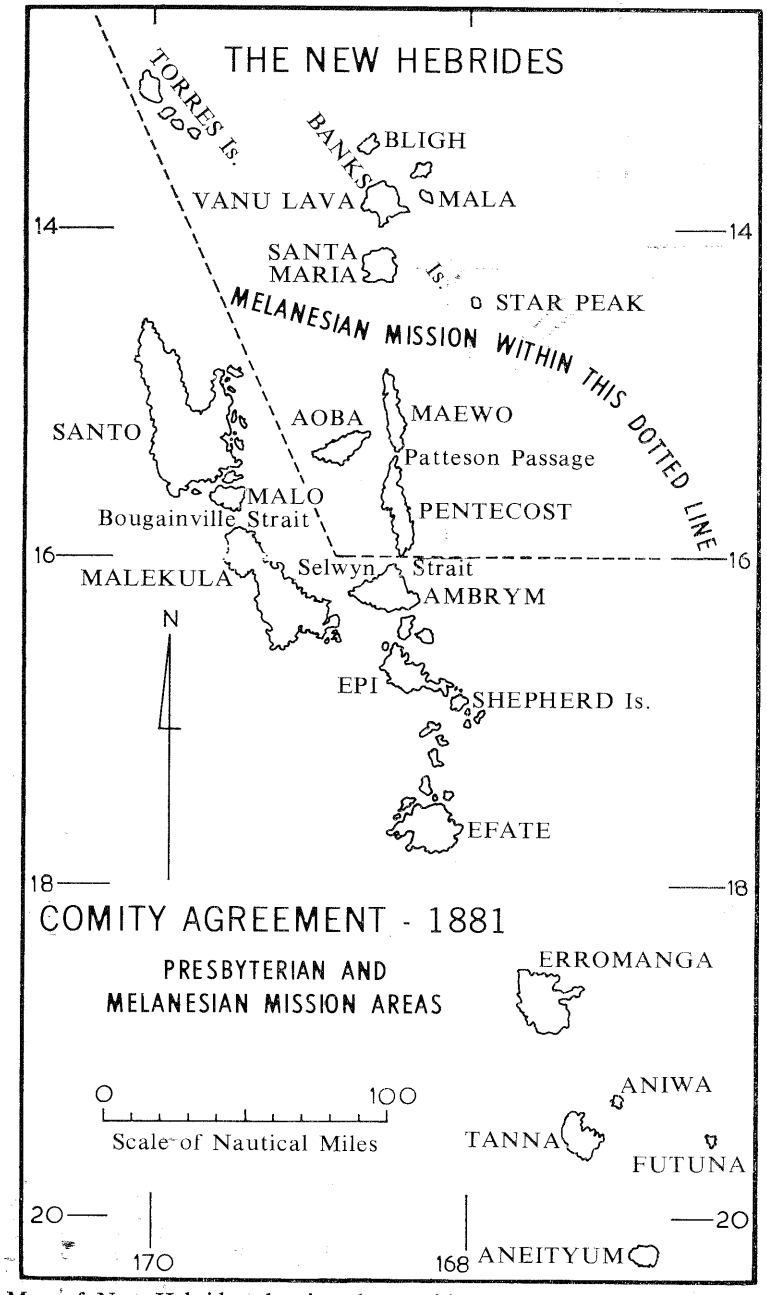
The Presbyterian Synod in 1881 acquiesced in this arrangement. The map shows by a dotted lie where this partition was made.

This was the most fair and proper settlement that could have been reached. Yet the decision has led to some restiveness on both sides as the years have passed and situations have changed in the New Hebrides.

Summary

Thus, by 1881 the LMS had finally withdrawn; the Roman Catholic mission had not recommenced work; the Presbyterian mission was no longer responsible for the evangelization of the whole group.

The Melanesian mission had a clear field for evangelism in the three northern islands, and in the Banks and Torres Islands, but they were late in settling workers on the Islands of Oba, Aurora, (Maewo), and Pentecost.



Map of New Hebrides showing the partition of the islands between the Presbyterian and Melanesian Missions, 1881.

CHAPTER THIRTY

A Tree With Many Roots

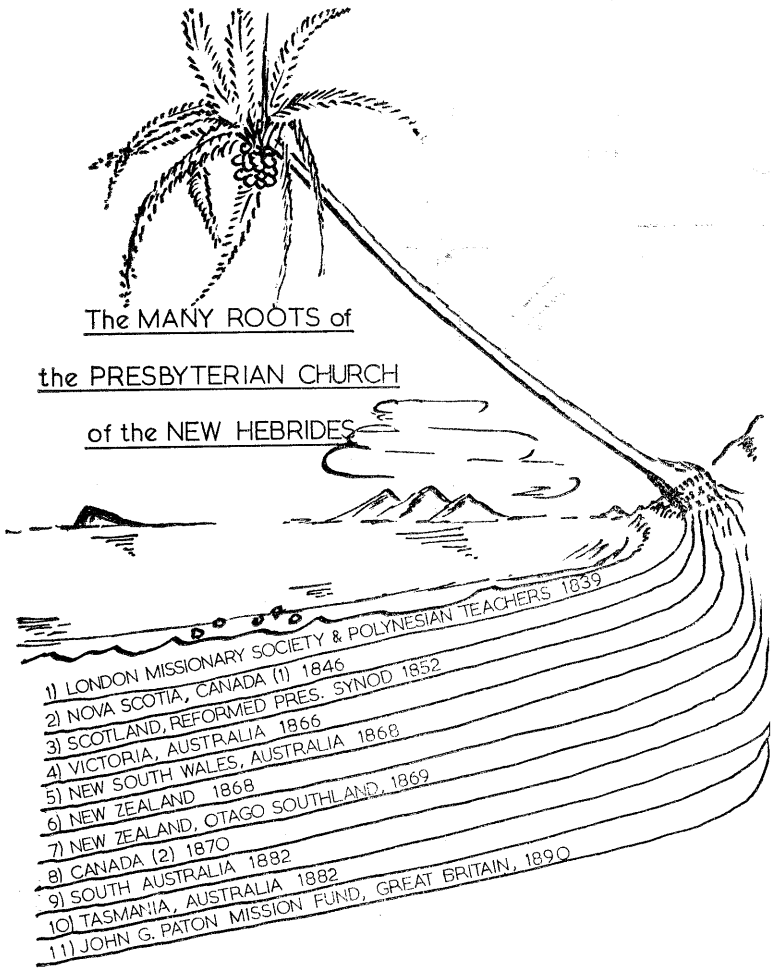
THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH of the New Hebrides is today like a tall coconut palm with spreading leaves and abundant fruit.

Its *navara* (seedling) was planted by unseen Hands before the coming of the first Christian missionaries. Gradually the young palm drew life from many tender roots. These roots are the churches which began and continued the New Hebrides mission and finally brought the Presbyterian Church to self-government in 1948.

This chapter tells the story of the team-work of many partner Churches from different countries, cultures and languages which led to the healthy growth of the Church in these islands.

Here in the illustration is the palm tree and here are the roots, numbered in the order of arrival of the missionaries of these missions and Churches:—

1. The London Missionary Society and its daughter Churches in Polynesia, especially those on Samoa and the Cook Islands, from 1839 onwards.
2. The Presbyterian Church of the Lower Provinces of British North America. This is the full name of the small United Secession Church which sent Geddie and most of the Canadian missionaries to the New Hebrides, from 1846 onwards to 1873.
3. The Reformed Presbyterian Church of Scotland sent the Rev. J. Inglis and others from 1852 to 1875. This Church united with the much stronger Free Church of Scotland in 1876.
4. The Presbyterian Church of Victoria in 1866 appointed as its first missionaries the Rev. J. G. Paton and J. Cosh. Both men had come to the New Hebrides as missionaries of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Scotland.
5. The Presbyterian Church of New South Wales in 1868 appointed as its first missionary the Rev. J. D. Gordon of Canada.



The coconut palm symbolises the Presbyterian Church of the New Hebrides. The roots symbolise the missionary churches and agencies which helped to plant the Church, 1839-1890.

6. The Presbyterian Church of New Zealand in 1868 appointed as its first missionary the Rev. William Watt. He trained in the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Scotland. This New Zealand Church is referred to as the Northern Church.
7. The Presbyterian Church of Otago and Southland, New Zealand, appointed its first missionary in 1869. He was the Rev. Peter Milne, trained by the Free Church of Scotland and the Presbyterian Church of England. The two Presbyterian churches in New Zealand united in 1901 and this Church has helped the New Hebrides ever since.

8. The second Canadian church to send workers was the Church of the Maritime Provinces of British North America in connection with the Established Church of Scotland. This Church sent out the Rev. John Goodwill in 1870, and the Rev. H. A. Robertson in 1872.
   The various Presbyterian Churches in Canada united in 1875 to form the Presbyterian Church in Canada. The Mission took note of this event in the 1875 meeting of the Synod, and hoped that misionaries would continue to be sent to the New Hebrides. In spite of this moving appeal from the New Hebrides no further ordained Canadian missionaries were sent out. Dr. Annand later had the help of lay relatives Mr. and Mrs. Ewan G. McAfee, from Canada, at the Teachers' Training Institution.
9. The Presbyterian Church of South Australia sent out the Rev. William Gray in 1882 and continued to support the New Hebrides.
10. The two Presbyterian Churces in Tasmania (the Free Church and the Church of Scotland) united to send out their first missionary, the Rev. R. M. Fraser of the Free Church of Scotland in 1882. They continued to support the New Hebrides.

To these ten roots must be added the great assistance of the John G. Paton Mission Fund, established in 1890. For some years this was the largest supporting body in the Mission Synod, with a special interest in the unevangelized areas of the New Hebrides.

Two points are worth noting.

The first missionaries of the Churches of Australia and New Zealand all came from Scotland and carried the loyal, Bible-based Reformed faith of the smaller branches of Scottish Presbyterianism. This has left a definite mark on the character of the island church to this day.

Further, most of these Scottish missionaries and some of the Canadians later became influential in the life of growing colonial Presbyterian Churches in Australia. None stood higher than Dr. J. G. Paton, but Dr. J. Cosh, Rev. J. Copeland, T. Watt Leggatt,

Frank H. L. Paton, J. Noble Mackenzie, J. D. Landels, Dr. Daniel Macdonald and others continued to give effective leadership.

The famous Dr. Alexander Duff of India, when he was secretary of the Foreign Missions Committee of the Free Church of Scotland, had a great love for the work in the New Hebrides. He helped to bring about the union of the Reformed and Free Churches of Scotland in 1876, which strengthened the work in the New Hebrides.

When the World Presbyterian Alliance met for the first time in Edinburgh in 1877 the New Hebrides Presbyterian Mission was represented by Dr. John Inglis. Dr. Duff had hoped to be present to propose to the Churches of the World Presbyterian Alliance that they co-operate in strengthening the New Hebrides Mission, but was too sick to attend. Instead he sent a letter setting out his grand vision. However, he died in 1878, and the hopeful plan died with him.

God has made the New Hebrides mission a good example of a great variety of churches working together, within the Presbyterian order, to bring the island church into being. We are a tree with many roots — long and strong roots.

CHAPTER THIRTY-ONE

Money in the Young Church

Williamu's four dollars

WHEN THE FIRST LMS teachers settled at Ipeke, near Aname on Aneityum in the year 1841 a lad named Williamu, then about fourteen years old, joined them. He was one of those who welcomed the coming of John Geddie in 1848. Williamu was baptized by Geddie in 1854, one of two young men who were the first-fruits of Mr. Inglis' district.

Williamu wanted to show his love for Mr. Inglis. He brought him a fine pig weighing over sixty kilos, the best gift he could offer within his culture. Williamu became one of the first evangelists to go to a heathen village on Aneityum — and was later elected deacon and elder. When Williamu, who always showed deep interest in the Bible, was about thirty, Inglis took him to Scotland to assist in completing the Aneityumese New Testament.

As a young man he sold four valuable shells to a trader for four silver dollars. These shells were highly prized by the chiefs on Eromanga. The trader knew that with each shell he could buy a boatload of sandalwood. Williamu gave the four dollars to the Bible Society to help to pay for the translations of Scripture portions into his own language. Those four dollars were the first money Williamu owned.

Trade goods and money

In the early days of trading in the islands trade goods were used to pay for produce and labour. Tobacco, and later matches, were commonly used. That is how smoking became so common among heathen and church people alike.

There was very little money about until the people began to be recruited to the plantations in Fiji and Queensland. In Queensland they were paid in gold sovereigns. I remember seeing some of these sovereigns as late as the year 1941. The custom was to

hide the coins in a hole in the ground because there was no bank. In this way much money was lost.

Sharing the cost

The cost of planting a mission station was borne by the church which sent out the missionary, the cost of building up the congregations by the local people. This seems clearly to be the New Testament pattern for church-planting, church-growth and church-support. The first missionaries saw this clearly and gave the church a chance to be self-reliant and responsible.

Missionaries paid wages to the people who helped at the mission stations in building and maintaining mission property, and in other ways. The payment in those early years was often in food and clothing. Work done for the local church was free. Thus the first teachers on Aneityum went out to heathen villages without receiving any payment, except a gift of clothing at the end of the year.

When a new building was needed, such as a church, teacher's house or day school, the whole village, or wider Christian community, worked to collect the material and construct the building. Workers were fed daily with community feasts. This is the way the people have always said "thank you" for work-parties. The people learned from the beginning that local support is the responsibility of the local Christians, not the home churches or the mission.

Payment of teachers

When teachers were sent out to other islands as evangelists among the heathen the Aneityum missionaries believed that the sending church on Aneityum should support them. Unfortunately another way was also found.

The mission received gifts from friends in the home churches to pay their salaries. The gifts were placed in a Teachers' Fund under the control of the Mission Synod. From this fund missionaries could ask for help to pay the teachers who came to assist them on their stations.

This practice of having the Mission pay the teachers grew stronger and finally became general in the Presbyterian mission. Rates of payment were fixed by the Synod. The responsibility for payment, support and supervision of these teachers passed out

of the hands of the local churches into the direct control of the synod and its missionaries.

Thus a practice which at first seemed helpful, proved a serious hindrance in later years when the churches should have been self-supporting. Mission support of teachers hindered the growth of responsibility in the island congregations and made them dependent upon missionaries and the bounty of the home churches.

Team work

Big jobs in the villages are undertaken by the whole village; the system is part of the culture. No money payments are made. When a village or island turned to Christ this old system of communal work parties accomplished the building of the churches, schools, and teachers' houses. There was no need for any payment in cash.

One of my happy recollections of the use of this kind of community work was the building of the first residential district school at Ere, Tongoa, in January 1942, just one month after Japan's blow against the USA fleet at Pearl Harbour.

The session talked with the chiefs. The chiefs agreed to the project and together the session and chiefs made all the plans. In one exciting day nine huts and larger buildings were erected, all in island materials. The volleys of yodelling and singing as the big timbers and bundles of wild cane were carried in by sweating work-parties told its own story. This is the New Hebridean way of doing the work of the Church.

Arrowroot as a cash crop

The cost of schoolbooks, translations, Bibles, hymn books and catechisms was met in a different way. The LMS missionaries trained their converts to use arrowroot as a cash crop. This potato-like tuber, which grows in sandy land about the beaches, had no use among our ancestors. The early missionaries showed people how to grate arrowroot, wash it in the sea, then in fresh water, dry it, and sift it. This was a long and careful process. The arrowroot was then packed in casks for sale in overseas markets.

For nearly a century this new and easy source of revenue covered most of the cost of Bible translation at a time when no other cash crops could do so. A small island like Futuna would produce as much as a ton of arrowroot in one year. On most of

the Christian islands the production of arrowroot continued until copra and cash offerings replaced it in the economy of the local churches.

The Aneityum cotton company

Both Geddie and Inglis felt that there was need for some cash crop to assist their people on Aneityum. They started a cotton-growing project, under the guidance of a Glasglow firm of cotton manufacturers. Mr. H. A. Robertson of Nova Scotia, a member of the crew of the "Dayspring" when she arrived in 1864 on her first voyage, agreed to become the local manager on Aneityum for the cotton project. The experiment was tried for only a few years with limited success. From this experience Mr. Robertson gained a love and respect for the people. He returned in 1872 as missionary to Eromanga.

Inglis found that the people of Aneityum did not seem to want money and hardly knew what to do with it when they had it. They could not eat the cotton crop and saw little sense in taking the trouble to grow it. In 1868 Inglis recommended to the company in Glasglow that the Aneityum cotton company be wound up. The directors in Glasglow were disappointed. They did not consider that the project had been a failure. Their main object was not to make money but to encourage an industry that would benefit the people of Aneityum and thus help the young church.

Church offerings in cash begin

The absence of cash during the early years of the island churches helps to explain the late commencement of church offerings. The first reference seems to be in the 1891 report for the church on Aniwa. At the close of the Lord's Supper on 14 October 1891 a collection was set apart by the Aniwa session for the Mission Fund of the Presbyterian Church of Victoria, Dr. John G. Paton's home church, to be used in sending the Gospel to the people of the New Hebrides who were still in darkness.

From this time onwards we find frequent reference to cash offerings being given for the local churches. Soon offerings became a means of encouraging the local churches in self-support and evangelism.

PART FIVE

Faith, Worship, Hope and Love in the Young Church

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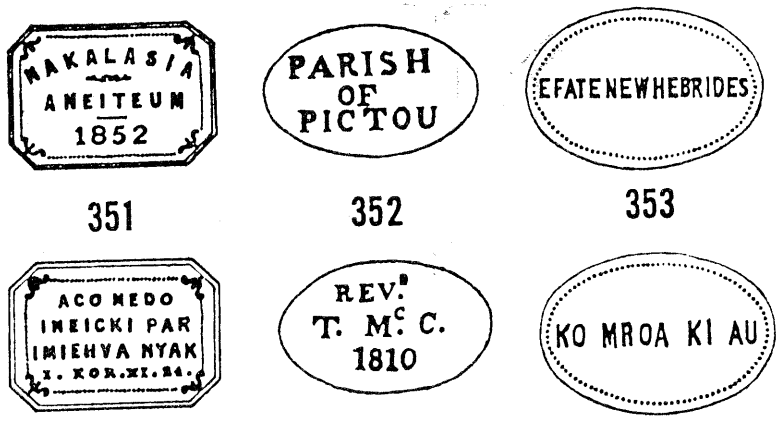


Metal tokens used for admission to the Lord's Supper on Aneityum and Efate. No. 351 shows both sides of an Aneityum token of 1852. No. 352 shows both sides of a token brought from Pictou, Nova Scotia and used for many years on South Efate. No. 353 shows both sides of the South Efate token which replaced No. 352 when the Rev. J. Mackenzie was missionary (photo by courtesy of Mrs. L. Griffiths, Surrey Hills, Melbourne).

CHAPTER THIRTY-THREE

The Faith of the Early Christians

THE CHAPTERS WHICH follow attempt to set out what we know of the faith, worship, hope and love of the early Christians in the New Hebrides. Faith comes first. Hope and love are its fruits. We record in this chapter what we know of the faith of the early Christians in the islands.

"Can these dry bones live?"

This quotation from Ezekiel 37.3 was used by John Geddie in the first entry which he made in his journal, on arrival at Aneityum, on 29 July 1848. [Misi Gete p. 31]. The same quotation keeps turning up in the reports of later missionaries as they stood face to face with heathenism and the demonic forces of darkness. They confessed that the task was one for God and not for man. They felt that they were helpless unless the Spirit of God breathed upon the dry bones and caused them to live.

"What hath God wrought!"

This quotation from the God-given prophecy of the false prophet Balaam, recorded in Numbers 23.23 is the most commonly expressed testimony in the early mission records to the amazing change which came over the islands when Christ began to cast out Satan and light began to chase away the darkness.

The early missionaries were astonished at the great change which the Good News brought in a few years. So were the people, such as the Futunese and Tannese, when they saw the change from darkness to light among the people of Aneityum and Aniwa.

By 1880 there were Christian congregations, with members who had been admitted to the Lord's Table, on Aneityum, at both Anelgauhat and Aname; on Efate, at both South Efate and Havannah Harbour; on Aniwa, Eromanga, Nguna, Pele and

Mataso. A church was formed at Kwamera, South Tanna on 6 October 1880.

A statement of faith

There was need for a common statement of faith for new converts when they became communicants in the Church of Jesus Christ in the New Hebrides. A statement of faith approved by the Synod in 1879 continued to be the rule of faith for admission of new communicants for almost seventy years.

The eight points in the faith of the New Hebrides Church were set out in questions to candidates for communion:

1. Do you believe that Jehovah is the only true God?
2. Do you believe that in the one true God there are three persons, namely Jehovah the Father, Jesus Christ the Son, and the Holy Spirit?
3. Do you believe that the Bible is the Word of God?
4. Do you believe that you are a sinner in the sight of God, and unable to save yourself?
5. Do you believe that Jesus Christ came into the world, and died in order to save us from sins, and now lives in heaven to bless us?
6. Do you believe that the Holy Spirit alone, by means of the truth, enlightens and sanctifies the heart?
7. Do you resolve that you will now give up the service of Satan, and all bad conduct, and serve Jesus only?
8. Do you acknowledge it to be your duty to train up your children in the fear of the Lord, and to seek to bring others to the Saviour?

Comments on the Statement of Faith of 1879

The first thing we notice is the absence of "don'ts." There is no legalism; no rule is laid down on such matters as kava-drinking or plural marriage, though in practice both were serious problems for the young church.

In October 1880 several candidates among the first group of converts on Tanna were kept back from Communion because the Tanna missionaries had made abstinence from daily kava-drinking a condition of Communion. The missionaries Watt and Neilson knew Tanna well. They took this stand against kava because they saw that a man who was always at the kava-

drinking ceremonies was dragged into the life and customs of heathenism, then inseparable from kava.

They were right. Kava-drinking on Tanna was again included in the heathen reaction of John Frum about the year 1940.

Some mistakenly think the early Christians were placed under rigid man-made rules. Nothing in here said about the necessity of European clothing. The practice among Christians varied from island to island.

No reference is made to the Apostles' Creed or to the Reformed creeds of the Presbyterian churches. The early Presbyterian missionaries did not impose a western form of church doctrine and government on the young Church of the New Hebrides. The missionaries claimed that Presbyterian doctrine and government are found in the Bible and therefore sought as quickly as possible to place the Bible in the people's own languages, in their hands.

The emphasis on salvation as the work of God's grace is a mark of the Presbyterian understanding of the Bible doctrine of salvation. This emphasis is clearly set out in questions 4, 5, and 8. Question 4 states that the sinner is unable to save himself. Question 5 states that only the Holy Spirit can enlighten and sanctify the heart. Question 8 sees the family as the unit in God's covenant of grace.

The duty of the new convert to go out and tell others is placed upon the candidate in question 8. The early New Hebridean Christians shared their faith with great eagerness and success. They showed the same devotion as the early Christians in the Book of Acts.

Central importance of the Bible

Chapter twenty referred to the place of the Bible in the young Church of Aneityum. What is said there is true of all the early Churches in the islands.

The Question: "*Do you believe that the Bible is the Word of God?*" was practical and basic. It stimulated translation and publication of the Scriptures in over thirty island languages and gave depth and permanence to the work and witness of the early missionaries. The missionaries based all their teaching and practical social work on the principles of Scripture. They believed that the Bible was God's Book, and that the Spirit of God would use the Book effectively on even the most evil and ignorant

island. The Bible would transform villages and build a Christian society.

This conviction led the early missionaries to preach Bible-based messages. The use of the catechisms aimed to present, in systematic form, the summary of the Bible's teaching on the truths of the Gospel.

Dr. John G. Paton describes how he used the Shorter Catechism on Sundays in the young church on Aniwa: "I carefully expound the Church's Shorter Catechism, and show how its teachings are built upon Holy Scripture, applying each truth to the conscience and the life." [John G. Paton's Autobiog. II 226].

One curious error, however, crept into Question 2 of the Statement of Faith. We do not believe or teach that Jehovah is the name of the Father, but we believe and teach that Jehovah is one of the names for the *Triune God,* God in His being as three persons.

The preparation of candidates for the Lord's Supper

The Synod in 1879 laid down two rules regarding the qualifications of candidates for the Lord's Supper:

1. We think it desirable that none should be admitted to the Church, except those who can read the Word of God, unless prevented by age or infirmity.
2. That candidates be at least one year under training previous to admission, and manifest a fairly clear knowledge of the the way of salvation.

Teaching of the Bible

From the beginning of the Church great importance was placed by the missionaries on learning to read. This was necessary in order that they should be able to read the Bible and so grow in grace. This aim led to the practice of the early morning "school" from Monday to Friday in all villages, which survives in some outlying areas today. The first purpose of this "school" was that they should worship together as a Christian community. At that time the members of the village could not yet read for themselves. After worship came instruction, followed by the daily literacy classes for old and young.

The missionaries prepared a set of graded charts and primers, followed by simple Scripture readers. Last of all the people read

books of the Bible in translation. Thus the Church quickly became literate. The means of growth and grace came within their grasp. The early missionaries never thought of using Bislama or English as alternatives to local languages. They believed that one's mother tongue best conveys the message and meaning of the Bible. Classes for the teaching of English began in some parts of the church about the year 1900. They were popular among young men whose fathers wanted them to be able to run stores, go about on ships and be good business men.

The prayer meeting

Every station also had its morning prayer meeting for the Christians, usually held on Wednesday or Thursday morning, in place of the morning "school." The aim was to ask God to move powerfully in the hearts of the people.

The missionaries bound themselves to do the same. At the 1874 Synod they agreed to a "concert of prayer." Every Wednesday night at 7.30 each missionary family would spend time in prayer "for a special blessing on the Mission." In 1878 the Synod gave the need for more missionaries as a further reason to keep up these prayer meetings.

Candidates' classes

Why did the mission insist upon candidates attending the preparation classes for a whole year? In many places the class was held for about two hours, once a week. This centralized class meant that many of the candidates had to make long journeys from distant villages. They could do no garden work on that day because the whole time was taken up in getting to and from the class.

The purpose of the thorough training was to make sure that candidates knew the way of salvation in both their hearts and heads. They would thus be well grounded against the assaults of Satan and the pull of the old heathen way of life. A full year of classes tested the sincerity and purpose of each candidate, in the face of wet weather, times of sickness, and other problems. Half-hearted candidates found it easy to make excuses and drop out. The wheat was sifted from the tares before candidates came to Communion.

The early missionaries feared the bad effect of one back-slider,

Peter Milne learned a hard lesson over the apostasy of one of the first three men he baptized on Mataso in 1875, which troubled him for a long time. This rule helps to explain the continuing life and vitality in the Church after one hundred years, in spite of much that disappoints people and dishonours Christ.

Finally the long period of preparation was an object lesson to the heathen that Christianity was no easy road. Jesus' words were spelled out month after month, "Strive to enter in by the narrow gate!"

The narrow way

To the early Communion services the heathen came in large numbers to see a few new converts baptized and received into the church. The heathen recognized that the Lord's Supper was a *tapu* feast. The New Hebridean people still remember this solemn fact.

Every convert had to let God search his heart, life, family, relationships, and reasons for leaving the old heathen life and entering the fellowship of the Church. He did this with the open Bible as his teacher and guide.

CHAPTER THIRTY-THREE

The Worship of the Early Christians

Their places of worship

THE POLYNESIAN TEACHERS who first brought the Gospel held services wherever they could gather a few people together. Usually they had to worship in their own home. Later they built grass churches in which they tried to teach the people to understand the Gospel.

The European missionaries also made their homes the first centres of early teaching for any who would come and stay at the mission stations.

On Sabbaths the Aneityumese missionaries would walk to nearby villages and speak to little groups of people wherever they found them — in the gardens, on the bush tracks, in the *nakamales* (men's meeting-houses) and at feasts. They sought out the people who were willing to listen. Before there were any church buildings they often used the banyan's shade.

As soon as a regular group of seekers began to attend the mission station a small church was built, with their help, from local materials. At first the missionaries had to pay for the materials and the labour. Later the people did this work themselves when they saw that the worship belonged to them.

"School"

Usually the same building was used for worship and for teaching people to read. The "school" was open all the time and had plenty of use, so that soon the word "school" came to stand for the Christian church. In pidgin English "school" came to mean Christianity. Thus the people in each area were divided into two rough and ready classes, "man school" and "man bush," Christians and heathen.

Buildings

The Polynesian teachers had made use of burnt coral for lime in building some of their early homes and churches, as at Erakor, Pango and Havannah Harbour on Efate.

On Aneityum Dr. Geddie used coral rock for his biggest church whose ruins can still be seen at Anelgauhat.

By 1880 we find that western-style wooden churches of frame and weatherboard began to appear. The first of these was the Martyrs' Memorial Church which was shipped down to Eromanga from Sydney on the "Dayspring" in 1879. This church was erected at Dillon's Bay in 1880. The money was raised mainly in New South Wales.

About this time galvanized iron roofs began to replace the island thatch of coconut leaves, sugar cane leaves and wild cane. The iron had many advantages because the leaf roofs soon rotted and always fared badly in hurricanes. The people liked the iron roofs because they gave a good water supply to the village which had such a building. The great merit of local building materials was that they cost nothing and could be replaced cheaply and quickly after hurricanes.

Each church-building effort became a happy social occasion, community activity in the best traditions of the people. The strong men cut the posts and hauled them from the bush to the building site, singing and chanting all the way. The women wove the matting and prepared the thatch. The old men sat in the shade preparing the lashings of bush rope and coconut fibre. No nails or bolts were used.

All joined in providing the special food for the evening community meals. When the building was ready to be opened, a dedication feast and service of worship acknowledged the goodness of the High God and sought His presence and blessing in all the worship of the sanctuary. All of the people had a share in the privilege of building the house of God.

There was plenty of room for variety in the shape and construction of these churches and in the use of island materials. Some churches were built like the old *nakamales*, with great curved posts like the ribs of a whale. Some were oval, or with semi-circular ends. Bamboo lattice work and wild cane often gave a pretty appearance to the walls, and allowed for plenty of

fresh air. The pulpit was a low platform of wood or lime-cement and always stood in the centre, at one end, to command a view of all the worshippers.

With the coming of western-style churches this community spirit received a check. Money was needed to buy the European materials and pay the builders. Only a few skilled men were available to do the work. They had to be fed and paid.

When these buildings were damaged, or fell into disrepair, the people could not replace them locally. They looked to the missionary or his home church to provide the cost of replacement or repair. Thus the impulse to self-help was further checked. In 1945 I saw derelict churches in the bush on Epi which had been built in Thomas Smaill's time (1890-1902). The posts had rotted, and the buildings had collapsed, but the roofing iron was intact and the materials were still treated as *tapu* by the villagers.

Rusty, iron-roofed buildings began to disfigure New Hebridean villages. Little effort has been made to retain the style of the local culture and often the beauty of the local sacred buildings has been lost.

The congregation

The Polynesian teachers brought with them from Samoa and Rarotonga the custom of sitting on the floor while worshipping in church. The old New Hebridean custom was to squat, usually on a log or wooden stool.

The local practice soon replaced the Polynesian way of sitting on the floor during worship. The churches were supplied with "stools" made of logs, adzed down for comfort and placed like forms in the body of the church. The children often sat on mats on the floor in front. The elders usually sat at the side of the pulpit as it became customary for some of them to take part in the service.

Segregation

In the heathen dances men and women never mixed. Men formed one company of dancers and the women another. This segregation was observed in the earliest congregations, the men sitting on one side of the church, and the women on the other, and is still widely observed.

Mothers fed their babies without any sense of embarrassment.

The whole family went to church. When dogs or goats strayed into the building they were quickly hunted out with hisses and cuffs. The services were natural, happy, reverent and hearty. The handshake, unknown to the heathen, became the badge of the fellowship, speaking silently of peace with God and peace with one another. All shook hands with the preacher.

In heathen times the *nakamale* and idol-drums were the centre of village life. This gradually changed. The idol-drums fell into decay. A Christian church took their place. Thus the Christian village usually had a *nakamale* at one side and a Church at the other. Here was the happy union of "Church" and "State." The chief and the teachers were not rivals for the allegiance of the people, but partners. This was so from the beginning of the church on Aneityum.

The day of worship

In the central islands of the New Hebrides the number six seemed to have special meaning as a complete number. Thus in folk-stories Munuai Tavara, the prophet from the sea, told the woman to dip herself six times in the sea in order to cleanse the village of Panita, Tongoa, from its sins. Topuku burst six pigs' bladders, one after the other to cause Lopevi to erupt and destroy the land of Kuai. These folk-stories point to the special meaning of number six. The people knew only the luner month of twenty-eight days; almost certainly some tribes observed a four-weekly division of each month.

I was startled in 1943 when an old man on Buninga, born in heathenism, told me that his people observed a sabbath in their old culture. John G. Paton speaks of meeting people in the northern islands who kept the sabbath before the coming of Christianity.

These facts may help to explain the readiness of the people to receive the Christian Sabbath as central to the Christian life. Almost all the pioneer missionaries were astonished to find the heathen willing to observe the Sabbath, though not yet willing to "take the Book." By observing the Sabbath the heathen showed a reverence for the High God, but by taking the Book they believed they would have to break with their old heathenism. In the earliest years of the church in the New Hebrides the sacred day and the sacred Book went hand-in-hand among the Christians.

Happy Sabbaths

It is common today to hear people speaking ignorantly of the Christian Sabbath of those early days of the first churches in the New Hebrides. Here is what the second missionary, Dr. John Inglis of Aneityum, wrote about the Sabbath there soon after 1852:

> "We offered them the Sabbath as a day of rest, a day also with abundance of food, a day not of amusement and frivolity, but a day of joy and gladness in the worship of God. We took nothing away, we deprived them of no enjoyment. . . . We trusted for success to 'the expulsive power of a new affection.' " [See Inglis, Bible Illustr. 103, 102].

In olden times the people had only one proper meal a day, usually after dark when they returned from their gardens. The Christians were encouraged to cook their Sabbath food on Saturday night. Sunday was the best day of the week: no routine journey to the food gardens, no bringing home of firewood, no tedious cooking in the ground-ovens, but plenty to eat!

Today we find islanders out on the reefs or in the bush on Saturday looking for extra good things, such as fish, coconut crabs, and flying foxes for Sunday's dinner. Though the Melanesian day ends with the sunset, as the Jewish day did, the church has fitted into clock-time and now counts Sabbaths from midnight to midnight.

The services of worship on the Lord's Day

In volume two of "John G. Paton, Missionary to the New Hebrides" (from page 226) we read Dr. Paton's account of a typical Sabbath day on Aniwa in the 1870's, about eight years after the church was established on that island. It was a very full and busy day for both preachers and people, but happy; indeed the happiest of the week.

Paton's book describes the village sunrise prayer meeting of about an hour, when the missionary preached, while elders or members read the Bible and prayed. This was followed by the communicants' class at ten in the morning, at the same time as a members' prayer meeting.

At noon all attended a graded all-age Sabbath school led by Mr. Paton and his wife.

In the afternoon teams visited outlying villages but returned by sunset for worship under the banyan tree at home — a foretaste

of today's "testimony meetings." Hymns and prayers were offered informally in family style, under the leadership of an elder or teacher.

The day closed with family worship in the mission house.

Concerning this kind of Sabbath Paton wrote: "Our hearts were in it, and the people made it a weekly festival."

Sharing the worship

This early worship was free from bare formality and one-man ministry. Early morning prayer meetings and evening testimony meetings was open for any who wished to take part.

New Hebridean Christians have always been more ready to take part in public worship that Europeans. All the Christian men could pray in public, most did so, as they felt led, or were asked. Women seldom spoke, but led in prayer and were foremost in the singing; at the close of prayer or a Scripture reading the whole congregation united in a hearty Amen! — not whispered but emphatic.

Preaching bands

On most islands preachers' bands began among the first converts. Eager Christians went out to heathen villages on the Lord's Day to carry the Good News to all who would hear. As these outlying villages responded to the Gospel some of the preachers settled among them as teachers, as on Eromanga.

In the absence of village pastors preachers were frequently sent to Christian villages also. Preachers were rostered for a different village each Sunday; a few messages would last the preacher for a long time. The work of the preacher, like that of the teacher, was good preparation for the eldership. The preachers and elders received no payment.

In chapter twenty we have given Inglis' first-hand view of the kind of preaching which marked early worship in the islands; the missionaries trusted God to do the work, through systematic, thorough and carefully-prepared preaching of the Word. No public call for decision was made; such appeals were hardly in use in the Presbyterian Churches anywhere in the world at that time.

All preaching was in a language of the people; the first missionaries became masters of the island languages and knew

local customs better than those who followed. The early preachers used illustrations from real life, they spoke with parental love and firmness and they reverenced the Book that spoke with divine authority.

Inglis' sermons lasted for twenty or twenty-five minutes; the main service for about an hour and a quarter.

God's hammer to break the rock in pieces

Dr. John Inglis in his second book, "Bible Illustrations from the New Hebrides," tells how surprised his people were to see him squaring stones with a stonemason's hammer. With these stones he built the chimneys in his house at Aname. Inglis used this incident to speak to the people of Aneityum.

> "When the missionaries came, they brought the hammer, the Word of God . . . and they struck the stone with the hammer; they applied the Word of God to your hearts. They translated the Word of God into your language, they read it to you; they taught you to read it, you read it yourselves; you committed portions of it to memory, you believed it, you obeyed it, it broke your stony heart, it brought your heart into a new shape, you gave up your heathenism, you accepted Christ as your Saviour, and took God's Law as the rule of your lives." [p. 79-80].

The Aneityumese Christians remembered Dr. Inglis' illustration. Often, after that, he heard the Christians in prayer use some such words as these: "Oh Lord, Thy Word is like a hammer, but our hearts are like stone. Oh take Thy hammer, and with it break our stony hearts. Take Thy good and holy Word, and with it make our sinful hearts what you wish them to become . . ."

Baptism

We have shown that the first converts were carefully prepared for the step of Christian baptism. Geddie was almost four years on Aneityum before he baptized the first converts, Paton was almost three years on Aniwa, Michelsen five years on Tongoa, Watt twelve years on South Tanna, Milne ten years on Nguna before he baptized any Ngunese converts.

Most of the first baptismal services comprised adult believers and their children. The truth of the believing family, within the covenant of grace, shines out from the first founding of Christ's Church in the islands.

The mode of baptism followed that of the Reformed Churches

and was by sprinkling. The pioneer missionaries clearly felt the mode of sprinkling to be scriptural both in form and meaning. Later in the New Hebrides history the baptism of infants began to present problems of its own. To "take the water" began to have almost magical meaning in the eyes of some of the nominal Christians.

The Lord's Supper

Geddie often refers to "the sealing ordinances." Baptism, as the ordinance which opened the way to the Lord's Table, took place only once. Therefore each time the Lord's Supper was administered members were called upon to re-examine themselves.

On Aneityum and Efate metal tokens were issued by the Session to admit members to the Lord's Table, thus following the Presbyterian practice of the Session's guarding the Lord's Table from abuse. Admission to the Lord's Supper was thus a form of church discipline.

Discipline in the church

Suspension of an erring brother or sister from the Lord's Table became the normal way in which the Church showed the sanctity of the sacrament and the seriousness of a professing Christian's falling into open sin. This practice led to members staying away from Communion when they felt unworthy, in fact members often disciplined themselves. It also led to a blurred understanding of God's grace, and of the church's duty to restore the pentitent sinner to fellowship on confession of his sin. Legalism began to overshadow the discipline of the Lord's Table.

Experience later showed that only faithful preaching and teaching of the Scriptures could deal with both the sins of members and hardening ideas of church discipline.

Frequency of Communion

Communion was usually observed only once or twice a year. At Erakor the Polynesian teachers had introduced a monthly Communion. Mr. Morrison and his elders in 1864 changed to a quarterly Communion. On Aneityum Mr. Geddie and Mr. Inglis agreed to hold Communion twice a year in their respective districts, but members were free to go to Communion in both districts, and so partake four times in the year, if they wished.

When we went to the islands in 1941 we found that the Lord's Supper was held only once a year in most parts of the central islands. Often there were practical reasons for infrequent Communion. Some islands were hard to reach; launching was risky; hot-season weather was unsettled; districts were large and scattered; furloughs intervened; there were few pastors.

The solemnity of infrequent Communion was sometimes offset by a tendency to turn the event into a kind of social festival when the women had to have new dresses and everyone needed a coin for the collection. In some districts this was the only cash offering of the year, apart from the village levies for the teachers' salaries.

A trader, married to a part-New Hebridean wife, tried in 1941 to convince me that the New Hebrides people believed their Communion offering was needed to "buy" the sacramental blessings. I was worried at the time by his remark but am sure he was mistaken.

Bread and wine

The early Christians used bread and grape-wine at the Lord's Supper. These elements do not belong to the local culture. In 1875 Dr. Inglis asked the Synod to allow the use of coconut water, instead of grape-wine, where missionaries preferred to use it. The Synod, by six votes to five, decided not to change its practice. Down the years all kinds of substitutes have been used in place of bread and grape-wine, where neither could be used. Cooked yams and coconut water have been widely used, but have never become the rule.

Early Communion services

Here is a description of Communion, taken from Paton's account of the first Communion service on Aniwa, on 24 October 1869.

Mr. Paton, after carefully examining the twenty members of his candidates' class, decided to admit only twelve of them to baptism. They were baptized in the presence of the whole population, mostly heathen, but including many earnest seekers. Two of their children were also baptized. "Solemn prayer was then offered and, in the Name of the Holy Trinity, the Church of Christ on Aniwa formally constituted. I addressed them on

the words of the Holy Institution — I Corinthians 11.23 — and then, after the prayer of Thanksgiving and Consecration, administered the Lord's Supper. . . . At the moment when I put the bread and wine into those dark hands, once stained with the blood of cannibalism, now stretched out to receive and partake the emblems and seals of the Redeemer's love, I had a foretaste of the joy of Glory." [John G. Paton Autobiog. II p. 222, 223].

Christian marriage

The Christian ordinances of marriage and burial showed the heathen the difference that Christ makes in all areas of daily life, though the full story would need a book on the social impact of the Gospel on the people of the New Hebrides.

Marriage had always been taken seriously in the island culture, because its contractual basis involved rights to land and property and to social relationships and family privileges. Christian marriage elevated all of these cultural ties and benefits to a new dignity and placed husband and wife together as fellow-heirs of the grace of life. The Christian home thus became a happy, wholesome illustration of the fact that "If any man is in Christ he is a new creation."

Many heathen men had more than one wife when they accepted the Christian faith. Careful provision was made for the support of the wives who were put away. Inglis points out that the great shortage of marriageable women on Aneityum meant that the plural wives were immediately sought as wives by unmarried men. Dr. Inglis' chapter on "Courtship and Marriage on Aneityum" in his valuable book "Bible Illustrations from the New Hebrides" will amplify this brief paragraph. [p. 162-175].

Christian burial

The heathen despised the body, when dead, and seldom gave it much respect, unless it was the body of a chief or of one greatly it much respect, unless the body of a chief or of one greatly respected or loved. Cannibalism, the desecration of the dead, and the lack of any doctrine of a resurrection for the body all made the Bible teaching of reverence for the dead new and startling.

The first Christians followed the Bible practice of the decent burial of the dead, accompanied with worship, prayer and praise. The whole company of believers gathered as one family at the

open grave. The body, wrapped in mats, was laid decently in a shallow grave. Wailing gave way in some measure to songs of praise and prayers of thankgiving for the gift of eternal life in Jesus.

Christian burial grounds sprang up beside many mission stations. Examples may be seen today at Taloa, Nguna and on Fila Island. Where an island like Tongoa turned rapidly to Christianity the old burial grounds in the bush continued to be used. As a result many of the old customs have lived on. The frequency of death and the steady depopulation of the islands made the people familiar with the smell of the open soil, but for these early Christians death had lost its sting.

Singing in the early churches

The old social life was full of song. The people paddled their canoes to the rhythm of song and hauled out logs to the chant of music. The head of the singers was a person of importance in tribal life. There were elaborate forms of poetry, and great varieties of accompaniment and of musical instruments. The songs were important in passing on the history of the people from one generation to the next. Much of the song was religious and was used for the great festivals of the year and the great events of the life of the tribe.

The Rev. T. Watt Leggett, Mrs. Agnes Watt's biographer, wrote of the Tannese people, whose games, legends and culture Mrs. Watt knew well: "The Tannese are a musical people, and their desire for new hymns was almost insatiable. Even in heathenism the spirits were invoked annually for fresh music for the season's dances. On no island was the service of song more developed than on Tanna, and the spirited manner in which they sang was the admiration of all who heard them." [Agnes C. P. Watt, Rev. T. Watt Leggett p. 43].

By 1896 the South Tanna hymnal contained ninety-five hymns, psalms and chants. The congregations were in the habit of chanting the Lord's Prayer and the Ten Commandments at the Sabbath service. The chants appear to come from the LMS through the Polynesian teachers, as do a few of the tunes which may still be heard.

The metrical Psalms

The Presbyterian missionaries taught the people to sing their own translations of the metrical Psalms. To this day nothing moves a congregation in the islands more than the opening of worship with Psalm 100 to the tune "Old Hundredth" — rolled out with wave-like rhythm and conviction. Psalms 1, 23, 40, 103, 121 and 145 were and are commonly found in local languages and hymn books and have become an important part of the people's sung praises.

Early hymns

At an early date the first missionaries translated simple hymns into language which all could feel and understand. Seven months after reaching Nguna, Peter Milne wrote his first hymn, a translation of "One is kind above all others." Mrs. Milne wrote it out for the teachers to use and to teach to the people.

In 1873 Milne notes "A blind young man from Moso was present at the service. He had heard our translation of the hymn, 'When mothers of Salem their children brought to Jesus' and could sing part of it." [Peter Milne of Nguna p.171].

In 1877 Milne translated the negro "spiritual" "There are angels hovering round," which was made popular by an American negro choir, the Jubilee Singers, at about that time.

"Sankey"

The Moody and Sankey Campaigns (1870-1895) launched hundreds of new hymns on the Christian church. They met a social and spiritual need and found instant acceptance in the New Hebrides church. After 1877 we find Sankey's books providing the greater part of the hymns for island translations. Next came the widespread use of the English editions of Sankey's hymns for testimony meetings and choir services.

Teaching of the tonic sol-fa notation at the Teachers' Training Institution, Tangoa, after 1900 led to the whole New Hebrides Church becoming eager learners of Sankey's hymns and tunes in "doh-doh" notation as tonic sol-fa came to be called. This brought some weaknesses, but they were trifling alongside the revolutionary importance of this lively addition to the people's praise, which gave to worship a joyous sense of reality and bound the churches closer together.

"Sankey" in translation

The arrival of "Sankey" gave a new direction to the translation of hymns, which now passed into the hands of New Hebrideans, who could *feel* the meaning of many of Sankey's hymns and readily translate the ideas into their languages. On many stations over the years the people came to their missionaries with translated hymns from "Sankey." The missionaries could not keep up with the task of checking, copying and printing these early attempts at enlarging the translated hymnals.

The largest of the New Hebrides language hymn books, *"Tusi Nalegaana"* of Nguna-Tongoa shows what the collection owes to "Sankey;" many were beautifully rendered by such people as Jack Tavimasoe and Stephen Kalorisu.

In 1888 a Tannese named Kaiasi, of Kwamera, translated "Jesus is Mine" into his language. Mrs. Watt of Tanna called this "the first instance we know of a native in this group translating a hymn." [Agnes C. P. Watt p. 287].

I wonder if she was right?

Musical accompaniment

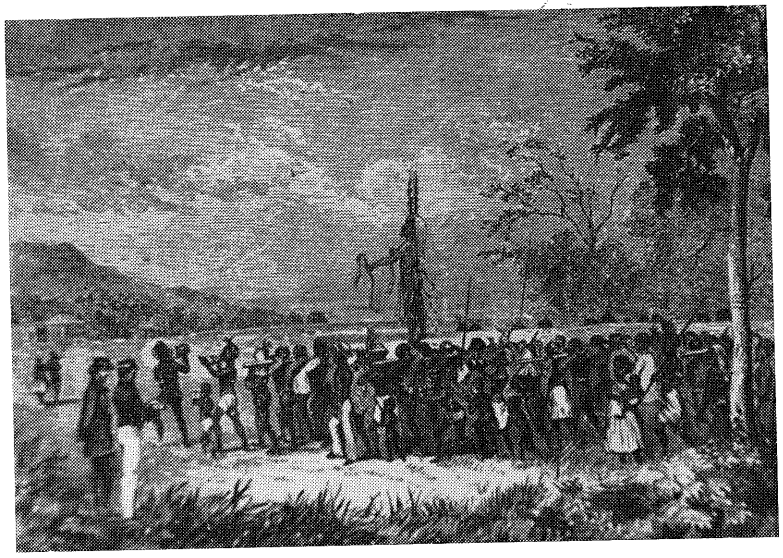
New Hebridean churches seem to have preferred the familiar music of the human voice to the imported help of organs and pianos. Each hymn was begun by a "precentor," who took the liberty of re-pitching the note if he found the pitch too high or too low. The congregation swung obediently in behind him. Occasionally an impatient rival voice would strike up on a new note, or with a faster time.

The first Mrs. Paton, who died on Tanna in 1859, had her piano with her at Port Resolution. The second Mrs. Paton of Aniwa, Mrs. Watt of Tanna, and Mrs. Milne of Nguna had music in their souls. They played the organ and sometimes helped the services of praise in church.

John G. Paton and Peter Milne lacked this gift of music, but Oscar Michelsen was a master of music and of good translation. He was also a favourite on the fiddle among New Hebrideans and missionaries alike.

Singing helped the shy woman and the heathen man to draw near enough to the "worship" to listen to the truth concerning Jesus and was an important part of the work of evangelization in the first generation. It has continued to build up the churches.

The Scottish Revised Church Hymnary became the semi-official hymn book of the Presbyterian Church of the New Hebrides. Its majestic music and unfamiliar English had a foreign sound and seemed to fail to meet the needs of an Island Church in Melanesia. This fact partly explains the popularity of such recent Bislama hymn books as "Ol Sing Blong Nyu Laef" and the ever-popular Bible-based choruses.



Community work on a new Church at Aneityum. Carrying in a huge log, to traditional chanting, under the direction of the chief astride the log; probably 1852.

CHAPTER THIRTY-FOUR

The Hope of the Early Christians

After death what?

The island culture spoke about a shadowy life for the spirit of man after death. But there was no knowledge of resurrection life for the body.

Mrs. Watt says of the ideas of the people on South Tanna about 1870: "When they die, they say their bodies moulder in the dust, but their spirits go to another world called Ipai, which simply means 'very far off.' There they live as on earth, dig and plant, give and are given in marriage. After remaining there for an indefinite time they transmigrate into owls and other animals, and afterwards into sacred stones." [Agnes C. P. Watt p. 110].

The after-life beliefs on all the islands were sad and depressing. The coastal tribes and those on the smaller islands could show the rocky capes and cliffs where the spirits of the dead leaped into the sea, before they began their long and hard journey to the underworld.

The ancestors feared the sacred men who could injure them and kill them by witchcraft. Sickness, accident, hurricane, and death were believed to be caused by enemies using clever sacred men. All the people lived in daily fear of others and none felt safe.

Fear of the spirits of the dead

Worse than any fear of the living was fear of the *natemates*, the Efatese name for the spirits of the dead. Often grown men were afraid to go outside their huts at night. Strange sounds terrified them. A widow would be afraid of the sound of her dead husband returning to the hut at night as a *natemate*. Children were brought up from childhood on folk stories of the spirits. They feared the banyan, the bamboo grove, the reef, the rocks and the burying places. Their lives were schooled in terror and they lived all their days under the shadow of death.

When the Lord Jesus Christ entered the lives of the early Christians these fears lost their powers. Psalm 23 began to be the song of their hearts. They still faced sickness, enemies, evil spirits and death. But Jesus, dwelling in their hearts, took away the terror of their old fears. Jesus was stronger than the *natemates*, and the demons.

Waihit of Aneityum

Waihit was a heathen chief who lived quite close to the Geddies at Aneityum. He began to show an interest in the worship about 1850. Heathen opposition grew stronger. Several Christians died. The heathen said that these deaths were caused by the *natmasses* who were angry with the worship. Then Waihit's only child died. He was a little boy whom Waihit loved dearly. The heathen came and taunted the bereaved father.

Waihit was not yet very strong for the worship. He had not yet been baptized. He went to Mr. Geddie and asked if he could tell him anything out of the Bible that would strengthen his heart and bring him comfort. Geddie quoted the words of David after his own son died, "I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me." (2 Samuel 12.23).

This text met Waihit's need. He broke off his mourning and left the mission house. The idea that he would meet his little boy in heaven soothed his sorrow. When Geddie went to Waihit's house later in the day he found him quietly telling the heathen men all he knew about heaven.

When any heathen tried to shake his faith Waihit always repeated the words, "I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me." None of those heathen knew that hope. The hope of heaven met Waihit's need in that dark hour. Two years later in 1852 he was among the first to be baptized.

Hope of heaven

This inward change of heart led to an outward change af appearance. The wild savage look faded. The frowning face learned to smile. Surly distrust and rudeness gave way to gentle trust and courtesy. God's presence was more real than the face of the sun. God's pardon was like the falling of the rain that washed the volcanic ash from the forest leaves. Heaven was more real than the ground they walked upon.

This faith, hope and love of the early Christians in the New Hebrides grew best in times of trouble and opposition. They gave a clear witness to Jesus when they were in danger, alone, or dying. The widow grew brave, the young man gained strength to stand, the old man had the courage to ask for Christian burial. The Holy Spirit wrote the promises of the Bible on the hearts of the first converts in a way that helped them through their difficulties. The early Christians were severely tempted and tried, but firmly stood their ground.

The people saw this living hope in the first evangelists who came among them, the Polynesian teachers and their wives, many of whom died or were killed in the New Hebrides. Here is a typical story.

Tauri of Rarotonga, 1854

When the LMS ship "John Williams" called at Efate in October 1854 the missionaries found only one of their teachers still alive. He was Setefano. The chief of Erakor, Pomare, came on board with Setefano. Setefano was overcome with sobbing and could hardly speak. His companion Vaaru of Rarotonga had died of fever.

Setefano handed to the missionaries on the ship a letter: It was from his fellow-teacher Tauri of Rarotonga and had been written in February 1854. Tauri told in the letter how he and his wife had made a good start in learning the Erakor language and in their meetings among the heathen. In the midst of these encouragements his young wife died. Tauri wrote, "Death has separated us; but it was *well with her* in death. Alas, for the heathen, they were just beginning to understand, and to rejoice in her instruction."

A month later Tauri's only child died. He wrote, "This is a severe blow — my heart is full of sorrow; Rautoa my son is dead. I am weeping — but I lean my troubles upon Jesus."

Tauri's thoughts for his people were uppermost.

"Our greatest anxiety is for those who have come to us for instruction; they are constantly tried and tempted to turn aside."

A few months later Tauri took ill. There was no one to care for him and he died. [On Tauri see William Gill, Gems from the Coral Islands p. 92, 93].

Tauri was one of the noble army of Samoans, Rarotongans and

Loyalty Islanders who died in hope. They could have stayed at home, and lived in health and comfort. They sowed, toiled, and prayed in hope, and in hope they closed their eyes in death.

A heathen chief on Tanna, 1870

The heathen could see this new sustaining hope of the Christians. In 1870 Mrs. Watt at Kwamera, Tanna, went to see a heathen high chief who was dying in a bush village. The people said that when he died three women were to be strangled — his old mother and his two wives. Mrs. Watt went to try to stop this strangling. Mrs. Watt spoke to the dying man. Here is her account of what followed:

"We spoke of our sinful hearts by nature, and of Jesus the Saviour, of the perishing nature of all earthly things, and of that bright home on high for all who trust in Jesus. As we spoke he lifted up his eyes to heaven, and when we came to that last sentence, 'For all who trust in Jesus' he looked earnestly at me and said, with great feeling, 'Jesu!' "

"Poor man, he was unable to speak more; he grasped my hand as I sat on the ground beside him, and I prayed that the Lord would have mercy on him, even at the eleventh hour. A week afterwards he died. On hearing of his death we hastened to the funeral."

At the burial Mrs. Watt learned that that the old chief had his heathen people that they were to bury him as a Christian; they were to put no muskets, or kava, or gods into his grave; but simply to bury him in a garment; and above all, to take no lives. Every point of his dying directions was full of meaning. [Agnes C. P. Watt p. 139, 140].

John Worarua on Tongoa

Up till recent times on Tongoa, when a man found a slab of basalt rock on the beach below the cliffs, he would take it home. "That is for my grave," he would tell his family.

Many of the early Christians knew the time when they would go home to God. They gathered their people around them. Then deliberately and in quiet peace they dismissed their spirit and went Home.

As I write these words my grateful thoughts go back to the

hope which upheld John Worarua of Selepanga on Tongoa. He died in 1942. "Let there be no crying, no wailing," he entreated his people.

To this day the wailing prevails at death, even among the Christians. I do not fully know why.

CHAPTER THIRTY-FIVE

The Love of the Early Christians

The love of the Polynesian evangelists for us

IT IS NOT easy to gather the names of all the Polynesian evangelists who came from the London Missionary Society, after 1839. Most of them were first generation converts to Christianity. They knew what heathenism had been like on their Polynesian islands. This made them good missionaries while the people of the New Hebrides were still in darkness.

Because of malaria in the New Hebrides the Polynesian teachers were subject to much fever and related diseases. Their wives were ready to face these risks and the additional dangers for women among the savage islanders. Some were left as widows; many lost children by death. Few of those who came returned to their homes again. They laid down their lives for us.

The LMS had a rule never to place Polynesian teachers on an island unless the local chiefs made a promise to assist the teachers and protect their lives. The chiefs sometimes changed their minds and left the teachers to die. When sickness came to an island, or a severe hurricane, the *tapu* men blamed the Christian teachers and demanded that they be killed or chased out of the island. When the teachers were not able to leave for lack of shipping they were in danger of death from violence, neglect or treachery. Sometimes they were isolated from the people and left to die of sickness and starvation; sometimes they were murdered and their bodies desecrated or eaten.

These powerful Polynesian men were strongly built and tough fighters in their old heathen wars; but as Christian teachers they refused to take up weapons to defend themselves. They believed that Christ's example was their guide and rule.

I have collected the names of about seventy of these men, and of some of the wives. I have also recorded the names of over

thirty men who died in the islands, together with eighteen wives and some children.

The records are incomplete. I have estimated that more than one hundred men, women and children, Polynesian evangelists, died to bring the love of God to the New Hebrides.

The love of the first Christians

The language of love among the people who became Christians gradually became the common language of the islands. Visitors to the New Hebrides sometimes find amusement in the way in which everyone wants to shake their hands. These visitors do not realise that they are saying to them "We love you, you belong to the people who brought us the Good News; we welcome you to our islands."

John Geddie found on Aneityum that the people had no form of greeting. While he was in Samoa he heard the Samoan word *alofa*, meaning love or pity, used as the Christian greeting. He introduced this form of greeting among the first Christians on Aneityum.

"Kaiheung raieung!"

"My love to you!"

From the word *alofa* has come the common word now used in the central islands for a hand-shake.

"Talova!"

The idea of such a greeting quickly spread.

When the Milnes landed at Nguna in 1870 Mrs. Milne noticed that the women kept saying to her,

"A rurum iko!", now written, a roromi ko.

It was some time before she found the meaning.

"I love you!"

Though these were heathen women, they could read love in the face and actions of Mary Milne. They loved her in response with an ever-deepening love [Peter Milne of Nguna p. 97].

When Mrs. Miller and I landed at Nguna in 1941 as guests of the Rev. C. K. and Mrs. Crump, we could feel that love flowing strongly towards us. It seemed just as deep and strong when we said our last farewell there in November 1973.

The symbol of love

There are many species of fruit-eating doves in the islands

and there are many proverbs about them. Jesus spoke of His people being "harmless as doves." The people learned what that meant. John Geddie's journal has this entry for 12 March 1854.

> "At Aname today . . . the Lord's Supper . . . We met for the first time in the new church . . . It is pleasing to see so many persons formerly hostile to each other, now meeting as friends and christian brethren . . . A dove had found its way into the church . . . It is the emblem of peace and love, and I thought that it had almost a right to be there. The natives who were now met as brethren in Christ were in their former state hateful and hating one another. And I thought also of the Spirit which descended in the form of a dove, and felt a humble hope that the same Spirit was present with us." [Misi Gete p. 179].

The love shown by the Christians was something new and unknown to the heathen in their old ways. The problem of old grievances and old debts led to the practice of the heathen community making a great feast as the last act of their old life as they were about to take the worship. The feast brought together all their old heathen friends and enemies; all outstanding troubles were settled in accordance with the old customs.

Thus the people entered the Christian community free from any obligations to the past and chose to live under a new law of love. The law of "pay-back" no longer ruled their lives.

This spirit of reconciling love had been at work among the warring chiefs of Aneityum. On 19 September 1852 Inglis and Geddie witnessed a miracle of reconciliation in the church at Anelgauhat. Geddie recorded this in his journal:

> "Mr. Inglis brought with him yesterday an old warrior named Yiata (Yatta). He has not been at this side of the island for many years. In the house of God he met Nimtiwan an old fighting man like himself. The last time they met was on the field of battle. I wondered how they would act now, and was delighted to see them embrace each other when the congregation was dismissed. I could not help turning Mr. Inglis' attention to the sight and saying, 'See what the gospel has wrought.'" [Misi Gete p. 142].

The leaven of love was at work among the first Christians even before they were baptized. On 6 January 1851 Mr. Geddie wrote in his journal:

> "A skirmish took place today between two parties of natives near the mission premises. It originated in a case of adultery. None of the Christian natives took part in the affair. They endeavoured to act the part of peace makers. As the fight was likely to be renewed they used their best efforts to reconcile the contending parties. They went without my knowledge and besought their countrymen to give up fighting, and dwell together in peace. There were four natives wounded in the fight, but I hope they will all recover. Their bodies were pierced in several places with spears and I have dressed their wounds for them. [Misi Gete p. 80].

The Christians not ouly dressed the wounds of the heathen; they cared for them in their sicknesses. On 27 July 1852 Geddie wrote:

> "An epidemic prevails at present . . . The heathen are ashamed to come for medicine, but many of them apply for it through their friends. The christian natives have been unremitting in their attentions to the heathen in sickness and this has had a softening influence on them. It has been in our power, during the prevalence of disease to return good for evil, which seems to awaken feelings in favour of a religion which appears so lovely in those who profess it." [Misi Gete p. 136].

Even more remarkable was the desire of the heathen that the Christians should come and pray with them in their sicknesses. The same journal entry adds:

> "I have learned from the natives that they have great faith in the efficacy of prayer in sickness. They mention many cases of remarkable cures in answer to prayer. Even some of the heathen are so convinced of its value that they request their christian friends to pray for them." [Misi Gete p. 136].

On 1 November 1852 Geddie mentions another similar case, this time of a chief with a record of evil and opposition:

> "The sick chief who was thought to be dying is still alive. I prepared medicine for him at Aname and sent it by the natives. He has been much better ever since he took it. The kindness shown to him by the christian natives in his sickness has softened him. He has been told by them of the disease of his soul as well as his body and he is now desirous to know more about divine things. Some of the natives go every afternoon and pray with him." [Misi Gete p. 145].

The story could go on, from island to island, as the Good News changed the hearts of the people. They showed the flower of love in their lives, homes, dealings with others, and toward their missionaries. None of us who have had the privilege of serving the Church in the New Hebrides will ever know a deeper, more

enduring and more transparent love than we have been shown by brothers and sisters in Christ in the New Hebrides church.

They showed it in their dealings with the heathen, and in their changed attitudes to husbands and wives, aged people, children, and strangers. Even the chiefs found a new dignity when their authority was seen to proceed from God, and His Word.

The greatest display of this love in action was the outreach of the little bands of the first Christians on Aneityum to their heathen friends. Nowhere in the New Hebrides, probably nowhere in the South Pacific, possibly nowhere in the world has so small a Church sent out so many workers, with the love of Christ as their grand compulsion.

They went to Futuna, to Tanna in a constant stream, to Aniwa, to Eromanga, to Efate — and later to the northern islands. Many came home; many perished; many chose to remain and die among their converts on other islands.

I estimate that two hundred Anityumese missionaries left the little island between 1852 and 1879. Almost all were married, and we have counted wives in the estimated number of two hundred. These were men and women of influence, the best the church on Aneityum could provide. They left all. The love of Christ contained them. That "expulsive power of a new affection" to which Dr. Inglis refers, was the love of Christ. These missionaries were sent by the Author of that love, so that their mission was spontaneous, sustained, and successful.

Side by side with this mission the church on Aneityum was awake to the mission of hospitality. Boat-loads and canoe-loads of heathen came to Aneityum from Tanna and Futuna, refugees from trading ships, and returned labourers dumped on Aneityum; all found the open arms of the young Church ready to receive, feed, and care for them. The same story could be told of nearly every island as it was evangelized.

The love of Christ made human life precious. Strangling of widows ceased and destruction of infant children almost ceased. Inglis could name only one or two cases of separation among the hundreds of couples married by him during twenty-five years on Aneityum.

Further north the schooner "Chance" came to grief on a reef on the south side of Tongoa. Mataputi, the chief of Meriu, rescued the recruiters and the crew. His paramount chief, Manaura, from

Mangarisu, wanted Mataputi to hand over these men to him. Mataputi knew that all would be killed and eaten. Mataputi was an earnest seeker and on the side of the worship. He saved these men and Oscar Michelsen the missionary was able to get them away to Sydney by another trading ship.

A year or two later Michelsen heard from Epi that the Napuka tribe on the hills of the South East Epi were being slowly eaten up by their stronger enemies. The first Tongoan Christians went across and rescued the Napuka people and welcomed them to Tongoa. When South Epi took the worship these refugees went back to a new life. The fear of violent death had gone.

In addition to all the other labour freely given the custom arose on many islands of giving time for the care of the gardens of teachers, pastors, and widows. Love knew no bounds, kept no accounts, suffered and was kind, did not behave itself unseemly, and bore all things.

And when love's last sacrifice was asked, it was gladly made.

> "During the night, Korkor, an Aneityumese man who had been with Mr. Murray on Ambrim, and who had been taken on shore (at Eromanga) to die, passed away to his eternal rest. He gave testimony to his faith in Jesus and his hope of eternal life . . . He did good service in the Master's cause, though he was 'only an armour bearer.' His body now rests close by the graves of the martyred Gordons and the sainted Macnair. 'Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints.' " [Mrs. Watt, letter of 1887 in Agnes C. P. Watt p. 280].

Korkor's unknown grave may well represent to us the graves of the unnamed men and women who laid down their lives for their friends.

The love of the early missionaries for the people

When John Geddie was appointed the first missionary of the Nova Scotian Church he was immediately criticised. Just before he left Canada in 1846 he wrote to his friend the Rev. John Keir:

> "The various trials that have been thrown in my path have led me to reflect much on my motives in going to the heathen to preach Jesus to them. . . . My desire to go far hence to the Gentiles is stronger now than ever it was. I long for the time when God in mercy will honour me to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ among the heathen."

These early missionaries were clear about why they came to

us. They came to preach Christ and the benefits which always flow from saving faith — peace with God and man; health of soul and society; respect for self and others. Their plan was broad because their foundation was strong.

Their love gave them the will to learn languages, translate the Scriptures, and banish dislike for books. The people were able to look at Jesus in the Holy Scriptures and in the lives of Polynesian and European missionaries and their wives.

Their love for us made them cure diseases, care for orphans, and stand ready to rescue the people from slavery and death.

Roll of Missionaries 1839-1880

(other than Polynesians and loyal Islanders)

London Missionary Society:

1. Rev. John Williams	Murdered, Eromanga 20.11.1839	
2. Mr. James Harris (visiting Christian)	Murdered, Eromanga 20.11.1839	
3. Rev. George Turner and Mrs. Turner	Port Resolution, Tanna	1842-3
4. Rev. Henry Nisbet and Mrs. Nisbet	Port Resolution, Tanna	1842-3
5. Rev. Thomas Powell and Mrs. Powell	Aneityum	1848-9
6. Rev. Samuel Ella and Mrs. Ella	Aneityum (temporary)	1864

Presbyterian Mission:— from Canada

1. Rev. John Geddie, D.D., and Mrs. Geddie	Aneityum	1848-72
2. Mr. Isaac Archibald, catechist, and Mrs. Archibald	Aneityum	1848-49
3. Rev. G. N. Gordon and Mrs. Gordon (England)	Both murdered at Dillon's Bay Eromanga, 20.5.1861	1857-61
4. Rev. J. W. Matheson and Mrs. Matheson	S. Tanna. Mrs. Matheson died at Aneityum. Mr. Matheson at Mare, Loyalty Is. 1862.	1858-62
5. Rev. S. F. Johnston and Mrs .Johnston	Port Resolution, Tanna Mr. Johnston died at Port Resolution on 21.1.1861. Mrs. Johnston married Rev. J. Copeland in 1863	1859-61
6. Captain William Fraser and Mrs. Fraser.	Of the Mission Ship "Dayspring."	1864-71
7. Rev. Donald Morrison and Mrs. Morrison	Erakor, Efate Mr. Morrison died in N. Zealand on 23.10.1869.	1864-69

8. Rev. James D. Gordon (single)	Eromanga and N. W. Santo. Murdered at Potnuma, Eromanga, 7.3.1872.	1864-72
9. Rev. William McCullaugh and Mrs. McCullaugh	Aneityum	1864-66
10. Rev. Jas. McNair and Mrs. McNair (Scotland)	Dillon's Bay, Eromanga Mr. McNair died at Eromanga, 15.7.1870. Mrs. McNair later married Rev. George Turner of LMS, Samoa.	1866-70
11. Rev. John Goodwill and Mrs. Goodwill	S. W. Santo	1870-1874
12. Rev. J. D. Murray and Mrs. Murray	Aneityum	1872-1876
13. Rev. J. W. Mackenzie, D.D., and Mrs. Mackenzie	Erakor-Fila	1872-1912
14. Rev H. A. Robertson, D.D., and Mrs Robertson	Eromanga	1872-1914
15. Rev. Joseph Annand, M.A., D.D., and Mrs Annand	Fila, Aneityum, and Tangoa	1873-1913

Presbyterian Mission:— from Scotland

1. Rev. John Inglis, D.D., and Mrs. Inglis	Aname, Aneityum	1852-1879
2. Rev. J. G. Paton, D.D., and Mrs. Paton (Mrs. Paton and infant son died on Tanna, 1859).	Tanna Aniwa	1858-1862 1866-1881
3. Rev. J. Copeland	Tanna, Aneityum Futuna	1858-1881
Mr. Copeland married, in 1863, the widow of S. F. Johnston. She died on Futuna 20.1.1876.		
4. Rev. J. Niven and Mrs Niven (immediately resigned)		1865
5. Rev Jas. Cosh, M.A., D.D., and Mrs. Cosh	Pango, Efate	1866-1872
6. Rev. Thos. Neilson and Mrs. Neilson	Port Resolution, Tanna	1866-1882
7. Mr. (Rev.) Jas. H. Lawrie and Mrs. Lawrie, received as elder and evangelist — later ordained.	Aneityum	1879-1892

Presbyterian Mission:— from Australia

1. Rev. Daniel Macdonald DD and Mrs. Macdonald	Havannah Harbour	1872-1907
2. Mr. Peter Holt (layman) and Mrs. Holt	Burumba, Epi	1880-1881

Note: The Rev. J. G. Paton, after his second marriage in 1865, was received as a missionary of the Presbyterian Church of Victoria.

The Rev. Jas. D. Gordon was for a short time a missionary of the Presbyterian Church of New South Wales. 1868-70.

Presbyterian Mission:— New Zealand

1. Rev. William Watt and Mrs. Watt Mrs. Watt died on Tanna in 1894	Kwamera, Tanna	1869-1910
2. Rev. Peter Milne and Mrs. Milne Mr. Milne died at Nguna in 1924	Nguna	1870-1924
3. Mr. (Rev.) O. Michelsen (single) Mr. Michelsen was ordained and married on short furlough, 1880-1	Tongoa	1879-1931

Note: Mr. Watt was sent out by the Northern Presbyterian Church, Mr. Milne and Mr. Michelsen by the Southern Presbyterian Church (The Synod of Otago and Southland). Mr. Watt and Mr. Milne were both trained in Britain, Mr. Michelsen in New Zealand.

Summary:

Thus the New Hebrides Church received thirty-three European missionaries and their thirty wives up to the year 1880. Five of these were martyred in our islands. They were Rev. John Williams, and his friend James Harris, Rev. George Gordon and his wife Ellen, and Rev. James Gordon.

Seven more of them died in the islands or soon after leaving — four men and three wives. I have a record of thirteen missionary children who died and were buried in these islands, up to the year 1880.

Twenty-three European lives were laid down in the islands up

to 1880, while Donald Morrison was buried at Onehunga, New Zealand and J. W. Matheson at Mare in the Loyalty Islands.

Service:

Two of the New Zealand missionaries served for more than fifty years. Three of the Canadians served for more than forty years. The journals, letters, reports and books of these early missionaries all tell the same honest story. That story is written on the grave stone of one of them, at Port Resolution, Tanna.

"In rabi nakur Ipare" — "She loved the people of Tanna." She had often said, "I live for Tanna, and if need be, will die for it," Mrs. Agnes Watt, who died on Tanna in 1894. [Agnes C. P. Watt p. 46, 40].

Epilogue

"*Remember* your leaders,
Those who spoke to you the Word of God;
Consider the outcome of their life,
And imitate their faith."

Hebrews 13.7

WE REMEMBER

Like the sound of many waters,
The thunder of the waves upon the reef,
The voices from another world —
We hear them still, and
We remember.

John Williams and the Polynesians,
Samoans and Rarotongans
Tall and tanned and weaponless,
For service or for sacrifice;
We remember.

Geddies, Inglis, Gordons, Patons,
Copelands, Mathesons, Johnstons, Morrisons,
Women, men and little children,
To die, yet not to die;
We remember.

Nohoat the chief and Nemeyin the martyr,
Aniwa's Namakai and Tanna's Jon Pata,
Mana and Yomot from red Eromanga,
Sualo, Pomare and Vakalomara,
We remember.

"And you shall remember all the way
which the Lord your God has led you." Deuteronomy 8.2

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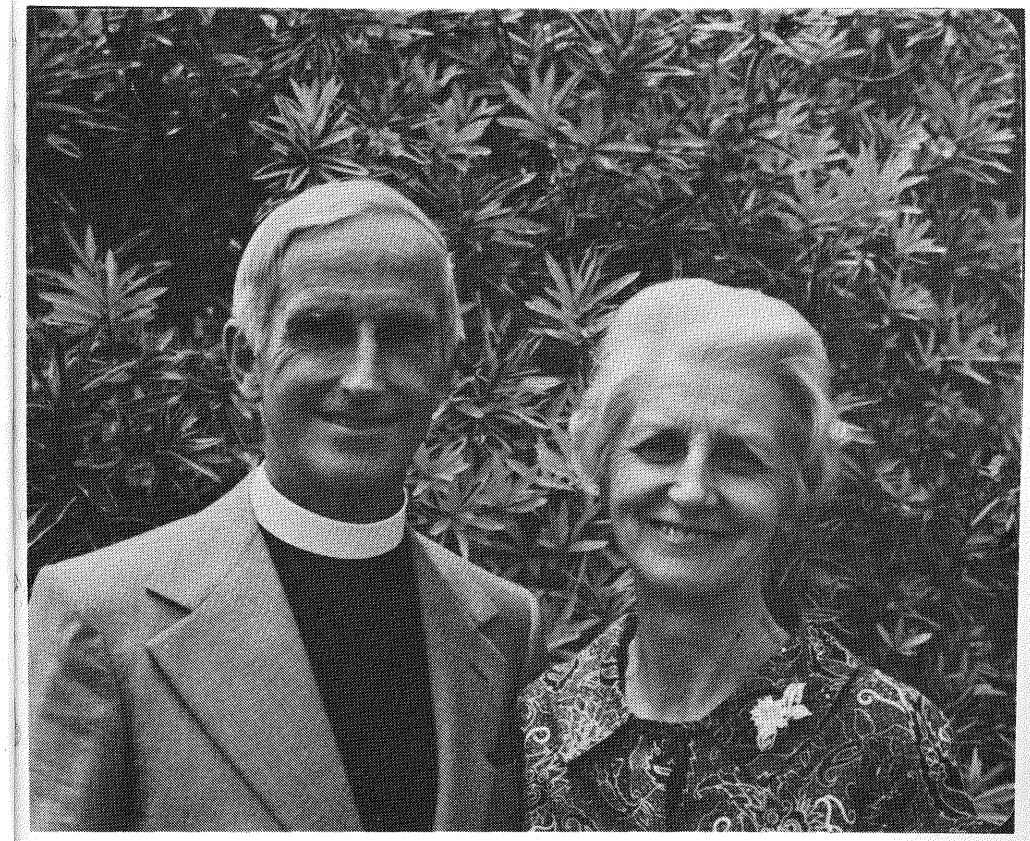

GRAHAM MILLER AND his wife Flora arrived in the New Hebrides in May 1941 as missionaries of the Presbyterian Church of New Zealand. Seven months later came the Japanese bombing of Pearl Harbour and war in the Pacific.

While on Tongoa from 1941-1947 they worked towards the emergence of the indigenous church. This led to the inauguration of the Presbyterian Church of the New Hebrides in 1948. He was chosen as the first Moderator. From 1947-1952 he was principal of the Teachers' Training Institute at Tangoa, Santo. Their four children were born in the New Hebrides. Dr. Miller has served the New Hebrides Church primarily in the ministry of the Word and incidentally as a lawyer, as a linguist, and as an enthusiast for the preservation of the culture. This is the first in a projected series of historical books written to tell 'man New Hebrides' the largely lost facts about the coming of Christianity and the planting of the Church. Dr. and Mrs. Miller were invited back by the Presbyterian Church of the New Hebrides in 1971 to assist in establishing the Presbyterian Bible College at Tangoa on the site of the former Teachers' Training Institute. He is at present minister of St. Giles' Presbyterian Church, Hurstville, New South Wales.