

**GOD IS**

**A SERVANT**

**Missionaries**

**Year 7**

**Term 3**

## Thinking Skills

### Year 7 Servant

<p><b>Serving 1</b></p> <p>You are going to make a 'blessings bag' for someone who is homeless. List the contents.</p>	<p><b>Serving 2</b></p> <p>Make a list of 10 ways you could serve an elderly person.</p>
<p><b>Serving 3</b></p> <p>You are collecting items to send to a kindergarten in the Solomon Islands, where there are few resources for children. Make a list of the things you would collect.</p>	<p><b>Serving 4</b></p> <p>You are going on a mission trip to India. You need to raise money for your fare. Give 5 ideas on how you can raise money.</p>
<p><b>Serving 5</b></p> <p>List 5 things that early missionaries to Fiji did NOT have, compared with missionaries of today.</p>	<p><b>Serving 6</b></p> <p>Make an acrostic poem for :</p> <p><b>S</b> <b>E</b> <b>R</b> <b>V</b> <b>E</b></p>

# Joeli Bulu

## Biography

In Tonga, on the island of Vava'u, lived a big lad called Bulu. When he was a boy, he and his family worshipped the Tongan gods. Even though some Christian teachers had come to tell Tongan people about Jesus, Bulu was determined not to leave his Tongan gods. However, one day he heard a Christian man talking about "a home in the sky for the good." He says to himself, "I want to go there." Bulu longed to go to this beautiful land in the sky, so he decided to become a Christian. The people in his place were against "the 1otu", the Christian religion, so Bulu went to another village and became a Christian.

Bulu's family and the priest of their old religion were very angry with Bulu. "He shall die today!" they shouted. Bulu was frightened. To save his life he changed his mind about being a Christian, but this made him so sad, he went to the forest and prayed to God. After a long time, his father stopped being angry and decided that Bulu was old enough to decide what was best. He made a feast and gave Bulu up to the Christian religion. Bulu changed his name to Joeli. He did not know much about Jesus, he just knew he was a sinner and God would punish him. Before long, a Mr. Turner taught him to trust in Jesus Christ to forgive his sins, and taught him how much Jesus loved him. Then Joeli Bulu was so glad he cried with happiness.

One day someone said to Bulu, "I have heard that a message has come from Fiji asking for a Tongan preacher." By that time Bulu was married. He went home and talked about it with his wife. They prayed to God, and talked to other people. At last it was agreed that they should go to Fiji. They packed their big sailing canoe and set out late one afternoon. All that night they sailed, and all the next day and the next night, and the second morning they came to land. They and their companions offered their prayers of thanks to God for their safe journey. The year was 1838. There were already two English missionaries in Fiji who had earlier worked in Tonga – David Cargill and William Cross. Not long afterwards three English couples arrived, the Hunts, the Calverts and the Jagers.

Joeli Bulu met many dangers in Fiji and many times he was nearly killed, for there were hardly any Christians in Fiji at that time. Here are some stories about Joeli Bulu:

Joeli Bulu was attacked by a shark in the Rewa River. He thrust his arm down the shark's throat towards its guts, forcing the shark to open its jaws. He struggled towards the bank with the shark, and as it was slipping away, he tried to grasp its tail. For the rest of his life he bore the frightful marks of the shark's teeth on his arm. Once in Vanualevu he and his people were threatened by a group of Fijian people who didn't believe in this 'new' God the Christians talked about. Bulu and his people sat down and prayed silently while their enemies came up close to them with spears and muskets. The people continued to sit and say nothing, and their enemies were so puzzled by their courage that they couldn't strike them nor shoot them. Joeli said, "What held them back I cannot say, but this only I know that for a long time they stood threatening us with their weapons of war, while we sat in silence, speaking never a word but our hearts were crying to the Lord for help, and He heard our cry."

Later the enemy chief accepted the whale's tooth and told Joeli, 'We felt that your God was too strong, and when we saw the people sitting in silence all our strength left us and we could do nothing. We ask your pardon.'

Joeli took a canoe sixty miles across the open sea to Kadavu when he heard one of his Christian friends, teacher Isaac, was in danger of being killed. The enemies were making an oven in which to cook his friend, but Joeli rescued him just in time. On another occasion the house of one of the white missionaries, John Watsford was blown down in a cyclone. Bulu led Rev. Watsford and his family to safety in the middle of the storm. Rev. Watsford said "How bravely has Joeli Bulu acted! We owe him so much. Any missionary may be thankful to have Joeli as his friend."

When he was ordained at Ono-I-Lau, the minister conducting the service said all the people burst into tears when he laid his hands on Joeli Bulu. They were so full of joy and gratitude to God for this wonderful minister.

When Joeli Bulu was very sick and dying, the Governor of Fiji, Sir Arthur Gordon, sent his chief medical officer, Dr. William MacGregor to help him. Bulu died on Bau, as a son and a daughter of Ratu Cakobau. That was how much this wonderful and godly man was respected by the Europeans and Fijians alike. They decided to take his body to the next island, Viwa, and bury him next to the missionary John Hunt. He is still remembered by the Methodist Church in Fiji today as one of the first four ordained Pacific Island ministers, and a great missionary to the people of Fiji.

# John Hunt

## Biography

John Hunt was born in 1812, the third of four children. His family lived in England and were farmers. They were not very wealthy. John only went to school for a short time, then stayed home to help on the farm. As a teenager, he was unable to read or write. He worked hard on the farm during the day, and in the evenings often got into trouble with his friends in the town.

At the age of 20 John became very ill with a “brain fever”. For the first time in his life, John decided to pray, and ask God for his life to be spared. When his strength returned, John started to attend a Methodist church.

One day John went with a friend to a meeting and came to know Jesus as his Saviour. John’s whole life changed. Instead of spending his spare time getting into trouble, he studied to learn how to read. Once he could read, he worked hard at nights studying what he would have learned had he gone to school. The Bible was one of the main books John studied. He grew to love it. He loved to preach, telling people what Jesus had done for him and asking people in the Methodist churches around his area to follow Jesus. So well did John study that when he felt God’s call to become a minister, he was accepted to enter college. He was 23 years old and he was one of the best students in the college.

One day the students in his college were told about Fiji, where, at that time, William Cross and David Cargill had just started their work. Cross and Cargill felt strongly that many more ministers were needed to tell the Fijian people of the love of God. John Hunt realized that this was the work God wanted him to do. He prayed about it, and wrote to Hannah, the girl to whom he was engaged. John and Hannah agreed that they must offer to go to work in Fiji. In 1838 after their marriage, they set sail on the long voyage half way round the world, not knowing that John would never see his homeland again. In the same ship was a friend from the same college, James Calvert.

John and Hannah Hunt landed at Lakeba in Fiji after their long voyage. The Fijian people liked and respected John for he was a tall, strong looking man. At Viwa, Ratu Ravisa (Varani), the nephew of the island’s high chief, was converted to Christianity. Varani had previously led a raid on a passing French ship, and killed the captain and his crew. Varani “publicly bowed the knee to Jehovah” on Good Friday 1845, the first truly Christian, chiefly missionary in Fiji. Later that year, a great revival broke out in Viwa. John wrote in a letter to a friend, “Many who were careless and useless, have become sincere and devoted to God.”

Wherever he worked, at Rewa, Somosomo or at Viwa, his size helped people to respect him. One of the chiefs of Somosomo, Tui Kilakila, was so impressed by Hunt’s goodness that he told him, “If you die first I shall make you my god”. Of course that was not what Hunt wanted; he wanted Tui Kilakila to make Jesus his God! Hunt didn’t want people to just believe in Jesus in their heads, because they would be falling “short of the great design of Christianity which is to make men holy in heart and in life.” In other words, he wanted people to change their lives if they believed in Jesus.

Another thing that helped John was the love which God had put in his heart when he came to know Jesus as his Saviour. John was able to love the people of Fiji, even though he saw them doing cruel and savage things, as they often did in those olden days. This was especially true of the time he and Hannah spent at Somosomo in Taveuni, where killings frequently took place in front of them, and cannibal feasts a few yards from their home.

Life was hard for the Hunts. Sometimes a year would pass without mail or supplies from England. There were very few comforts in their little home. Two of their children died - only one little girl grew up. John Hunt had to travel in an open boat in storms at sea, and was often ill afterwards because of this. Once he sailed in a small canoe right around Viti Levu, taking six weeks. He used to train pastor-teachers, and prepare teaching topics to send out with them. These were not only religious topics, but covered health and practical subjects. He would then go to visit these teachers to help them with their work.

One of the greatest tasks John did was to translate the New Testament into Fijian for the first time, and make a start on the Old Testament. He also wrote hymns and religious books. The mission work in Fiji was dangerous and hard, and John and his family were often sick and in danger. John Hunt died at Viwa, near Bau, when he was only 36 years old, after working for ten years in Fiji. He is buried at Bau, and you can visit his grave today, right next to the grave of Joeli Bulu. The John Hunt Memorial Church near these graves was built about 120 years after John Hunt's death. The people of Viwa and of Fiji still remember this wonderful man who came half way around the world to bring the Gospel to Fiji. The new building erected in 2002 in the Methodist Church compound near the Centenary Church, Suva, was named after John Hunt.

# Varani

## Biography

In 1834, before any missionaries came to Fiji, a young man lived on the island of Viwa, near Bau. He was a nephew of the high chief of Viwa, Namosimalua. A French warship visited the area and Fijian chiefs borrowed it to attack an enemy chief in Somosomo, Taveuni. After that battle, the French captain had a quarrel with the Fijians. The Chief of Viwa, Namosimalua, along with his nephew, led a group to capture this French warship. They murdered its captain and crew and sailed the ship to Naselai in the delta of the Rewa River. They did not have much experience in navigating a ship like this and later wrecked it on a reef near Kaba, south of Bau.

The nephew then became known by the name of Varani (Fijian for France), and was famous as a killer and eater of his enemies, and was a companion and helper of the great chief of Bau, Ratu Cakobau. Varani was a 'human butcher' for his Chief, Cakobau. Ratu Cakobau praised Varani for his savage actions. However, the French people attacked Varani's island of Viwa in another French ship, and Varani's people suffered badly for what Varani did. Namosimalua, chief of Viwa, asked the missionary Rev Cross to tell him about the Christian God, because his old gods had not been able to stop the French people from burning down the idol-house at Viwa.

Slowly Namosimalua began to change and live the Christian life. Many of his people became Christians. But Varani, nephew to Namosimalua, was savage, blood-thirsty, and broke many promises he had made for peace. This clever but wicked Varani was still carrying on with his murderous cannibal ways when John Hunt came to Viwa in 1842. John Hunt said that Varani was a 'bloodthirsty and deceitful man.' He couldn't be trusted in any way at all. Once he promised mercy to 100 captives, but then changed his mind and killed them all. On another occasion 120 people were killed and their bodies taken to Bau to be cooked. Another 80 women were strangled, on Varani's orders, and this action greatly upset the missionaries.

One day Varani asked John Hunt to teach him to read. Hunt decided to do this himself rather than give the work to a Vakatawa or another teacher. The only complete book he had in Fijian language from which to teach was St. Matthew's Gospel, so he used important passages from this as Varani's reading book. He prayed with Varani too and Varani knew from the way Hunt prayed that God and Hunt loved each other. Varani grew to like John Hunt and wanted to live in the same way Hunt lived. He began to go quietly into the bush to try and pray, just as Hunt did.

One day a Fijian Christian found Varani crying loudly Varani had been reading St. Matthew's Gospel chapter 27: the story of the death of Jesus on the cross. "Why did Jesus suffer like this?" Varani asked. "For you, sir," replied the Fijian Christian. "For me? Do you mean this?" asked Varani. "Yes, sir." Varani's response was, "Then I give myself to Jesus."

Varani sent a message to Ratu Cakobau, saying he was going to become a Christian. Cakobau's answer was, "On the day you become a Christian I shall kill and eat you". Varani replied to Cakobau, "I fear you, but I fear the great God much more."

Varani told Rev Hunt that he would make a public announcement that he had become a Christian on Good Friday (21 March 1845). He did so at an early Morning Prayer service that day. He took a new name, Ilaitia (Elijah) when he was baptized. One hour after that prayer meeting Varani was asked to take revenge on people who had murdered a friend of his, a chief at Bau. Varani refused to take revenge.

This made the Fijian priests and Cakobau really angry. They blackened their faces for war, and came to Viwa to attack the families of Rev Hunt and Rev John Watsford. Varani came from his part of the village to Hunt's house and declared that he would die with the missionaries if they were attacked. Hunt and Watsford and their wives were praying. Cakobau and his men wandered around the village for some time and then left, saying that something had held their hands and they could not do anything.

'When the chief at Bau was killed, the chief's ten wives expected to be strangled. Varani, as a near relative, was called on to supervise the strangling. He said, 'A short time ago I would have done it, but I'm a Christian now Death is past, and life is come. You must live.'" When an American ship was wrecked at Ovalau, the Fijians gathered to kill the crew and rob the ship, but Varani went with a large canoe to save the crew.

After he became a Christian, when people insulted him he accepted this humbly. People now refer to Varani as the "peacemaker of Fiji". In 1853 he went to the island of Ovalau to settle the quarrels between the mountaineers in the interior and their chief, Tui Levuka. Varani took six men with him into the interior, and as he went along the track, he often knelt down to pray. One of the rebels met him and hit him with a club. Varani took the club from his hands and threw it away. But Varani was later murdered in the village where he was staying; some people believe that Ratu Cakobau plotted the murder. Varani was buried in Levuka.

People said of Varani:

So died one of the finest men Fiji ever produced. As a heathen warrior, he was famed throughout the islands. As a Christian chief, he proved himself 'a man of highest principle and courage, loyal to his heathen friend Cakobau, yet maintaining against all odds the traditions of his newly-adopted religion.

Another wrote:

Few men, black or white, civilized or uncivilized ever lived more truly or met their death more courageously than Ratu Elijah Varani. He was the noblest sincerest of all native Christians of this period.



# Vatea of Fiji

## Biography

A church minister, John Hunt, was an early missionary to Fiji. He first met Vatea in 1844. She was the highest ranked wife of Namosimalua, high chief of Viwa. She was the daughter of Caucau of Balu and was forty years younger than her husband Namosimalua. She was his favourite wife, and the missionaries used to call her 'the Queen'. She was a beautiful woman and very intelligent. She had been one of the first people to become a Christian, and the missionaries taught her to read and write. Vatea pleaded with John Hunt to be allowed to take lessons in preparation for being baptized. Usually the missionaries would not baptize women who were married to men that had many wives, but John Hunt was convinced of her true faith in God so he allowed her to attend baptism classes. There she learned more about the truths of the Christian faith. Vatea was baptized on May 26<sup>th</sup> 1844 at Viwa. Her baptized name was Litia, named after Lydia in the Bible. We read that Lydia welcomed Paul to Europe when he founded the first church there, (Acts 16:14 and 16:40).

When the baptismal ceremony commenced Vatea felt the powerful presence of God so strongly that she could hardly stand up, and she cried tears of joy. Vatea became a prominent Christian missionary on Viwa and Bau even though she was struggling with poor health. She received lots of criticism for turning away from the old gods and worshipping Jesus, but she was very successful in sharing her faith, especially with the women in the chiefly families.

Several ladies from Bau became Christians through the words and life of Vatea. One was Adi Qoliwasawasa, the widow of Rokotui Dreketi, who came to Viwa seeking medical help from John Hunt, for her son, Tabakaucoro.

Christianity appealed to the wives of the chiefs in Fiji at the time, because it offered them an escape from the old and cruel traditions such as being strangled to death when their husband died. The men described these Christian women as 'lacking proper respect for their husband.' The non-Christian men were afraid that if too many chief's wives accepted Christianity, there would not be anyone to show respect to the King when he died, following the tradition of their old religion. (He was now an old man.) But the women stayed true to Jesus. Only one woman turned back to the old gods because she was afraid of the men.

In 1845 the Holy Spirit moved among the people in a great revival. The Fijian people began to spend a lot of time in prayer and fasting, and praise and worship. Many more people were converted to Christianity, including Namosimalua, Vatea's husband. He turned from his many wives, in obedience to the Christian faith and married Vatea in a church ceremony on November 2<sup>nd</sup> 1845. He began baptism classes immediately and was baptized on November 25<sup>th</sup>, taking the name, Melchisedic.

The paramount chief, Cakabau, became very angry with the people from Viwa because they were reluctant to support him in his wars. John Hunt and the other missionaries had been teaching the Fijians to live in peace with one another, and many of the men preferred peace as they were tired of war. Cakabau came to visit John Hunt one day, and Mrs. Hunt served him tea and bread while they waited for John to come home. Cakabau drank the tea but threw the bread away and demanded to see Hunt and Namosimalua, who came into the room on his hands and knees in submissions to his high chief.

“Split his head with an axe”, thundered Cakobau. Just then John Hunt’s voice was heard, “Sa loloma Saka (My love to you Sir”. For the moment Cakobau forgot about Namosimalua and began to talk to Hunt, telling him that the missionaries should all go back to England. Cakobau told Hunt that, but for his presence all the people of Viwa would be in ovens! The two men were then interrupted, this time by Vatea. She entered on her knees, weeping, and pleading with her cousin Cakob au to become a Christian. History tells us this eventually happened, but not for some years yet. However, Namosimalua on that occasion, did not lose, his head!

Vatea’s story was not always a happy one. Although her husband had professed to become a Christian, had been baptized and married Vatea (or she was more commonly called Adi Litia now), he was not always a kind man and was sometimes very brutal towards her. In August 1848 she ran away from him and went to her family at Bau. One of the church members persuaded her to return to him, but things did not change and she ran away again to Bau. Another tragic event occurred, her dear friend Rev John Hunt, became ill and died on 4 October 1848. Perhaps Litia felt that God no longer loved her, and that the Christian life was too much of a struggle. We do know that she became very angry (perhaps with God, with the missionaries, with her husband and with the church!) and decided to stop following Christ!

After Litia left Viwa, she abandoned the church in her anger and we don’t know what happened to her in the five years between 1848 and 1853. In 1852 Namosimalua died. Litia was therefore released from her marriage vows and from a life of hardship with this man who was so very much older than her (40 years).

In 1853 Litia married Koroiravulo, a chief of Bau and a non-believer. Litia was his second wife, so people who write history think that at this time she was still angry with Christianity, or she would never have agreed to marry a man who was already married and who was not a Christian. At the same time, we have to understand that a widow was helpless in those days and needed the support of a husband. Perhaps no Christian chief would have her, so this is why Litia decided to become a second wife. We don’t know and sometimes we can only make guesses.

Some time after her second marriage, Litia came back to the church and renewed her faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Her husband, Koroitavulo, went to Kaba as part of a rebellion against Cakobau and this rebellion ended in the famous Battle of Kaba. Litia went with Koroiravulo and, astonishingly, she commenced a Christian congregation among the non-believers of Kaba. The missionaries, Rev Joseph Waterhouse and Rev James Calvert, used to visit this struggling congregation to lend Litia support. Koroiavulo did not understand or approve of his wife’s activities in the church, but eventually Litia managed to gain his support for her ministry and he began to believe in peace not war, and tried to teach the other Rewa chiefs that they should stop fighting.

A lot of the rebel Fijians hated the missionaries, because they were seen as allies of Bau. On one occasion, Rev Waterhouse was about to bring his canoe into Kaba. The Fijians went to meet him with their guns and wanted to kill him. Litia went out into the water to talk to the rebels and stop muskets being fired at him. Eventually, Waterhouse and Calvert were banned from visiting Kaba, so Litia had to work alone with her Christian congregation. This was not an easy task for a woman, among these fierce warrior-like people.

For the rest of her life, Litia remained loyal to the Christian faith. In April 1855, the Tongan King George arrived in Fiji with a huge fleet of Tongan canoes. The leading

rebel chief, Mara Kapaiwai, either provoked or was provoked into the killing of a Tongan chief at Ovalau and the Tongans moved on Kaba and defeated the rebels. The lives of the small Christian community at Kaba were spared. Koroiravulo one of the leading rebel chiefs, was brought to Bau, but his life also was spared, perhaps as a result of Litia's pleading for him before the Tongan King.

Litia died on 25 November 1855 and was buried on the "holy" island of Viwa (the place where her good friend Rev John Hunt is buried). These were among her last words: "I am going to heaven. Tell my friends to follow me there...tell [them] that Litia, the faithless Litia, has reached the landing-place in heaven, through the grace of God". When Vatea died, three pagan customs associated with the reverence of dead spirits, including the amputation of fingers by friends, were abolished at Bau. Adi Litia Sarnanunu, Cakobau's Christian Wife, took the name of Litia in honour of Vatea.

So ends the story of a very wonderful Fijian lady, a woman who was born a chief, but who suffered much because of the traditional culture and customs surrounding women in her day. She learned to love Jesus, and although at one period of her life she turned away from him in anger and disappointment, she came back to serve Christ again with love and commitment. She was a church planter, in the same way as her namesake, Lydia in the Bible. She was a helper to the great missionary to Fiji, Rev John Hunt

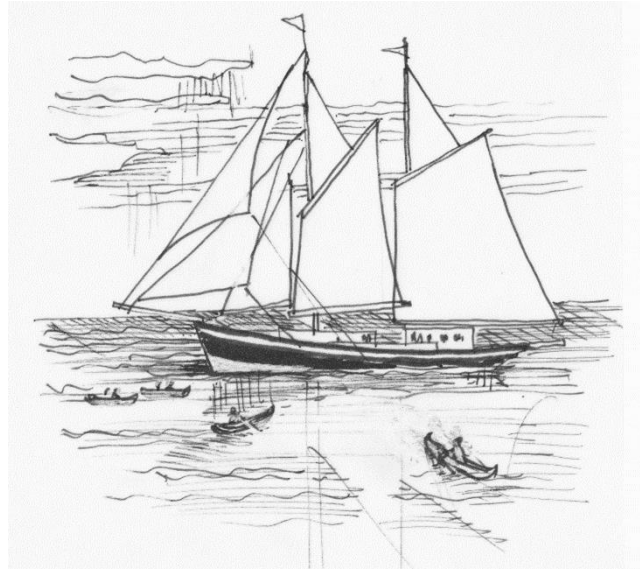
### **Revision Questions**

1. Who was Vatea's father?
2. What was the name of Vatea's first husband?
3. What did the missionaries give to Vatea?
4. Name the years she was a) baptized and b) died.
5. Find on a map of Fiji the places of Viwa, Bau, Ovalau, Kaba.
6. What actions did Vatea take to keep peace between people?

### **Further Discussion**

1. Perhaps it would be wonderful to be the daughter of a chief, but it also brought hardships and responsibilities. What hardships did Vatea face because of her high birth?
2. Many people believe that Christianity has brought a great freedom to women, because the Bible teaches that women are not inferior to men and are given gifts of leadership in just the same way as men. Are there still areas in our culture and traditions, in society, in family life and in the church where women and girls are not given equal status? If so, do you think this is okay, or should we change? What should we do?
3. Do you, like Vatea (Adi Lisa), sometimes get angry with God, with the church or with members in our family and are tempted to think that it is too hard to be a Christian? Does God get angry back at us when we get angry at him?
4. How hard do you think it would have been for Adi Litia to come back to the church and begin to witness for Christ again? Perhaps people, especially the Women, would keep criticizing her for having left her first husband. How hard do you find it to say sorry and be reconciled to people that you have been angry with? How hard is it to come back to God and say sorry, asking him to forgive us? What is written in 1 John 1:5-10 about this?

## William Bromilow of Dobu, Papua



The people of Dobu stood on the sandy shore of their island, talking excitedly among themselves as they watched a large, three-masted schooner anchor off-shore. Some, more daring and curious, took to their canoes and paddled at a safe distance, but close enough to watch all the strange activity on the large ship that had unexpectedly appeared.

“Who are these people?”

“Why are they coming on to our island?”

“What are all these things they bring with them?”

Dobu is a small, ‘inactive’ volcanic island lying between Normanby and Ferguson Islands, east of the Papua New Guinea mainland. The only experience the Dobuan people had with Europeans was an occasional visit from the government Administrator or his deputy in their steamship. Now they were witnessing a totally new event, the arrival of a large party of missionaries whose call was to teach the Christian message of salvation to the people of these islands.

The party was led by Dr. William Bromilow from Australia, accompanied by four other men who would be stationed on other islands in the vicinity. There were also twenty-two South Sea Islanders from Tonga, Fiji and Samoa with wives of a number of them. Traveling on the schooner with them was Dr. George Brown, who led the original missionary party that went from Fiji to New Britain in 1875. There were several other men who were to sail on from the Papuan Islands in the chartered schooner with Dr. Brown to join the mission stations in New Britain.

“We’ve never seen so many white people before.”

“What are they doing here in our place?”

“See how they cover their bodies with all that stuff. It must be hard for them to move with all that on them.” The Dobuans were fascinated with the European clothing!

They continued to observe from a distance, speculating on the variety of strange activities. The new-comers were now unloading their cargo from ship to shore by means of the two whale boats they had brought with them. This caused even more incredulous gasps from the Dobuan on-lookers, for the cargo consisted of building materials for three houses and a store-room, a three-ton cutter as well as supplies of food and goods for several months.

“Look at the things they are bringing ashore. What will they do with them?”

“Some of those people are brown-skinned, a bit like us. They must have come from a different place than the white people.”

“What’s this huge animal they’ve got there? Look, it’s swimming!”

“Yes, it’s swimming, but a man is holding its head up with a rope.”

“And it’s being pulled along by the men in that small boat.”

The animal in question was a cow which had been lowered over the side into the water and was now making its way to shore, towed along behind the small boat. This was the first time the Dobuans had ever seen a cow so it caused them great astonishment. Another source of wonder was the arrival of several dogs, pets of some of the missionaries.

Not far away was the Administrator’s steamer. Sir William MacGregor had come to the area in order to smooth the way for the arrival of the mission party to Dobu. The Dobuans had a reputation in the district as ‘the fiercest and most inveterate head-hunters in all Papua.’ Dobu had been chosen as the site for the new mission for two main reasons. It was central to the islands they wished to reach, and they had remembered the words of their founder, John Wesley, “Go not to those who need you, but to those who need you most.”

It was the year 1891 when this mission party arrived. The vast quantity of building materials and stores, as well as personal effects, had been unloaded and the men began to build the houses and store room. The members of the New Guinea party stayed to assist until the main building work had been completed, and then they returned to the schooner and were on their way to their mission stations in New Britain.

The Dobuan people continued to observe from a distance, for they were aware of the government steamer patrolling their waters, not far away. When finally the Administrator was satisfied that the mission party were settled into their location on Dobu he shook the hands of Dr. Bromilow and his team and set off back to Port Moresby.

The newly arrived missionaries began learning the Dobuan language, aided greatly by the Samoan, Tongan and Fijian pastor-teachers. Regular worship services were held, attended by the mission team and a number of village people. The Dobuans were attracted by the singing and quickly learned simple hymns that had been translated into their own language. They gained much of their Christian understanding by learning to sing these songs. The missionaries gradually extended their worship and teaching meetings to the surrounding villages. The people were attending these meetings in increasing numbers, but there had been no apparent response in the form of a true conversion. But God was preparing for a change.

One day, after the missionaries had been there for nearly two years, a messenger came to Dr. Bromilow, "A woman from the village of Gaula has died. She comes to the Sunday worship every week."

"Oh, yes, I know her," said the missionary, "she's a pleasant woman, and comes to the Sunday worship regularly."

Turning to Alesana, a Samoan pastor-teacher, he asked, "Alesana, could you go now and see the family? Ask them if they want a Christian burial."

Gaula was a small village situated between two high cliffs a little way around the coast from the mission station. Alesana set out at once for Gaula. When he met with the woman's family they said they would like a Christian burial. Alesana went to look at the body of the woman which was ornamented as for the dead.

"There isn't the look of death about this woman," he thought, "she is so still but she doesn't have the stamp on death on her face."

Turning to the people he said, "Would you be willing to wait till tomorrow for the burial? I'm not sure this woman is really dead."

The sorcerers who lived in the village were angry. "We want her buried straight away! There's no need to wait. Of course she's dead."

But the other villagers said, "Yes, we can wait. We'll see if she comes back to life by tomorrow."

During the night the woman revived. When Alesana returned in the morning she was strong enough to tell him what she had experienced.

"I was dead," she began, "and my spirit went to heaven. I met Jesus there. He is so good. I am so bad."

She paused for a time, then, her face showing the joy of what she had experienced, she continued, "I saw two roads, one was straight and the other crooked. I was standing on the straight one and I asked Jesus if I was on the right one. He told me that I was. Then I went on to the gate of heaven and saw inside. It was a beautiful place, but Jesus would not allow me to go inside. He told me to return and tell my people that the worship of the missionaries' God is true. He told me also that I was to return because I was not ready, and the missionary and his wife would tell me about heaven."

The woman spoke with such conviction that there was no doubting the reality of her experience. It was clear that this woman had stored up in her heart and mind the teaching she had heard, and God had confirmed it in her spirit while she visited the gates of heaven.

During the next three weeks Dr. Bromilow and his wife visited the woman several times, teaching her the simple truths of God's love shown through Jesus Christ. Her

constant word was always, "Jesus is so good, so good. There is no sickness in heaven."

"Are you afraid to die?" Mrs. Bromilow asked her one day.

"No" was her prompt reply, "I want to die and go to the beautiful place."

Laying on a mat under a house the woman was very weak. But news of how she had revived had spread, bringing a small crowd of curious onlookers, listening amazed and wondering at her remarkable words.

"Wouldn't you like to recover and grow strong again?" an onlooker asked her.

"No, no!" she replied, "I want to go to the beautiful land where there is no pain."

The end came three weeks after her rescue from burial and was quite triumphant. In her last moments the woman joined in singing with two of the missionaries a hymn that had been translated into Dobuan.

It began, "There are angels hovering all around".

This incident stirred up a great deal of interest in the village people. Here was one of their own people who had experienced the truth of what the missionaries had told them. There must be some truth in their message, they thought.

Not long after the woman's death five young men came to see Dr. Bromilow one evening. They had questions they wanted answered.

"We have heard much concerning Jesus Christ, and we would like to know where He is."

"Is the church building the house of Jesus Christ?"

"Is this house of yours the house of Jesus Christ?"

"Where is He? We cannot see Him or hear Him."

"Are you Jesus Christ?"

Such simple, yet deep questions opened up the way for these men to learn to know God and His Son, Jesus Christ. As they reached the point of decision to follow the Christian way they encouraged their friends in the villages to also seek to know God. Those who became believers were persecuted and tested by the opposing forces of the sorcerers, but this only made them stronger in their faith. It was three years after the first missionaries arrived on Dobu that the first baptisms took place.

There were three people baptised in that first service. The first was a thirty-five-year-old man whose wife constantly scolded him, trying unsuccessfully to draw him away from his new faith. Next was a twenty-year-old whose family strongly opposed his decision, but he too had stood firm. The third was a boy about thirteen, who had been particularly dirty and unkempt when he first appeared at the mission station. But the missionaries had taken an interest in him and he became a keen and ready learner of the Christian way. The remarkable change in his appearance and behaviour had been noticed by all in the village. His crucial test came when his village chief commanded him to steal. He refused and chose rather to be punished than to disobey his God. After the death of the Gaula woman these were the first of many Dobuans who became Christians and reached out to the people on the islands around them.

### **Chief Gaganumore**

One of the Dobuan warrior chiefs, Gaganumore by name, had a well deserved reputation as a fearless warrior, and a cannibal. He was a leading standard bearer for the warring parties that raided the villages on the nearby islands, so he was held in high esteem and some fear. When the British arrived in Papua New Guinea a few years before, they attempted to enforce some law and order in the island communities and, because of his renown as a warrior, Gaganumore was one of their targets. The government officers made it clear that Gaganumore's head-hunting had to stop, so he was a marked man.

"Gaganumore, I see the smoke from the government boat over the sea. It's coming this way," one of his friends would call, if they saw the official steamer on the horizon.

"I'm going into the bush, then," Gaganumore would respond. "They're not going to catch me." He would remain in hiding until the steamer was gone and the coast was clear.

So, once the mission party had arrived on Dobu and appeared to be settled in happily, the Administrator, Sir William MacGregor sailed off. But before he left he gave an instruction to Dr. Bromilow:

"Tell Gaganumore from me that if he will mend his ways and cease his head-hunting and raiding parties that we will forgive him and not try to capture him. Our hope is that your Christian teaching will change the attitude of warriors like Gaganumore."

Sure enough, as soon as the Administrator's steamer was well clear of Dobu, Gaganumore came out of hiding and presented himself at the door of Dr. Bromilow's newly-built house. He brought with him an interpreter who could speak a little pidgin. Gaganumore said, "I'm glad to see you on our island, but we don't want any more white people here."

Dr. Bromilow learned much later that the whole mission party had been in danger of being killed only a month after their arrival. One day a message reached the mission team, "There's going to be a cannibal feast tonight at the village over there." The village concerned was two miles away. One of the missionaries immediately reacted, "We mustn't let them do this evil thing. I'm going to the village to stop it!"

Bursting into the village, he tried to intervene, without success. The cannibal feast went on. But the village men were angry at the intervention and plotted to kill all the missionaries.

"We'll go to the mission station, and a few of us will surround each missionary and keep them separated while we talk to them. Then we will kill each one. Gaganumore and another older warrior heard of their plot and gathered the young warriors together to reason with them.

"If you kill them, they said, "what about their friends in the government? They'll come to visit them and find them dead. Then they'll punish us and be our enemies. Let's wait and see what they are like. If they are good to live with, we will adopt them into our tribe. If they're not, we can kill them when we choose."



Fortunately, the counsel of the older men was heeded and the missionaries' lives were saved. When Dr. Bromilow told Gaganumore of the Administrator's pardon on condition that he reformed his behaviour, the warrior would not believe him. Nevertheless, he did become a regular attendant at worship services, asking questions and discussing the teaching with Dr. Bromilow when he found it hard to understand. "It will be a long time before I understand this teaching, it is all so different from our village ways," he would comment.

It is hardly surprising that he found it difficult to understand. From a young child he had been trained to be a special warrior, going through heathen rituals with the older men to recognise him as such. The only way he knew to resolve all situations was to kill.

But gradually, Gaganumore was changing. Dr. Bromilow and he became more than teacher and disciple, they were firm friends. Gaganumore's outbursts of anger became fewer. He was learning, with Dr. Bromilow's help and guidance, to respond in Christian ways to those who did him harm.

One day Dr. Bromilow came upon a group of men working on a large canoe. "This is a very big canoe," commented the missionary, "what do you intend to use it for?"

"We started to build it some time ago," began one of the men, "We were going to use it for pay back. The brother of Gaganumore was killed in a fight at Eneute some time ago and we wanted to pay them back for that."

"But when you came you talked to us about living at peace with our neighbours," added another man, "so we hid the canoe away in the bush and never finished it."

"But now we thought of another way to use it," continued the first spokesman, "now that we have peace instead of war, we could use the canoe for trade, not fighting."

Dr. Bromilow was very pleased to hear of their plans. "What a wonderful idea," he exclaimed, "you've been leaders in fighting before, now you can be leaders in making peace."

"Do you have a name for the canoe?" he went on.

"We called it Eneute because that was where we were planning to take it for war, but we should give it a new name. What do you think, Dr Bromilow?"

The missionary thought for a minute, then made a suggestion, "Why not name it for Mrs. Bromilow? The Fijian word for 'respected lady' is 'Marama'. Would you like to call it 'Marama'?" And so they did.

There was much excited celebration when the canoe, specially decorated for the occasion, was launched and taken for its first short voyage on the seas off Dobu.

"What a beautiful canoe!" See how it rides the waves so smoothly!"

Everybody was thrilled to watch the canoe as the men paddled it along the coast, close to land, and then swing around so the stern faced the shore. This was a sure sign that it was a canoe of peace.

Later the missionaries watched anxiously as the canoe paddled past their homes, pointing in the direction of Eneute.

“What are they up to?”

“Have they changed their minds?”

“Surely they’re not going to Eneute after all.”

The missionaries were dismayed. But not for long. The canoe stopped. A young warrior stood up in the bow holding a coconut which, in one blow, he split in half and poured out the contents.

“What was that about?” Dr Bromilow asked Gaganumore.

“That’s to say that we will not fight the Eneute people. Peace has come upon us,’ he replied.

Dr. Bromilow could see that there was a real struggle going on in Gaganumore’s heart, the struggle between the old way of fighting and revenge and the new way of peace. For him this was a significant moment of decision to abandon the old life and follow the Christian way of peace. As the canoe intended for war was used to bring the Christian message to other island villages, to bring people to worship services, to help those in need, so Gaganumore’s life changed from anger and revenge to doing good for people.

There came a serious drought which particularly affected the area of Miadeba, the old enemy of Dobu across the water, on Ferguson Island. Gaganumore came to Dr. Bromilow with a suggestion. “The people at Miadeba are suffering greatly. I think I should go over in the canoe and offer to bring some of them back to my village. There is enough food in our gardens to feed both them and us.”

Dr. Bromilow was glad to hear of this plan and encouraged him to carry it out. Here was a sure sign that Gaganumore had become a true Christian. After six years on Dobu the Bromilows left for a trip back to Australia. Gaganumore came to see Dr. Bromilow a short time before his departure.

“How long will you be gone, my friend?” he asked.

“Eleven moons,” was Bromilow’s reply.

Gaganumore produced a length of bush string and proceeded to tie eleven knots in it. He asked Dr. Bromilow to find a piece of string in which he was to tie eleven knots. Then they exchanged strings, after which Gaganumore explained the purpose of the exchange.

“When you are in your own land and a new moon appears, cut off one knot, so that you will remember me, and I will do the same, until you return.”

When Dr. Bromilow returned 11 months later, Gaganumore was among the first to greet him, joining the happy group who carried him ashore on their shoulders. As a mark of appreciation Sir William MacGregor gave Gaganumore a special baton denoting him government chief of the district. He took his office very seriously and carried out his duties well.

Dr. Bromilow described his parting with Gaganumore when he was finally leaving Dobu:

'To part was not easy for either of us. Gaganumore said, "I will not wait for the ship to take you away. I could not bear it. When you came to us Dobu was like hell, but you brought love to us. Now that you are going away you are taking your goods, but you cannot take away that love. It will remain with the holy Book you have given us." We held each other's hands for a few moments. What deeds his hands had done! But I have never known a truer clasp of friendship. Then he turned and was gone.'

Adapted from:

*Twenty Years Among Primitive Papuans*, William Bromilow, Epworth Press, London  
*Extract from the Diaries of Miss J. Tinney*, Methodist Mission, British New Guinea 1892-1902

# Thinking about biographies

Use the Thinking Hats to write a summary of the biography.

## 1. The White Hat (The facts)

- What is the name of the person? (Write this as a heading)
- When was the person born and when did they die?
- Where were they born?
- Where did they work?
- What was the main type of work they did?



white

## 2. The Yellow Hat (The good points)

- How did this person help other people?
- Write about one good point that stands out to you in the biography.
- What were the strengths of this person's character?



yellow

## 3. The Black Hat (The bad points)

- What difficulties (hardships) did this person experience?
- Write about any sad events that happened in the person's life.
- What difficulties were the people of the country experiencing? What needs did they have?
- Were there any times in this person's life when they acted wrongly or made a wrong decision?



black

## 4. The Red Hat (Emotions)

- Write about one amazing event in the biography and explain how you felt when you read or heard it.
- Describe some of the emotions of the person and why they felt happy, sad, angry, worried or otherwise.



red

## 5. The Green Hat (The creative hat)

- What creative ideas did this person think of to solve problems?
- If this person did not choose to carry out the work they were called to do, what might have happened? (How would it have been different for people of that country.)



green

## 6. The Blue Hat (What we can learn from the biography)

- What did you learn from the life of this person?
- What does it challenge you to



blue