Pacific Island Stories

True stories of the spread of the Gospel in the Pacific Islands

	Page
A Bible that traveled	2
Benjamin	5
Bilivucu	8
Daniel Bula	10
Elikana of Tuvala	18
Father Damien	24
Hannah Dudley	26
Jacob Vouza	30
James Chalmers	33
Joeli Bulu 1	37
Joel Bulu 2	41
John Hunt	43
John Paton	45
John Williams	59
Lolohea Akosita Waqairawai, Fiji	69
Lord of the volcano	72
Makea of Rarotonga	73
Mataika	77
Peter Ambuofa	80
Piri and Maki	92
Ratu Cakobau	96
Ruatoka and Tungane	98
Sefanaia Sukanaivalu	103
Taufa'ahau	104
The Fijian call to New Guinea	110
Usaia Sotutu	113
Varani	119
Vatea	121
Wai of Ono	125
William Bromilow	128

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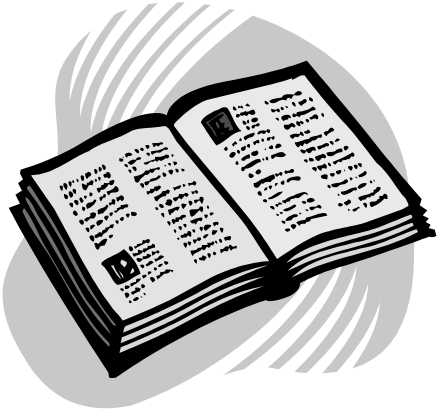
A Bible that traveled



There was great excitement amongst the Fijian people in a small coastal village on one of the main islands of the Fiji group. A boat had arrived and a large pile of wooden packing cases had been left on the wharf. These boxes were the centre of attention for they displayed marks and labels that indicated they had been sent from England.

Husky, well-built Fijian youths volunteered to carry the boxes up the hill to the missionary's house which over-looked the sea. Soon the air was split with the sounds of a hammer and the creak of the wooden lids being prized off the cases.

This was early in the 1870s; the Christian gospel had been taught in the Fiji Islands for about 20 years. Faithful men had learned the language, translated the Bible, and now it had been printed in the Fijian language.

The village people recognised the new Bibles and there was a great chorus, "Please let me have one!" There were so few Bibles and so many people who wanted one for themselves. The missionary gave one of the precious few to a teacher who had walked down to the coast from the little mountain village where he lived. This man was a teacher because he had become a Christian and had taught those in his village about Jesus, too. He cared for a small community of Christians, surrounded by many in nearby villages who still served evil gods.

The teacher walked the two days' journey to his home, carrying the precious Bible wrapped in a piece of cloth and then tied up in a woven grass mat. It was late at night when he reached his village. The news soon spread that the teacher had returned with his new Bible. All the people of the village crowded into the teacher's house and sat cross-legged on the floor, waiting for him to finish his meal. Then he washed his hands in the earthenware basin which was brought to him by his little daughter. He opened the bundle of mats and the cloth that contained the precious book. All the people, young and old, crept nearer to view the new Bible which had come all the way from England, six months' journey by sailing ship.

"Now, let is pray," said the teacher, and someone commenced singing a favourite hymn in their own language. They gave thanks for the arrival of the Bible in their village. Then

the teacher turned the fresh, new pages of the book and read aloud the stories of the lost sheep, the lost coin and the lost son who returned home. The teacher then led his people in prayer for those who lived in the surrounding hills who had not yet believed in Jesus the Son of God.

As soon as the prayer was ended the teacher's daughter, Mere, took hold of the Bible and began to spell out some of the words. Suddenly, through the quiet stillness there was a scream of terror. Everyone jumped up and shouted,
"It's war! It's war! The enemy has come!"

In a moment everyone had rushed out of the house. They could hear the bloodcurdling war-crisis of their enemies. Some of the village houses were already on fire, blazing fiercely in the strong evening breeze. The people scattered in all directions. Little Mere, still clutching the new Bible, was hurried away by her mother and together they hid in the long reeds some distance from their village.

The horror of that night will be remembered, the wild cries and shrieks of terror, the dull thuds of heavy clubs as the fleeing people were struck down. The blaze of the burning houses lit up the surrounding hill-sides.

Slowly, the chant of the warriors died down as they dragged their victims away to the cannibal ovens in their own villages. Then there was silence, sad silence. It seemed the night would never end, but at last the dawn came. Little Mere and her mother crept stealthily out of their place of hiding. Alone, Mere's mother went to the smoking ruins of their village.

After a time, Mere saw her returning along the bush track, crying as if her heart would break. She had met some women who had told her the sad tidings that her husband, the teacher was among those who had been killed and dragged away to the cannibal ovens. The whole village had been destroyed, and all their mats, baskets and wooden dishes had been taken away or burned. Only one thing remained of all their possessions, the Bible which Mere had carried off the night before.

"Let us have prayers," said Mere's mother, and so saying, she turned in her grief to the wonderful fourteenth chapter of John's gospel, the passage which reads, "Let not your heart be troubled….." Mere and her mother and the women who had returned with her, knelt down and prayed God to forgive those who had ravaged their village and brought sorrow into their lives by killing their loved ones. They baked yams and ate a good meal before setting off on the two-day walk down the mountain to the coast.

When they arrived at the missionary's home, Mere's mother told him the sad story and showed him the only article they had saved… the new Bible. In the Bible, Mere's mother wrote: "This is Mere Nasau's Bible. Is it not a brand plucked from the burning?" And she gave the Bible to Mere to keep.

The missionary did all he could to help Mere and her mother, then later made arrangements for them to go and live with the mother's people on the island where she had been born.

In her mother's village, Mere attended the mission school. In those days the Bible was the only reading book they used. Mere treasured her Bible and learned to recite many

passages from it. One year she won a prize for reciting the greatest number of chapters. It was a great occasion and Mere treasured her Bible even more.

Mere grew up and married a teacher named Josaia. They had not long been married when there came a call for teachers to take the Christian message to New Britain, one of the islands of what we now know as Papua New Guinea. Josaia and Mere volunteered to go. Of course they took their special Bible with them. Every morning and evening they read together from it.

After working together in New Britain for a few years, Mere fell ill. She knows as the weeks went by that she could not recover. One day she called Josaia. “I am going,” she said gently, “you are staying. Take my Book which we have read together each day; it has been a light to our path. Take it, read it, obey it.” So Mere died and was given a Christian burial in New Britain, (now Papua New Guinea).

After a time, Josaia returned to Fiji. The church appointed him to a village high up in the mountains. One night he was sitting in his house with a group of village people. They began to tell stories of the old days. There was an old man, a very old man, who remembered the days before they had become Christians in that village. He said, “There used to be a village over on that hill,” he said, with a nod towards a nearby rise. “There are only the foundations left. But I remember as a young man, and a heathen, the time we raided that village. We attacked it at night, burned the houses and killed the Christians. Among the Christians we killed was the teacher.”

Everyone sat in silence, thinking of how God’s love had changed their lives. Then Josaia took Mere’s Bible, worn and old from much use, and broke the silence. “Do you see this Book?” he said. “It once belonged to the teacher you killed. It was saved by his little daughter. It was the only thing they saved. Years later, she became my wife. We rook this Book to New Britain and there it was used as we taught the people God’s love. Mere died there, but the Book has returned to the place where it began its ministry. So now I am using it as I teach the Christian way to these who are descendants of the men who killed the teacher.”

Everyone sat in a deeper silence, contemplating the wonder of God’s ways. “The Word does not fail to do what God plans for it,” said Josaia softly, tears of gratitude running down his cheeks.

Adapted from “Deep Sea Canoe”, by Dr. Alan Tippett, William Carey Library, South Pasadena, California, William Carey Library, 553 Hermosa St., South Pasadena, California, 91030

Benjamin

The year was 1838. John Hunt, who lived in England, had something big to do for God.

“I know that God has called me go to Fiji,” said John to his wife Hannah. “Will you come with me?”

“It is such a long way from England,” said Hannah, “and the journey by ship will be dangerous. But God will be with us. I know that the Bible tells us to go into every part of the world to tell others about Jesus.”

So John and Hannah sailed from England to Fiji.

They went to live on the island of Viwa, in the Yasawa group of islands. It was the time of cannibals. John and Hannah told people about Jesus and helped the Fijians see that killing people was wrong. Many people became Christians, and John and Hannah made good friends with the people of Viwa.

One day John and his friends were traveling in a canoe along the coast of a large island. They were going to visit a Christian village that was three days’ journey around the coast. It was late afternoon so they were looking for a good place to land and shelter for the night.

Pointing to some houses near the shore, John called to his friends, “Something tells me we should go to that little village over there,”
The men looked at each other, then at John.
“But you know the people living along that part of the coast are enemies of Viwa,” one of the men said. “It isn’t safe for us to land there.”
“Yes, I know that,” he replied, “but I believe God told me that we should go to that village, so we must believe He will protect us and guide us.”

They brought the canoe into shore a little distance from the village and there they found a young boy who was quite sick with leprosy. The Fijians from Viwa spoke with the boy and made friends with him.
“Please take us to your village leader,” they said.

Off they went with the boy to meet the village leader.

“May we stay the night on your shore,” they asked the village leader. “We have a three-day journey ahead of us and we need shelter for the night.”
Then he added, “As we came here we met the young boy who has leprosy. He is very sick, but we could help him. There are medicines we have at Viwa that could help him, if you would allow us to take him back with us.”

The villagers talked among themselves for a few minutes, then their leader said, “Alright, we will allow you to stay on our shore for the night if you will take the sick boy to your island and make him better.”

Now John and his friends knew they were safe, because of the agreement to help the young boy.

When John and his friends brought the sick boy back to Viwa he was given medicine and his sores were cared for. The boy also heard the true stories about God the Creator and His Son, Jesus.

“Please,” he said to John Hunt one day, “I want to have a Christian name because I believe in Jesus Christ.”
“What name would you like to have?” John Hunt asked him.
“I’d like to be Benjamin,” replied the boy. So Benjamin was now his name.

One day the men on Viwa looked out to sea and noticed a war canoe approaching their island.
“I wonder who they are,” said John, “I hope they are coming in peace, not war.”

When the men in the canoe landed they were surprised and pleased to meet a chief of another island and some of his men.

“I have heard that you have good news for our people,” said the chief to John. “I want my people to hear this good news. Would you send a teacher back with us to teach us your good news?”

“I’m sorry,” replied John, “but we have no teachers on the island with us at present. The men we have trained are all out in the villages teaching now. There are none here ready to go with you.”

The visiting chief noticed Benjamin nearby and turned to speak briefly with him. Benjamin had noticed the look of disappointment on his face when John told him there were no teachers available.

Suddenly Benjamin had an idea. He turned to John eagerly.
“Please would you let me go with these men?” he begged. “I only know a little, but I could tell them what I know about God until you have other teachers ready to send.”

John looked at the boy. He could see that the leprosy was not better, but he could also see that Benjamin really wanted to help.

“Alright,” said John.

So the next day they sent Benjamin with the visitors in the big war canoe. It was a three-day trip but Benjamin wasted no time. As the canoe cut through the water he told the chief all he could remember of the stories of Jesus and God the Creator. But Benjamin was growing weaker all the time, and as they came in sight of their harbour, he died.

But the chief had taken Benjamin’s stories to heart and greatly desired to follow the Christian way.
“I want you to build a place where we can worship God,” he announced to his people. “Then I’ll tell you the stories our friend Benjamin told me about Jesus and His work. One day John Hunt will send us teachers to tell us more, but we can begin with all Benjamin told us.”
And that is the story of how the Christian message came to Nadroga, Fiji.

Adapted from: *Deep Sea Canoe,* Alan R. Tippett, William Carey Library, Pasadena, California.

More about John Hunt
John and Hannah stayed for 10 years in Fiji, from 1838 – 1848.
John worked on the translation of the Bible into Fijian, and finished it in 1847.
John and Hannah had two daughters, Eliza Jane and Hannah. Three other children died of dysentery soon after birth.
John died of dysentery in 1848.

Bilivucu

Bilivucu had become a very keen Christian and he wanted everyone else in his village to become Christians.

“You really should follow the Christian way, my friend,” he would say. “My life has changed such a lot since I believed in Jehovah God. I have real peace in my heart now. Won’t you become a Christian, too?”

There was one man in the village who grew tired of Bilivucu constantly talking to him about being a Christian. One day, he got so angry that he grabbed the nearest thing he could find. It happened to be a cooking pot. He smashed it over Bilivucu’s head, sending him home with a very bad headache.

Bilivucu sat in his house wondering what he should do.
“I try to tell this man good news, and all he does is hit me over the head with a cooking pot,” he said to himself. “It wouldn’t be so bad if he hit me with a club. At least that’s a man’s thing. But to hit me with a cooking pot! That’s a woman’s thing. You shouldn’t hit a man with a woman’s thing.”

“I feel like hitting him with my old war club hanging there on the wall,” was his first thought. But then he remembered, “No, I’m a Christian now. I won’t hit back.”

He had hung the war club on the wall when he became a Christian to remind himself of what his life had been before that. Now he was reaching out to take it off the wall and go and hit the man who offended him. But he stopped. There on the floor beneath the club was his Bible. He took that instead.

“Maybe God will tell me what to do through His word,” he thought.
He looked down a page and there his eyes fell on some words in Matthew chapter 5. “Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, for theirs is the kingdom of God.”

As Bilivucu thought on those words his anger left him and his heart was filled with joy. Going out to his own kitchen he chose the best cooking pot he could find and went back to the house of the man who hit him.

In the Fijian way he arrived at the door and called out, “I’m coming in!”
The man inside recognised his voice and immediately reached for his club, thinking Bilivucu had come back for revenge. But Bilivucu entered with the new cooking pot, and said to the angry man, “I’m sorry I broke your pot on my head. I’ve brought you back a new one.”

The man was so amazed. “I was sure you had come back to fight me, Bilivucu. Thank you for the new pot. Being a Christian has changed you. It has made you a good man. Please would you teach me more about the Christian way? It must be a good way for me too.”

On another occasion a measles epidemic broke out in Bilivucu’s village. It had been brought into Fiji by men on trading ships, causing great loss of life to the Fijians.

“Your brother is very ill, Bilivucu, “some men reported to him. “They’ve begun to dig his grave because they think he will die soon.”

Bilivucu was reading his Bible and came upon the passage in James, “Is any sick among you, let him call for the elders of the church and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord, and the prayer of faith will save the sick and the Lord will raise him up.”

Bilivucu read the scripture and thought of his brother lying near death in his house. Then he took his Bible and a bottle of oil and ran to his brother’s house. He found him lying close to the fire and his face was deathly pale.

“You have been offering up pigs to your gods and they haven’t healed you. My God will heal you for nothing,” Bilivucu said to him. “Would you like me to speak to my God for you?”

The sick man agreed, so Bilivucu rubbed oil all over his body and knelt down beside the man to pray for his healing. Bilivucu hadn’t even finished his prayer when the sick man suddenly threw off his covering, sat up and cried, “I am better! Your God has made me well!”

He turned to his wife who was sitting beside him. “Get a new sulu for me to wear. Get one each for yourself and the children. This will be a sign that our family has become Christian today.”

Everybody was delighted that he and his household had become Christian that day. He asked Bilivucu to teach them to read the Bible and learn about the Christian way. Bilivucu’s changed life and behaviour was such an example to people that God was able to work in many lives. Instead of fighting with one another, people started acting kindly to one another.

Adapted from: *Deep Sea Canoe*, Alan R Tippett, William Carey Library, Pasadena, California

Daniel Bula of Vella Lavella

In 1907 Reginald Nicholson left Australia to be a missionary in the Solomon Islands. Reginald studied the local language so that he could teach the people about our loving of God who wants us to live in peace, not war.

Reginald was also able to use his medical knowledge to help the people of the Solomons. This is how Reginald was able to help 12-year old Bula, on the island of Vella Lavella.

Bula was sitting in the dark in his leaf-thatched house. He covered his eyes with his hands. Reginald entered the house and took a close look at Bula. His eyes were very swollen and he was in great pain. Bula tried to peep at the new comer, Reginald, who had only been on the island for four days. But the light hurt Bula's his eyes, so he covered them again with his hands.

Reginald went straight back to his thatched hut which was close by and mixed up some soothing medicine for the eyes. He brought it back in a bowl to the boy and began bathing his eyes with it. The missionary continued this for over an hour, after which the eyes felt much better.

Reginald returned to his hut again, and opened up his suitcase. He finally found what he was looking for - a dark green eye-shade. He brought it back to the boy and put it on his head, pulling it well down to shelter his eyes from bright light. Then he left him.

The next morning Reginald returned to see Bula. Reginald could not speak the local languiage, so used sign language to ask Bula to come to his thatched house so that he could treat his eyes there. But Bula did not understand what Reginald was saying.

Finally Reginald took him gently by the arm and led him across to his hut where he again bathed his eyes.

After that, Bula came to Reginald's hut every morning and evening for treatment, and by the end of a fortnight his eyes were completely better.

During this time, Bula and Reginald became strong friends. As a twelve year old, Bula had been trained in all the dark practices of his people. His father was a well-known head-hunter. Bula's ambition was to be a head-hunter like his father. On one occasion his father, in a fit of anger, tied Bula into a basket and hid him in a tree. Then he went off on a fishing expedition for several days. Fortunately his mother searched for him and rescued him. Bula's mother had a great influence over the local women. She possessed hypnotic powers and practiced witchcraft.

By the age of ten Bula could look after himself very well. The men of the villages were often away, fighting other tribes and head-hunting, so the boys very quickly grew up. They learned the fighting skills of their fathers and became independent at an early age.

Kindness and care, love and respect for people were not often shown in Bula's village, and Bula responded to the love and care shown towards him by Reginald. Bula became Reginald's cook-boy, although to begin with his main duty was to light the fire in the morning.

Bula also learned to prepare Reginald's food and did it well.
"If you break a plate or cup, or anything, you must report it to me. So long as you tell me that you broke it I won't be angry," said Reginald.

Bula called Reginald Nicholson "Nicolo".
One day Bula came along with a broken saucer. "I'm sorry, I broke your saucer, Nicolo" he confessed."
"That's alright, Bula," replied the missionary, "I'm pleased that you owned up. That's more important to me than a broken saucer."

Some time later Reginald discovered that it was someone else, not Bula, who broke the saucer. "Why did you say you broke it, Bula?" Reginald asked.

"You told me that whenever anything was broken I must say I did it," he replied.
Reginald realised that Bula had not understood, so explained.

One day Reginald found Bula very carefully rolling two eggs in an old pair of his trousers. "What have you got there, Bula?" he asked.

"I found a nest of alligator eggs in the bush. There were many eggs so I took two of them and I'm going to keep them warm till they hatch." replied Bula. "It will only be two more days before they come out."

"I'm not too sure I want baby alligators around the place, Bula," said Reginald, "but let me know when they hatch and we'll see what happens."

Sure enough, on the second day both eggs opened up and out crawled two baby alligators. They kept them for five or six weeks, but finally Reginald made his decision:

“Those creatures are growing quickly, Bula. I don’t like them around the house. One day they might do some harm to someone. You’ll have to put them back where they belong, in the river."

Reginald and Bula became dependent on each other. Bula helped Reginald to learn the local language and helped with cooking and cleaning up.Bula was learning about the wider world beyond his island. Most important of all he was beginning to know the Creator God and Jesus, His Son. As Reginald learned the language he was able to teach the Christian message to Bula along with others who came to hear.

But it wasn’t easy for Bula. “You’re foolish to put your trust in a white man, Bula,” the village people told him. “Think of all the terrible things the slave traders did to our men in the past when they came in big ships and took our young men away. They played nasty tricks on our people. Don’t trust a white man.”

This piece of history was true, the ‘blackbirders’ did come during the 1870s and take men unwillingly to be sold as slaves to the sugar cane planters of Fiji and Queensland. But somehow Bula knew that this white man was different; he could be trusted. He had done nothing but good since he arrived on Vella Lavella. Although Bula was quite small for his age, he stood firm and remained loyal to his friend Reginald.

The sorcerers made threats against Bula. “We’ll call down sickness on you. You know our word can bring you death. You should leave that missionary and come back to stay with your own people.”

Bula remained unmoved by the threats, and showed no signs of the sickness or death the enemy had spoken over him, even though loyalty to his friend meant loneliness and unpopularity among his own people.

For the first year that Reginald was at Vella Lavella he lived in a thatched hut down near the shore. Bula came to live with him when he became cook-boy. Later on, Reginald got permission from the men in the villages nearby to build a house on a hill.

“The place where we will build our house is through the jungle a little way, Bula,” Reginald said one day. “We’ll have to clear a path first to get all the building materials to the building site.”

“I’ll help you, Nikolo. We can work together to get the house built,” promised Bula.
It was a year of hard work but at last the house was completed. But the village people still kept trying to make Bula leave the missionary.
“You know there is a specially evil spirit living on that hill,” the people jeered. “If you go and live with Nikolo, that spirit will kill you. You know you shouldn’t go near the spirit’s place.”

“I know Nikolo is a good man,” replied Bula. “I know his God protects him and He will protect me too. I’m not afraid of the evil spirits because Nikolo’s God is greater.”

Many years passed before Bula told Reginald of the evil spirits reported to be on the hill where his house stood, and the struggle Bula had with his people over moving in to live with the missionary. Bula remained strong and trusted in God.

Late one night Bula woke Reginald.
“Nikolo! Nikolo! Wake up! I can hear people coming up the hill. I think they might be coming to take me away, like they said they would.”

Together Reginald and Bula went out on to the verandah and were surprised to find a number of men carrying a small canoe in which a badly wounded man lay.
“This is the result of the fight they had this morning,” thought Nikolo.

Two tribes had been in a fight that morning and Reginald had gone down to the village to try and stop them. It took some very loud yelling to get them to stop and listen to him but eventually the fighting stopped. When he saw the wounded man in the canoe he knew they had started again.

“Bring him up on the verandah,” Reginald told the men carrying the injured man. “Let me have a look at his injuries.”

The man had a badly shattered knee.
“I can’t attend to this at night,” he said, “There isn’t enough light to see by. This kerosene lantern flickers too much. I’ll make him as comfortable as I can and work on the knee in the morning.”

He placed some ointment and a bandage over the sore knee and left him to rest until morning. By daylight he was able to remove several fragments of bone from the shattered knee, then he made nine stitches in the muscle and eleven in the skin. He had just completed the task when a messenger arrived with the news that fighting had broken out again. Reginald left Bula in charge of the wounded man and went down to the village yet again. This time he had to yell until he nearly lost his voice. Finally the fighters stopped to listen to him.

This was the first surgical case Bula had seen and it made a deep impression on him, giving him a great desire to learn more of the medical work. Bula was given greater responsibility for the house and everything in it, and he grew in Christian character as he took that task seriously. Reginald was learning more and more of the language, filling notebook after notebook with vocabulary and notes.

As the missionary learned the vocabulary and was able to translate parts of the scripture and hymns, Bula was learning more and more about the Creator God and Jesus His Son.
One day, soon after they had moved in to the new house Reginald heard Bula call urgently, “Nikolo, come quickly! There is a messenger here from your friend the trader who lives near the lagoon around the coast.”

The missionary came out on to the verandah to speak to the messenger who looked and sounded very distressed.
“What’s the trouble?” he asked.
“Please come quickly, Nikolo,” gasped the young man, “your friend the trader, who lives near the lagoon wants you to come straight away to help him. Something terrible has happened to his neighbour, the other trader.”

“What has happened?” asked Reginald.

“The trader went off early this morning on a trading trip and left his wife and children in their house. That chief, Sito, who is wanted by the government authorities, brought his men and killed the trader’s wife and children. Sito and his men also killed all the people who worked for him. The other trader, your friend, came to help but he was too late. He wants you to come, Nikolo and help him. He’s afraid the raiding party will come back and ransack the village houses and trade store,” the messenger explained, very disturbed and fearful of what might happen next.

Reginald called for some men to prepare their large canoe, gave Bula instructions to look after the mission, and set off along the coast. The twenty-mile trip in the large canoe on a choppy sea took four hours. When they finally arrived in the calm waters of the lagoon the scene that confronted them was horrifying. But it was just the beginning of two weeks of horror.

The government authorities were called in. Without knowing the full facts, and being unwilling at first to listen to Reginald, they blamed the massacre on the whole population of Vella Lavella. Government police were told to kill anyone they found. The police urged the missionary to leave the island as Sito had vowed to have his head.

Reginald pleaded with the government authorities to allow the local people to conduct the search for Sito and his gang because they knew the land best. For two weeks they refused the missionary’s request, claiming all the islanders were responsible, but eventually, after indescribable acts of horror, the Resident Commissioner agreed to the local men joining the search for the guilty parties.

While all the violence continued the people of Vella Lavella began to move to the land around the mission house. They saw safety in the presence of the missionary who trusted his God to protect him. Here was a man who possessed no gun, had no locks on his doors, in fact he had no doors, just open doorways, yet he lay down to sleep every night without fear. For the first time, the people, who had for three years been unresponsive, now began to show some faith and trust in the missionary. For three years the missionary had stitched up ugly gashes on arms and legs, set broken bones and treated deep-seated ulcers without any expression of gratitude from the people. Suddenly, in the midst of terrifying events on their island, the people were responding to his care of them by recognising him as their protector.

“I’m very pleased that the people have turned to you in their trouble, Nikolo. They can see that your God is protecting you.”

For the first time in three years Mr Nicholson could see a response to the Christian message. The numbers of people attending Sunday worship and day school increased steadily. Many people built permanent homes for themselves near the mission station. The missionary rejoiced as he watched the word of God begin to take hold in the hearts of the Vella Lavellans.

Bula grew rapidly and deeply in knowing God his Father and Jesus His Son. The time came for him to be baptised.

“When you are baptised, what Christian name would you like to have, Bula?” the missionary asked.
“I’d like to be Daniel, please Nikolo,” he responded instantly.

“Is there any reason why you choose Daniel?”
“Yes,” came the reply, “when I first came to you and my people were all against me I felt lonely and afraid. Then I heard the story of Daniel and how he stood alone. God looked after him in the hard times and I knew He would look after me in just the same way.”
So he became Daniel Bula.

But Mr Nicholson had known him as Bula for so long that he found it difficult to change to Daniel and continued to call him Bula. One day Daniel came to him looking very troubled.
“Nikolo, why do you still call me Bula? God has given me a new heart. I know this. So why don’t you call me by my new name? I want to be called Daniel. This is my Christ name. You tell me that when Saul of Tarsus became a Christian his name was changed to Paul. So now that I am a Christian, let my name be Daniel.”
From that time he became Daniel. He continued to learn about the Christian way, always choosing to please God.

There were new Christians from nearby villages now living at the mission station. Daniel took encouraged them to walk in the way of Jesus, taking every opportunity to help them know God the Father.

Daniel also enjoyed accompanying the Reginald on trips around the island, visiting villages along the coast, helping with any medical needs they found. He understood that the purpose of these trips was to gain the confidence of the people by healing their sick and relieving their pain.

Daniel took a great interest also in the treatment of the injured and sick. Ever since the first time he witnessed surgery on that damaged knee he was most enthusiastic about learning how to treat such injuries himself. He was a fast learner. Once, when Reginald was away from the mission a man was brought in from a nearby village.
“What happened to him?” asked Daniel.
“He was getting coconuts from a very tall tree when he fell,” they explained. “His leg is damaged.”

Daniel examined the leg, found where the bone was broken, and proceeded to set it back in place. The man fully recovered.

On another occasion a man who had been in a fight was brought in with a severe gash across the side of the head, the ear and cheek bone. Reginald was there, but Daniel begged to be allowed to deal with the patient. The gash was cleaned up thoroughly and then Daniel proceeded to put in the stitches, which he did very well. The man was placed entirely in Daniel’s care and he recovered completely. Daniel was learning very quickly and managed these minor surgical cases very well.

A boy of twelve was brought in one day in a serious condition. He had been playing in the water with his friends when a shark attacked him, tearing a huge lump of flesh from his thigh. His friends dragged him from the water, bound the torn flesh roughly back in place, and brought him to the mission station. Daniel at once took charge, cleaned up the wound, and sutured the lump of torn flesh back in place. The boy made a full recovery, eventually getting back the full use of his leg.

The most outstanding work Daniel achieved was seen in his orphanage. He had, over the years, collected orphans and unwanted children from all around Vella Lavella and adjacent islands. They were brought to the home that had been specially built for him. It was larger than the usual village house. Two-thirds of it was partitioned off for the boys and Daniel lived in the remainder. There were times when he had as many as sixteen boys with him. The boys learned from Daniel's example what living as a Christian really meant. As a result they learned quickly and many of them became Christians because of Daniel's influence.

The missionary watched Daniel develop into manhood, ever growing in Christian grace. "One day, Lord, "he prayed, "would you have Daniel preach to his own people? They are still living in so much darkness. They come to worship you with spears and axes in their hands, still afraid of each other. They would understand you and your ways more quickly if one of their own people taught them."

Reginald began to prepare Daniel for preaching. He was very enthusiastic about this new venture, for he realized the importance of presenting the Christian message to his fellow islanders so they would clearly understand and believe it. It wasn't long before he was taking part in the Sunday worship services, presenting the gospel with illustrations that related to their every-day life.

Speaking one Sunday on the verse, '*Be still and know that I am God'* he said, "You all know I was out in my small canoe the other day when that big storm came over us. It took us quite by surprise; it hit so suddenly and so hard. I was a long way from land so the first thing I thought was, "I must get back to the shore." But I soon found how useless and dangerous it was to try and battle against the wind and waves. So what did I do? I waited. It was best to be still. That was the safest thing to do. If I had continued struggling, the canoe would have been swamped and I would have been lost. In fact, the storm soon passed and I was able to paddle home safely."

"In our lives we get caught by storms. Waves of fear, anger and jealousy come over us and threaten to swamp us. If we struggle in our own strength we make more trouble for ourselves. The safest thing to do is to *be still and know that God is in control.* If we obey, all is well. So I urge you to listen to God's voice, obey Him, and all will be well for you. Just be still.

For ten years Daniel preached in the worship services with wonderful results.
Another of Daniel's great gifts was his ability with languages. He was fluent in five Solomon Islands languages, and learned quickly to speak simple but correct English. There was no written form of the Vella Lavellan language so an alphabet had to be developed before any translation could be attempted. Daniel worked with Reginald in the task of translation of scriptures and hymns.

In 1916 Reginald brought Daniel and his friend Alex on a speaking trip around Australia and New Zealand. Alex was one of the first people on Vella Lavella to be baptised.

In 1921 Daniel was married to Rini Vailoduri. People from all over the island gathered for this great event

The church was decorated with palm leaves and feathery ferns, brilliant flowers including graceful native orchids. After the happy ceremony some hundreds of people sat down to a lavish feast of pigs, fish, taro, chickens, tapioca, and a variety of delicious fruits.

After the feast many men spoke to the gathering. There was one thought above all others that they expressed. "Before the missionaries came we only met together like this if we wanted to make war on someone. Now we can meet as friends with love and friendship in our hearts towards each other."

So Daniel Bula grew in grace and in the knowledge of Jesus Christ, leading and teaching his people, knowing that God had laid His hand on him and called him to this special task of leading his people into the Kingdom of God.

Daniel and Rini had been married only ten months when Daniel complained one day of a pain in his side. He wasn't feeling well but he continued work as usual. After two days he was running a high temperature that the nursing sister was unable to control. The next night he became worse, and a little after midnight he died.

It was all so sudden and unexpected. Rini, who had only been married to Daniel for ten months, was heart-broken. In a letter to Reginald, who had returned to Australian Rini wrote:
"Today Dani is not here. I listen for the sound of his voice and long to see his face, but all in vain. I cannot understand why God took him. I am amazed. But I know He has gone to be with God, because his face at the time of his going was lit with a wonderful light."

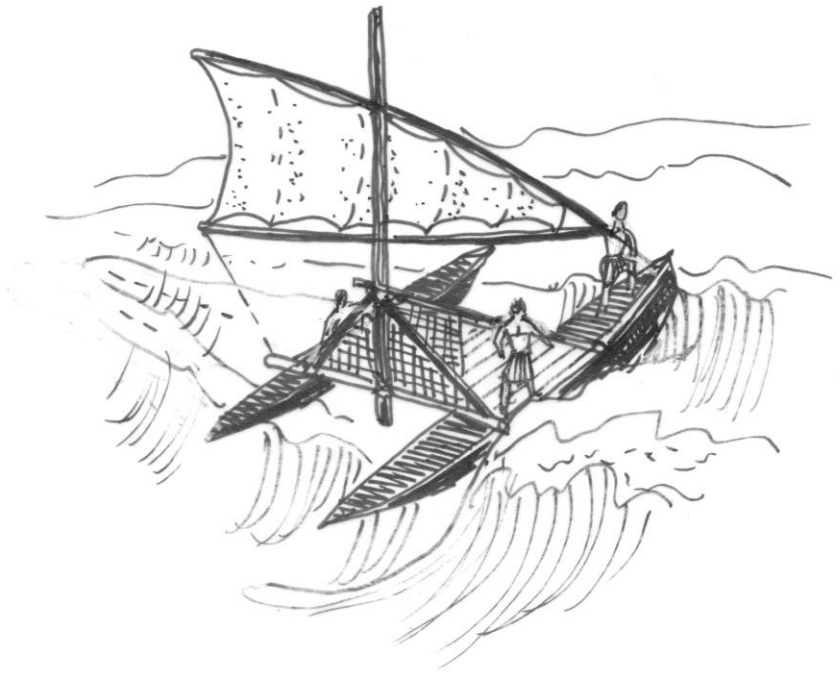
The nursing sister on the mission station wrote:
"Daniel was both our right and left hand in the work here. Perhaps God knew that we trusted too much in Dan and not enough in Him. He was always ready. He fixed up the squabbles and straightened out the difficulties of both non-Christian and Christian. Yet he always stressed that only God could solve their greatest need."

Friends in New Zealand wrote:
"Daniel Bula was only twenty-eight years of age when he died, yet he lived to see his people become Christian in character. In his life-time he saw the banishment of head-hunting and murder. He saw love-feasts take the place of tribal fights. He saw head-hunters take their sons in their canoes to their preaching appointments. God had brought about dramatic change in Vella Lavella in just one generation, and much of it was through the devotion of one man, Daniel Bula.

Rini had a baby son whom she named Daniel Bula, with the prayer that he would grow up to follow in his father's footsteps.
"*Through his faith he is still speaking" Hebrews 11: 4*

Adapted from *The Son of a Savage*, R.C.Nicholson, Epworth Press, London, 1924

Elikana of Tuvala



“There’s a big storm coming up over there. I hope we can reach Rakaanga before it hits us,” observed Elikana anxiously. He was the leader of a group of nine people who were paddling home by canoe to Rakaanga from Manihiki, a journey of about thirty miles. They had been attending a special conference of their church. in the Penrhyn Islands group, about 1000 miles north-west of Tahiti. There were six men, two women and a child in the group. It was the year 1861.

“That’s Rakaanga straight ahead. You can just see the mountain through the rain over

there. Perhaps we can get home before the storm hits,” said another man.

“The black clouds are blowing in very quickly,” commented a third, “We need to move fast to avoid it.”

The men strained hard to steer the canoe. The wind blew stronger and colder. The rain-filled clouds rolled across the waves towards them, blocking their view of the island. Suddenly the storm hit their vessel and they were being tossed about on a raging sea. Their two canoes, each about 16 metres long and 2 metres wide, were joined together using lengths of timber. Boards were laid over these to form a deck which was protected from the sun and rain by a shelter of woven coconut leaves.

But there was little protection for anyone now as powerful gusts of wind tossed the canoe about. Darkness fell as the men worked hard to keep their vessel on course for Rakaanga but the strong winds were against them.

“Let’s turn and go back to Manihiki,” suggested one of the men, an experienced sailor. “The wind is blowing us that way, anyhow.”
The others agreed, so they turned the canoe about and steered it all night in the direction of Manihiki, or so they thought. By daybreak the storm had passed, but to their dismay, when the sun rose there was no sign of land anywhere.

“This is serious,” said Elikana gravely. “We’re out on the open ocean, with not much food and water. Worst of all, we don’t know where we are.”
“The canoes aren’t really strong enough for the open ocean,” commented another man. “They’re both leaking so badly we’ll have to have two men baling full time.”

All six men kept baling, steering or resting in turn. After a long discussion the men agreed they should steer south in the hope of reaching Samoa or Rarotonga or some other island. For days they continued heading south without once sighting land.

“There are rain clouds over that way,” observed Elikana at the end of a week. “We need to collect more water for drinking.”

He spoke to the women, “Could you have one of those canvas sails ready? When the rain comes, collect it in the sail and store it in the water gourds.”
Once again they were tossed about in the heavy seas blown up by strong winds. Once again they lost direction and decided to turn north again. Another week passed. Then there came a cry from the steersman. “I see land ahead! Someone else please come and help me steer to that island!”

The men tried with all their combined strength on the steering oar to reach it, but the weather was wild. Time after time they would be near the shore, then the wind would blow them away from it again. Night came and their efforts had been in vain. They were back on the open sea.

The following day the same thing happened. Land was in sight, they steered anxiously towards it, straining hard on the steering oar, but rough weather carried them away from it. For a few more days they continued steering the canoe, but the day came when Elikana spoke to them all. “There’s nothing more we can do. I’m going to pray that God will save us. We can’t save ourselves.”

Then he prayed, “Lord God, You made the sea and the wind and the currents that carry us through the seas. We give ourselves to Your care and trust that You will use the wind and currents to steer us to where You want us to land.”

They stopped using the steering oar and just allowed the canoe to be carried by the winds and current. Their small supply of coconuts had dwindled to only six. Occasionally one of the men managed to catch a fish or a bird that settled on the edge of the canoe. For six long weeks they just drifted on the ocean. At the end of that time they decided they should give themselves up to God for whatever He wanted to do with them.They could see no other end to their predicament.

“I’m not giving up hope of being rescued,” one man spoke up. “I’m willing to keep on baling one canoe if someone else will bale the other one. They are both in bad shape so it’s no use baling one without the other.”
“I’ll help with the other one,” offered another man.

“These two will be doing the hard work,” said Elikana;” I think we should allow them to have the remaining six coconuts to give them strength. Do you all agree? The rest of us will keep trying to catch fish and birds as we have been doing.”

During the next two weeks they caught two sharks and a sea bird which provided them with enough food to stay alive. At the end of the eighth week they looked at the food situation again.
“There’s only half a coconut left,” said Elikana. “When that is gone there’s only what we can catch from the sea. And we’re getting too weak to manage that.”

During the whole eight weeks of this journey they had held worship every morning and evening. On Sundays they had special worship times. On the Sunday evening, at the end of the eighth week at sea, Elikana prayed a special prayer, “Lord, we commit ourselves into Your Hands and ask You to do Your will with each one of us.”

It was a clear, calm, beautiful evening, with not a cloud in the sky. As daylight faded Elikana scanned the horizon, quite expecting this to be their last night.
“Look friends,” he said quietly, afraid of raising their hopes again only to be disappointed, “Look over there. Isn’t that land?”

The others gazed in the direction Elikana was pointing and all agreed it was land in sight. Hopes were mixed with fear as they saw the land so near.

“We’ve been this close to land before,” they thought, “but the wind blew us away from it. What if that happens again?”

The wind blew up, bringing a shower of rain which refreshed the weary travelers. Then it passed and a stronger wind sprang up, blowing them towards the land. Hoisting the one remaining sail they ran straight in for the land. It was midnight when they struck the breakers and knew they were passing over the reef. But on they went, through the dark, roller after roller carrying them forward till at last they reached the shore.

As they were tossed around by the breakers four of their members were lost overboard. The remaining five managed to wade through the shallow water on to the first solid ground they had stood on for a long time. It was Nukulaelae, an island in the Tuvalu (Ellice Islands) group. They lay exhausted on the sand until daylight, when they hung up their wet clothes on the bushes nearby.

Faivaatala, a man from the nearby village, noticed the wet clothes hanging on the bushes and came to investigate. When he found the five survivors all looking so wretched, hungry and exhausted he took pity on them and went quickly to get some green coconuts to relieve their hunger and thirst. When they had gained enough strength, Faivaatala brought them to his village by canoe to cook food for them and give them shelter in his house.

The village people gathered around these strangers who had appeared in their midst, curious to know how they had arrived there. They soon discovered that the local language had much in common with Samoan. On further enquiry they learned that a group of Samoans had lived with them on Nukulaelae some years before, so communication was not difficult.

With all the care and attention of the villagers the five survivors soon recovered from their ordeal and Elikana, who was a minister in his local church, began telling them about God the Creator and Jesus His Son.

“Please tell us more,” they pleaded whenever Elikana told them Bible stories. “We love to hear about your God.”
“You seem especially interested in the stories of Jesus,” said Elikana one day. “What is it that attracts you?”

“We’ve heard some of your stories before,” explained a village chief. “Some time ago a man named Stuart, from a trading ship that visited our islands, spoke to us about the true God. He told us that God doesn’t like idols and he advised us to burn them and to turn and worship the true God. So we did; we burnt all our idols, but we didn’t know what to do next.”

It was evident that for some time God had been preparing the hearts of these people to receive the gospel of Jesus Christ, so the five survivors taught the villagers all they could of the Christian message for as long as they were with them.

After four months a ship called at Nukulaelae so Elikana and his friends prepared to return to their home at Rakaanga. The island chief was sad to see his new friends leaving them for they had taught his people so much about the one true God.
“I understand that you must go back to your homes and your families. They will be surprised to see you again after all this time” he said; “but please could you send someone back here to teach us more about God and Jesus His Son?”

Elikana was so happy that the people wanted to know more about God. “I must go back to my people,” he replied, “but I promise to come back and bring more teachers with me so you can learn more about our God.”

The chief was satisfied with this promise so the five survivors boarded the trading ship, leaving behind a group of growing Christians on Nukulaelae. Before he left, Elikana took his Rarotongan New Testament and hymn book, which had survived the stormy journey in the canoe. He had been using them to teach the villagers to read. Dividing the books up into small portions he shared them among the households, so that everyone could have access to a little bit of God’s word. These portions were treasured by the new Christians.

It was four years before Elikana returned to Nukulaelae, for he first had to spend three years teacher training at Malua, in Samoa. When he returned he was accompanied by a white missionary, Mr. Murray, and two Samoan teachers with their wives. The people were surprised and delighted to see their old friend back again and gave him a great welcome.

But, as Elikana looked around, he noticed there weren't as many people as there had been when he was there before.
"Where are all the men?" he asked, puzzled at their absence.
There was an air of gloom about the people as the tragic story was told.
"A slave ship from Peru came here," explained an old man. "The slave traders took off two hundred men. There were only about three hundred men here altogether, so we have been left with only a few men to carry on the village work."

"At first our men refused to go with the traders on the ship," continued another man," but a bad man named Tom Rose promised our men that they would take them where they could get more Christian teaching. Then they would bring them back to their island home again. They went on board the ship and we've never seen them since."

One piece of good news in this sad story was that before the men left they were each given a portion of Elikana's New Testament and hymn book which they carried away with them as prized possessions.

The people living in the Ellice Islands (Tuvalu) were all eager to have Bible teachers in their villages and gradually more Samoan teachers were brought out. Altogether thirty-six trained pastors and teachers from Samoa, with their wives and families, served in these islands. Because the languages and culture were so similar, it was easy for them to live together happily. The people of the Ellice Islands readily accepted the Christian message brought by the Samoans.

A Samoan named Ioane, arrived in1875. He persuaded the people to give up work on Sundays and to worship God instead. He challenged them still further. "You have sacred objects and idols in your houses. They are made to represent fish, birds, the stars, sun and moon. These are all things that the great Creator God made. If He made them, then He must be greater than they are. So He wants you to worship Him, not the things He made."

The chiefs thought about this; they discussed it among themselves and finally came to Ioane. "You come with us into the bush. We want to show you something," they said.
There they showed him some of their sacred objects.
"We understand what you are saying to us, Ioane," said their chief spokesman, "but we're afraid to actually destroy any of these things of our old religion in case the gods destroy us."

"I'll do it for you then," offered Ioane.

The following day he called all the people together and removed the sacred necklaces from the five chiefs. The people watched in awe as the broken symbols of their ancestor gods fell to the ground. Seeing there was no reaction from any of the offended gods the chiefs said to Ioane, "There are god-houses here are full of sacred objects. You can strip them of their idols."

Ioane began clearing out each family's god-house, turning out skulls, sacred stones, clubs and spears and wooden images dedicated to the feared shooting star.
"You should bury the skulls in the proper burying place for your families," directed Ioane, "and the spears and clubs would be useful for making a fence around your meeting place, the court-house."

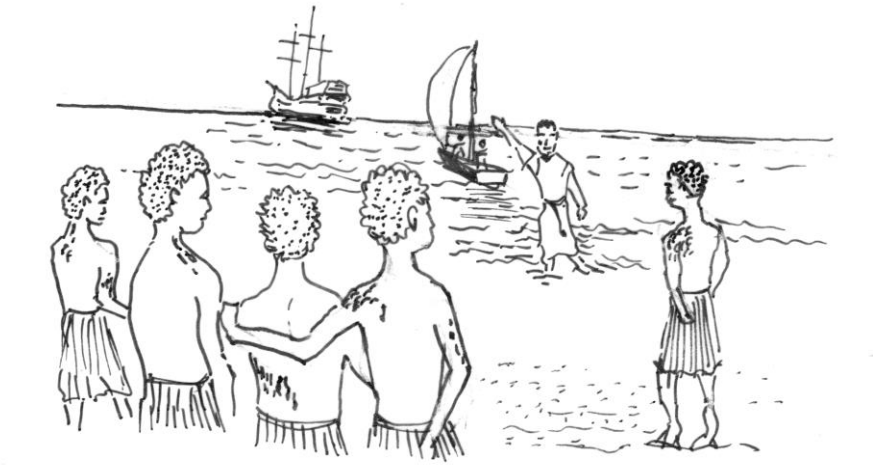
The people realized as this cleansing process went on that, in spite of their fearful expectations, these idols were not going to harm them, and they responded by coming to worship on the following Sunday in even greater numbers. They agreed to meet for worship in their court-house with the new fence made of spears and clubs they had surrendered. Almost one hundred attended.

Ioane and his fellow pastors gradually brought these people out of the darkness of idol worship to worshiping the Creator God, Father of Jesus Christ. Then, week by week he taught them the new Christian way of living which transformed their village life as well as their individual lives.

This tiny nation, now Tuvalu, which has a population of around 5000, has sent out at least 80 missionaries to eight other regions of the Pacific, from Tokelau in the east to Papua in the west. So, through the misfortune of a small group of God's people, He has brought about His purposes for, not only the people of Tuvalu, but also Kerebati to the north and countless others in distant islands of the Pacific.

Adapted from:
The History of the London Missionary Society, R.Lovett, O.U.P., London, 1899
To live Among the Stars, John Garret, Institute of Pacific Studies, University of the South Pacific, Suva, Fiji

Father Damien, the Friend of Lepers



Joseph Damien was born in 1840 in the village of Tremeloo in Flanders, Belgium. He was the son of a Belgian peasant, and as a boy, often helped his father with the work on the farm. Because of this he grew into a strong lad, and being very handy with tools, was able to do all kinds of useful jobs.

Joseph and his brother were brought up to understand the Christian message, and it was Joseph's brother, Pamphile who wanted to be a missionary to the Sandwich Islands (Hawaii).

However, Pamphile became seriously ill, and realized that he might never go to the Sandwich Islands and share the gospel with the people there.

"Would it make you happy if I took your place as a missionary?" asked Joseph one day. Pamphile's eyes lighted up for a moment and he squeezed his brother's hand, smiling.

Joseph wrote to the church for permission to be his brother's replacement on the mission. When permission was granted Joseph was very excited.

In 1863, Joseph Damien started out by sailing-ship for the South Seas. He was full of enthusiasm as he began his ministry on one of the Sandwich Islands.He worked there teaching and preaching for ten years. During this time, the disease of leprosy was detected among an increasing number of the local people. Because leprosy is contagious the authorities became increasingly alarmed for the disease was spreading at a great rate. The government decided to isolate all lepers on a separate island to prevent any further spread of the disease in the community. The island of Molokai was set aside for lepers and anyone banished to the island knew they had little or no hope of ever returning to their home and families.

Father Damien's kind heart was deeply touched by the sad plight of these poor people and he approached the Bishop of the church in the islands for permission to go to Molokai and minister to the neglected lepers. The Bishop agreed to his request and he made his way to the isolation from which he would never return.

On arrival at Molokai he was appalled at the conditions in which the poor people had been left to exist. They lived in makeshift houses, often with poor roofing that let the frequent rains in, creating mud puddles on the earth floor. They had no regular food supply and insufficient water for their daily needs. Some of the more fortunate had relatives who brought them food or clothing occasionally, but they would not venture on to the island and any such goods would be left on the beach without contacting the ones for whom it was intended.

As soon as he arrived, Father Damien set to work to supply the settlement with an adequate water supply. He asked the government for materials and, with the help of the strongest lepers, he built a reservoir in the hills and laid water pipes to the villages near the coast. His next task was to build better housing for the people. In ten years Father Damien had seen to the building of six hundred houses. There was the need for a hospital where the more advanced cases of leprosy could be treated medically. He nursed them, dressed their wounds, comforted them when they were dying and dug their graves when they were to be buried. As time passed, people in Europe heard of his unselfish work and sent out money and goods to help in the work.

One day as he worked in the hospital, he accidentally spilt some boiling water on his foot. "That's strange," he thought. "I can't feel anything. I should be feeling the burning."

Leprosy affects the nerves of the body and causes lack of feeling on the affected parts. The fingers and toes wear away because, without any feeling, the victim damages them on hard and sharp things. Because there is no warning pain, there is irreparable damage done to their limbs.

Father Damien went to a doctor. "Do I have leprosy, doctor?" he asked. After a thorough examination the doctor looked at him gravely and confirmed his suspicions.

Father Damien said that even if he could be cured by forsaking the island he would not desert the lepers. They were the people to whom God had called him, and there he would remain. He worked on as a leper among the lepers until his death. Father Damien's ministry is remembered around the world. He had lived out the life of Jesus among the outcasts of the islands, showing kindness and love to them, and brought many to know Jesus personally.

Hannah Dudley

Part 1
The plantation owners did not care about the Indian people, but the Methodist Church loved them and wanted them to know that the Lord Jesus also loved them. A lady named Hannah Dudley came from the Methodist Church in Australia to help the Indians. Miss Dudley had worked for live years in India so she knew the Hindi language, and knew how people lived, what food they ate, what made them happy and sad, and all about their traditions.

Miss Dudley began work in Suva among the Indian people in Toorak who no longer worked for the plantation owners but were growing vegetables to sell to the white people in Suva. Hannah believed that God brought Indians to Fiji because, “He wanted to save them through the Gospel of His Son”. She knew that God loved them very much, that Jesus died so they could have all their sins forgiven and so they could have everlasting life.

Hannah suffered many things so that she could be a good witness to the Indians. She lived as close to the families as she could, ate the same food as them, shared her money and her food, and became so poor she could not afford to go back to Australia when she got sick. The mosquitoes bit her very badly and her legs were poisoned. She could not walk for several weeks. One time she fell into the Rewa River near Davuilevu, and two Fijian boys had to rescue her.

Some Indians didn’t want her to talk about Jesus to the Indian people and they spread bad stories about her, that she was not really a trained teacher but a beggar in Australia. When her father died in Australia, she could not go home to be with her mother and brother and sisters; she cried for her father all alone in Fiji. But Hannah was very faithful and hard-working. She visited the homes of the people to tell them about Jesus, and went to comfort those people who were in prison or in hospital. The women loved to welcome her into their very poor homes because she could speak Hindi. They could tell her their stories about their homes and family in India, and they knew she understood because she had lived in India. Also they knew that she, like them, missed her family members.

After a year some people wanted to become Christians and get baptized. People in Australia sent her enough money to build a church where Dudley High School stands today. This was the first Indian Methodist Church in Fiji.

Part 2
Hannah Dudley felt very sorry for all the children playing around their houses during the day with no one to care for them and no chance to go to school. She knew that unless they learned how to read and write they would not be able to get any better work than the weeding and planting that their parents were doing, so they would never be free or able to earn money to have a better life.

Miss Dudley lived in one room in a house that belonged to somebody else, but she had a verandah on her room. She decided to start a school on her verandah. She went

around the Indian homes asking the parents to send their children to her school. Most of the parents only wanted to send their boys to school, but she said girls should also be allowed to come. So many children came that she had to move her school to a church hall. This used to be on the compound where the Centenary Church now stands, then it was moved up to Toorak.

Miss Dudley did not have books or blackboards or many of the things our teachers have today but she did the best she could with what she had available. Some of the Indian fathers said that they wanted to learn to read and write, so they could get better jobs. Hannah agreed that they could come at night after work, and so for three nights of every week she had a night school for men.

Hannah believed that education was important. God is very wise. He has made a wonderful world, and the more we learn the more we can be thankful for this wonderful world that we live in. If people don't know what makes the rain come, what the sun is, how plants grow; how people get sick and get well again, they can have all sorts of wrong beliefs that make their lives very unhappy.

While Hannah was teaching the children and adults how to read and write, she would tell them stories from the Bible. She was teaching the Indians about our Lord Jesus Christ at the same time as teaching them how to read and do mathematics. Hannah Dudley also had a Sunday School, and many of the children came because they liked to hear Bible stories.

The Government only began schools for Indian children in 1911. This was fourteen years after Hannah had begun her work. Today we have the privilege of education and we must thank God for giving us this opportunity, and also thank our parents who working hard so their children can go to school..

Part 3

Imagine that you are nearly blind. If you were nearly blind you would need help to do things like getting dressed, crossing the road, buying things at the shops, and lots of other things. Hannah met a nine-year-old boy who was just like this. Rajesh's mother had run away from her husband because he used to hit her all the time. She got a job as a housekeeper, but the lady who gave her the job said Rajesh was not allowed to live with her. She could only see her son on her one day off each week.
Who would look after Rajesh all the other days? Where would Rajesh live? His grandmother and grandfather and all his aunts and uncles were still in India. The neighbours were too busy and too poor and they had nothing to share with this boy. Rajesh's mother was very worried.

Then Rajesh's mother heard about a nice white lady called Miss Hannah Dudley, who talked about how Jesus loved blind people and healed them. She took Rajesh to see Hannah. Hannah said, "Let Rajesh stay with me."

By then Hannah had a house in Toorak where the Dudley School stands now Rajesh could not go to school because he couldn't see well enough to read, but he loved to listen to the stories Miss Dudley told the children: stories from the Bible, stories about life in India, stories about life in Australia. Hannah knew that Rajesh must one day look after himself so he must learn to do something well enough to earn money She taught him a trade. We don't know what it was. -Perhaps it was polishing peoples' shoes; he could do

that by feeling the shoes and feeling how much shoe polish to put on his brush, then rubbing the shoes very hard.. Or perhaps he worked in a store putting vegetables into bags; he could count very well. Hannah taught Rajesh to 'see' by feeling things with his fingers, and he became very clever.

Hannah cared for other little children who were left alone when their mothers and fathers died. These children are called orphans. Hannah adopted them and loved them as though they were her own family, even though she was not married and had no husband to help her earn money for their food or school fees. She loved them, and they loved her and began to call her "Hamari Mataji" or "Hamari Maa

Part 4:
Hannah Dudley left Fiji when she got too sick to work any more. She took some of the Indian children whom she had adopted and went back to her home country of Australia. She could only keep the children there until they had finished their education; they were not given permanent residency. So rather than send them back to Fiji, Hannah left her country of birth and went to live in New Zealand, where the children were allowed to become citizens.

One of Hannah's adopted sons, Raymond, became a Minister of the Methodist Church. His fellow-ministers liked him so much they elected him as the President of their Conference. This was the first time they had ever elected someone who wasn't a white New Zealander to become their President, so it was a great honour.

One of Hannah's girls, Piyari got married to Ranjan Mewa, and they bought a shop that sold fruit and vegetables. They had three sons. Three of Hannah's other girls did not marry but they became very good at sewing and were happy living in a nice house in Auckland and going to work each day Hannah grew old and weak, and Piyari and Ranjan took her to live with them. Early on May 2, 1931, Piyari and Ranjan and their children, and all of Hannah's adopted family living in Auckland gathered around her bedside because they knew their beloved Maa was dying. Hannah was very peaceful and quiet; she was not afraid to die because she knew that when she "went through the deepest darkness, she would not be afraid, because Jesus, the good Shepherd, would be with her." (Psalm 23).

Early in the morning of May 3, 1931, Hannah died. Her sisters and brother were still in Australia, but the children she adopted, who were grown up nova and her grandchildren, stood around the bed and prayed with her as she died.
They were sad to lose their beloved Maa, but they were happy that she was going to Heaven to see Jesus. They also knew that because they believed in Jesus, loved Him and served Him the way that Miss Dudley had taught them, and they would also go to Heaven one day. They would all be together again. Hannah once said to a friend that those who believe in Jesus never really die. They just go to sleep in this life and pass through the gate into the presence of Jesus.

The Indian Division of the Methodist Church in Fiji & Rotuma
The Indian people were brought to Fiji from different parts of India between the years 1879 and 1916. Altogether 60,533 Indians came to Fiji during that time to work on the coconut, sugar, cocoa and other plantations that the white people owned in Fiji. The Indians were mostly uneducated people from the villages in India, who did not know

where Fiji was - they thought it was in another part of India and that they would be able to live very much the same as they always had.

However, they had to travel over the sea for nearly three months, and when they got to Fiji they were often treated very cruelly by the white plantation owners. They had to live in very poor houses, and were punished if they did not do all the work the overseers expected them to do each day. Often overseers sat on horses and whipped the Indian labourers in the field if they did not work very hard all the time. Other times the Indians had to give back some of their wages as a fine, or they were sent to jail, if there was not enough work done.

The Indian women had to get up at 3.00am to bathe, cook breakfast and lunch before they went to the field to, work. They carried their babies on their backs and put them to sleep on sacks beside the fields while they worked. Children too old to be carried to the field, played at home without anyone to care for them until they were 8 or 9 years old, then they too had to work on the fields. There was no school at all for them to go to. All the aunts and uncles and grandmothers and grandfathers were back in India, so there was no one to look after the children.

Only 0.1% of the Indians came to Fiji as Christians; 83°/o were Hindus, Muslims 15% and Sikhs 2%. The Indians came firstly from Uttar Pradesh and Bihar provinces, and later from the Punjab area in northern India and Madras in South India. They were very unhappy and missed their families back in India. Many became so angry they committed murder and other crimes and went to prison. The British Government only allowed four women for every ten men to come, so many men could not get married, and this led to a lot of fighting, divorce and immorality. .

Under the indenture system, the Indians had to work for five years and then they were free to stay in Fiji or return to India. If they worked for another five years, they were offered a free passage back to India. If they chose to stay in Fiji, the British Colonial Government said they “would be in all respects free men with privileges in no way inferior to those of any other class of Her Majesty’s subjects resident in the Colonies”. This led the Indians to believe that they would be politically equal to Fijians once their indentured period was served. 9,000 Indians were put on plantations in the Suva, Nausori and Rewa delta areas. In 1884 the Methodist Mission began to think about teaching the Christian faith to these Indians, but it wasn’t until 9th July 1892 that the first missionary, John Williams from India, arrived in Suva. He worked in Rewa and Nausori.

Jacob Vouza

Everyone in the village was talking about the new-comers, Jacob Vouza and his wife:

“A new policeman has arrived here on Guadalcanal. You should see him. He’s very tall, maybe 6 feet, and he has great broad shoulders.”
“He looks really powerful.”
“He has a lovely wife.
“And they’re both Christians. They’ve started having worship services on Sundays. The policeman teaches from the Bible.”
“I think I’ll go along, it sounds good.”

Jacob Vouza and his wife soon settled in to life in the village near Honiara in the Solomon Islands. Their Sunday meetings grew in number and the village folk greatly respected their new policeman and his wife.
“They live their lives like true Christians, just like he teaches us,” they said.

The village community lived together peaceably, learning to follow the Christian way. Then one day their peace was shattered.

“What’s that noise?” asked one man.
“Sounds like a plane, coming this way,” said another.
Jacob Vouza looked up to the distant skyline then called urgently to everyone, “You’d better run and hide in the bush. Those are enemy planes. Get your families together and run!”

In the following few days, Japanese planes had landed on the airstrip at Honiara, ships had landed Japanese soldiers at the wharf and they now occupied the township of Honiara and the surrounding villages. Vouza recalled the past few years.

“I always thought it was suspicious the way those Japanese men came spying their way into our islands,” he commented to a friend. “I remember when I was working at Tulagi there was a Japanese who worked as a carpenter. He openly boasted about how his people would come one day and occupy our islands.”

For the first few months after the enemy landed on Guadalcanal, Jacob and all the villagers were hiding in the jungle, and no one knew where he was or what he did. But then the day came when a ship appeared from the east. “It’s an American ship!” someone cried, “They’ve come to help us claim our islands back!”

The villagers watched from the shelter of the jungle as the American troops landed on the wharf at Honiara, relieved and excited that help had come for them. They found ways of contacting the Americans to pass on information about the whereabouts of the enemy. Jacob Vouza came to the American officers. “I know all the tracks through the jungle, lots of secret ways to spy on the enemy.” he said, “I can get the information to you about what they are doing and where they are going.”

The Americans were pleased to have such a strong, reliable man helping them and Jacob Vouza served their forces well.

But the day came when Jacob was captured by the Japanese. He had some important information about the movement of enemy troops which he was anxious to pass on to the American officers. He was following a jungle track to their base when he was taken.

Roughly the soldiers pushed him up against a tree and threatened him. “You tell us where the Americans are!” they ordered, but Jacob remained silent. They tied him to a tree with lengths of bush rope. “We’ll give you tins of food. Tell us what you know!”

Jacob said nothing.
The man who had been a carpenter at Tulagi was amongst the Japanese party that had captured Jacob. He recognised Him and bigger bribes were offered. “You’re a big man in the police force. You’re important. We’ll give you lots of food.”
“Tell us about the Americans.”
But nothing would make Jacob talk.

They left him for a time and Jacob thought they had finished with him, but later they returned.
“One last chance,” they said. “Tell us where your friends are. If you don’t we’ll kill you!”
Still not a word from Jacob.

They thrust bayonets through his arms, neck and finally his body. Believing he was dead they left him there, tied to the tree. But Jacob did not die.
“I must get to the American base and give them the information I learned today,” he thought to himself. “I’ve got to get out of these ropes.”

Somehow he managed to chew through the bush ropes and set himself free. He was bleeding a lot from the bayonet wounds, and his strength was fading. But he determined

to reach the American base. “I must get there tonight,” he said to himself, “This information is too important to wait.”

It was twenty miles to the American lines, but staggering, crawling, bleeding, sometimes forced to rest, he struggled through the jungle during the long hours of the night. Suddenly, “Halt! Who’s there?”

It was an American sentry on duty who had heard a noise in the nearby jungle and called out his challenge. Then out of the dark jungle crawled Jacob, his strength almost gone.
“We must get you to a doctor immediately,” said the sentry.
But Jacob objected. “No, the doctor can wait. Take me to an army officer. I have important information for him. I must see him first.”

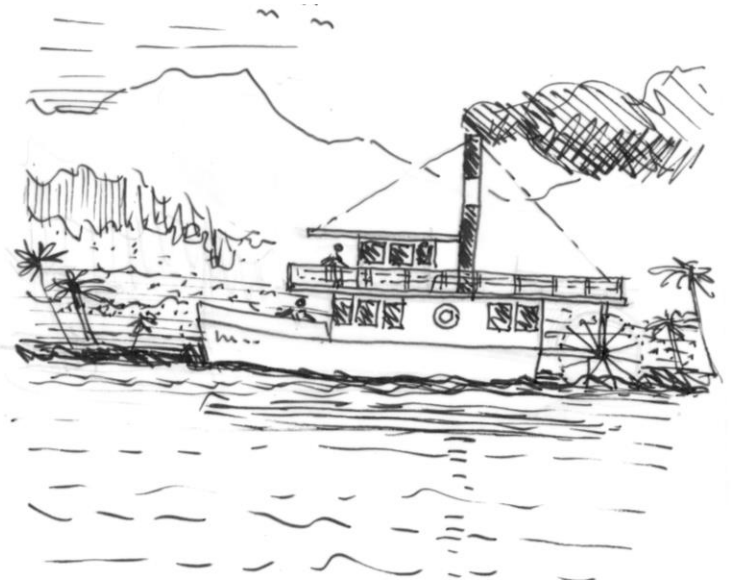
They helped him walk the rest of the way to see the officer, who listened to his amazing story of courage and determination. “You’re a very brave man, Jacob Vouza. You’ve done well to get this information to us. Thank you for your courage and loyalty. Now you’ve done your duty we need to get you to the doctor.”

During the months that followed Jacob recovered under the care of the Americans. In the following two years there was bitter fighting on Guadalcanal between Japanese and Allied forces, but finally the Japanese were driven out and eventually the Solomon Islanders were free to return to their lands.

Jacob Vouza was awarded the George medal, a British award for bravery and also the American Silver Star. Those who knew his story knew that both awards had been well and truly earned for this brave man who gave a new and deeper meaning to the word “loyalty.”

Adapted from:
Safety Last by Rita Snowden, Epworth Press, London
Not in Vain periodical of the South Evangelical Mission, Sydney, N.S.W.

James Chalmers



In 1817, British missionary John Williams and his wife Mary set sail for the Pacific Islands. They were the first Christian missionaries to visit Samoa. They also visited Tahiti, Cook Islands, Rarotonga, and many people became Christians.

John William and Mary learned the local languages and worked on translating the Bible. In 1834 they decided to take a trip back to England to tell people about the work they had been doing. The Christians in England wanted to help John and mary in their workd, so they raised enough money to buy them a ship called *the Camden*. One day John and his friend were exploring the southern islands of the New Hebrides (Vanuatu), in *the Camden*, when they were killed by cannibals.

The Camden was taken back to England and sold. But the children in the Sunday schools in England wanted to raise money for a new missionary ship. This one was called *John Williams*, which sailed around the Pacific islands for 20 years, until one day it was wrecked on a reef.

So once again the children in the English Sunday schools raised money for a new missionary ship. This one was called *John Williams 2*. In 1866, missionary James Chalmers and his wife Jane, set sail on *John Williams 2*, with four other couples, bound for Rarotonga.

The ship stopped for a time in Australia before setting sail for the islands. They passed south of Fiji and sailed on to Niue. They unloaded some of the goods the ship carried for Niue, but the captain gave the order to leave the remainder of the unloading until the following day. However, during the night gale force winds blew the ship on to the reef causing the loss of both ship and all the cargo.

“How are we ever going to get to Rarotonga?” James Chalmers said to Jane.
The missionaries now had to travel on whatever trade ships were available, going to whatever islands the ship was bound for.

On one leg of the journey the ship they were traveling on turned out to be a pirate ship, captained by a notorious man who went by the name of Bully Hayes. Yet, despite his name, Hayes turned out to be kindly towards the missionaries, treating them with the utmost respect. It was a great relief when they finally arrived at Rarotonga, fifteen months after they left England.

James and Jane settled in Rarotonga, and enjoyed their work there. But one day James said to Jane, “I like it here, but this place has been Christian for a whole generation now. There are other islands still not even touched by the Christian message. In my heart of hearts I really want to go to those islands to the west.”

But it was not God’s time for him to go just yet. The mission society asked him to stay on for another ten years, to train islanders to go and be missionaries in other islands to the west.

As well as training missionaries, James spent time learning the Rarotongan language, then translating and printing some books of the Bible. His work was so valued by the Christians of Rarotonga that nobody wanted him to leave, but in 1877 the time came when they were asked by the mission society to go to British New Guinea, now called Papua New Guinea

They sailed north along the east coast of Australia to the northern tip of Cape York. Then on to Port Moresby where they gladly stepped out on to solid ground again.

Mr. Lawes was the missionary in charge in Port Moresby. “Welcome to British New Guinea," he greeted the Chalmers and their team of teachers from Rarotonga, “We‘re very pleased to have more people to teach the islanders about God. There’s such a lot to do.”

“You should stay here with us for a few weeks, to learn something of the culture, then you can take your teachers and explore the coast-line for a suitable site,” said Mr. Lawes

Finally the mission team set sail from Port Moresby. Sailing close to the coast they searched for a suitable site and eventually found it at Suau.

“This place has a good harbour for the coming and going of boats,” said James.
The Rarotongan teachers, who were experienced in matters of sailing, agreed.

Rowing ashore in the small boat, James took the Rarotongan men with him and went in search of the village chief. They managed to communicate to him about setting up a place to stay, and were given permission.

James called together the chief and some of the village men and showed them the knives and tomahawks he had brought as trade goods. “We want timber from the bush to build our house,” he said. “I‘ll pay you with these goods if you will help cut it for me.” The men were keen to have the tomahawks and knives, so they willingly agreed to work for the missionaries. James explained the type of timber he wanted and what length it needed to be and they set to work. In the meantime James and Jane lived in the chief’s house until their home was built.

The Rarotongan team members were kept busy getting timber from the bush to build their own homes, helping each other in true Polynesian fashion. At last the houses were completed and the members of the missionary team were ready to begin teaching the village people.

The Rarotongan teachers were quick to learn from the villagers. James appreciated them for this, as they could pass on their knowledge of language and culture to him. This helped him with translating the scriptures and preparing other books of teaching materials that the teachers would use.

Occasionally the missionaries were threatened by some of the villagers.
"We don't want you here," they would say, "One day our warriors will kill you all."

But the missionaries ignored the threats and faithfully continued with their work. Many years later, when the Christian message had taken root in the lives of many of them, a village chief told Chalmers this story:

"One time the men in the village chose a group of warriors to kill the whole lot of you missionaries. I was in that group. One dark night we took our spears and clubs and crept up to the fence surrounding your house. It was a low fence, as you know, and we could easily have jumped over it. We had our weapons ready and were all set to attack you. Our warrior chief gave the word to go forward, but we couldn't move. Something stopped us from coming any nearer. It was a force we couldn't see, but it was very powerful. We tried again several more times in the following weeks, but that unseen power prevented us ever getting past that low fence. It must have been your God protecting you, because we knew you had no weapons to protect yourselves."

James and Jane were ever grateful for God's care and protection. James was always looking for new places for taking the Gospel.

"I'm afraid I'll have to leave you, my dear," he told Jane one day. "I must search along the rest of the coast for places where we can set up other mission stations. But the Rarotongan wives will be here to keep you company."

"I'll miss you, James," she replied, "but I know that you must go."

But while James was away, Jane suffered poor health. She came down with a fever and became very weak. The Rarotongan teachers' wives did all they could to relieve her fever, but her health continued to fail.

When James returned he decided that he would take Jane with him on his next trip, but she only became weaker. Finally they decided that Jane must go by ship to Sydney, Australia, to stay with friends. But she failed to recover and four months later she died. When James heard of Jane's death he was grief stricken. Although lonely, he continued his work in New Guinea.

Besides introducing Papua to the gospel, James Chalmers accomplished the seemingly impossible goal of promoting peace among the tribes all along the coast. According to those who accompanied him on his visits to native villages, James had a remarkable influence over people. A fellow missionary wrote:

The local people called James ‘Tamate’. One of the local people said of James: "Tamate said, 'You must give up man-eating': and we did."

During a typical first-time encounter with a savage tribe, James and a helper missionary would wait on board their boat until the local people on the shore had had a chance to notice the strange vessel and absorb the shock of seeing a white man for the first time.

Usually, an armed party of men would climb into canoes and approach the missionary boat. James would then make signs of peace, distribute presents, and say a few words, stating that he had come to make friends and planned to return for a longer visit in order to tell them of a great Being unknown to them. After a successful first visit, he would return for a longer visit.

In 1888 James married a widow, Lizzie Harrison, who had been a longtime friend of Jane Chalmers. The second Mrs. Chalmers provided the friendship and support that James had longed for since his first wife's death. She too, proved herself to be a brave and self-denying missionary. However, after 12 years, she also died.

In the last years of missionary service, James visited existing mission stations. But a visit to the Aird River Delta became his last mission trip. The people in that region were reputed to be fierce and unapproachable, even by Papuan standards. No white man had ever seen them. For a long time, James had wanted to make the dangerous trip there in order to win them for Christ. On April 4, 1901, the mission steamer sailed to Risk Point, off the shore of the village of Dopima. Immediately the ship was surrounded by the village people.

The ship was quickly over-run by village men who came out to the ship in canoes filled with bows and arrows, clubs, knives and spears. They clambered all over the decks, and refused to leave. James thought that if he went ashore it might persuade the intruders to leave the ship. Tomkins decided he would join James, so the two men got into the whale boat with some of the mission boys and set out for the shore. Half the village men returned to the shore, the rest stayed on the ship, looting all the goods they could find, and then they too went ashore.

The captain of the ship waited all day and night but Chalmers and Tomkins did not return. Next morning they searched along the coast without seeing a trace of the men. They sent a message to the government station on Thursday Island and three days later a steamer arrived with a government officer and ten men.

The investigation found that James Chalmers and Tomkins were attacked from behind. They were clubbed to death and died instantly. Their bodies were eaten. The news of the murders made headlines all over the world. Those who had worked closely with James Chalmers were shocked and grieved at the news of his death, but felt strongly that he would have wished to die as he did — engaged in service to the people of New Guinea.

Adapted from*:* *James Chalmers, His Autobiography and Letters*, Richard Lovett, The Religious Tract Society, London, 1903 and *FAITH for the Family* (1982), Bob Jones

Joeli Bulu (1)

“Oh, that beautiful land!” exclaimed Bulu, “I want to live in that beautiful land.” Bulu was a young Tongan man, now about 23 years of age. He had just heard the missionary speak about heaven – a place where there is no sickness or sadness, a place to be in God’s presence forever. How different this was from the Tongan idea of an after-life.

“If the words I heard tonight are true,” he declared, “then these Christians are happy indeed. I will be a Christian too.”

It was a clear, starry night, lit with many stars. As Bulu looked up at the brightness of the heavens above, he realised how dark and gloomy the earth was by comparison. His heart longed with a great longing to reach that beautiful land, “I will be a Christian,” he said, “that I may live among the stars.”

Bulu began to seek for more knowledge of the Christian faith, but when his family heard of it they called the family together to deal with him. They also called in the family heathen priest.
“This Bulu is learning to be a Christian,” his father told the priest, “What should we do with him?”

Possessed by the evil spirit in him, the heathen priest shook all over at the mention of the Christian way. The evil spirit, through the priest shouted, “Why has he forsaken me? I have kept him; I have preserved him since he was a little boy. Now he wants to leave me!”

As the evil spirit had spoken in this way with such anger the family made up their minds, “We’ll punish Bulu! We’ll club him! He’ll die today!” They wanted to obey the priest.

Bulu was so afraid that he fled into the bush and stayed there praying for some days. At last he decided to return home, hoping the family would no longer be angry. But he didn’t forget what he’d heard about ‘the beautiful land’. For the next few years Bulu’s life was a conflict between wanting to live the Christian way and fear of his family.

One day, as he was walking through the village he noticed a missionary standing under a tree talking to a group of people on the edge of the village green. Curious to know what he was talking about he drew closer. The missionary told the story of the wheat and the weeds that grew together in the field. Bulu thought about the good wheat seed and the bad weed seed growing together and it seemed that God spoke to him and said, “Bulu, you think you have been among the wheat, but really you have been among the weeds. You think you have been good seed, but you are bad seed.”

Bulu knew that this was God speaking to him. He began to see how sinful his life had been. He began to understand the meaning of repentance. “O, God,” he prayed, “I have done many wrong things. I’m sorry for all that wrong-doing. Please forgive me and help me to be good seed growing for you.”

He forgot about the ‘beautiful land’ of the future and instead began to experience God’s forgiveness in his life now. He put his faith in God and became a true follower of the Christian way for many years. He described his experience later, “I saw the way and I believed and lived. I was like a man fleeing for his life from an enemy behind me, groping along the wall of a house in the dark trying to find the door. Then suddenly, the door is opened in my face and I bounded in and was free.”

From that time he was a changed man, choosing the name ‘Joeli’ as his Christian name. It was the 1830s, the time of the spiritual awakening in Tonga. The Tongans were spreading the Good News to the west along their trade routes and a year after Joeli Bulu’s conversion he went to Fiji with a white missionary named Calvert. There he lived out his Christian faith for 40 years, planting churches wherever he went.

In the early days of his ministry, while working at Rewa in Fiji, he was attacked by a shark, which left scars on his body. He had been playing with a group of boys and a young chief, and then he went swimming in the river nearby where the boys were racing their toy canoes. Suddenly a shark bit him on the thigh, keeping a firm hold with its teeth. Desperately fighting back, Joeli forced it to let go his thigh, but it took hold of his arm. Mustering all his strength, Joeli pushed his hand down the shark’s throat, lifted it out of the water, dragged it ashore and dropped it

on the sand. Then he collapsed unconscious, but he survived the ordeal and lived many more years serving the Lord.

Joeli brought the Gospel to a village on Vanua Levu, the second largest Fijian island, north of Viti Levu. The villagers made life very difficult for him. They stole his pigs, killed his chickens and spoiled his food gardens. The culprits said, "When we've spoiled all the property of the Christians we're going to kill and eat them."

When Joeli heard of this he said, "I'll go and talk to them."
His friends in the Christian village objected, "Don't go alone, let us all go," they cried.
"No!" replied Joeli," If everyone goes, nothing will be achieved. Let me go alone."
He pleaded with them but they would not listen, even though they knew that cannibals had already wiped out 20 or 30 Christian villages on the island.

Joeli ordered the Christians, "Don't try to fight them. We'll keep the peace with them."
The Fijian method of warfare was to silently creep up and surround the village, and then suddenly sound the shell trumpet, gradually moving closer to build fear in the hearts of the villagers. In the early hours of the morning, just before dawn, Joeli and his faithful friends heard the sounds of attack coming in closer, causing them great fear. Joeli was calm. "Nobody must fight," he instructed them, "Everybody sit down on the grass."

They could hear the trumpeters getting closer and the noise of the enemy grew louder and louder. Suddenly there was a screaming war-cry from the enemy tribe as they burst in on the village to massacre the Christians. However, there they were, sitting peacefully on the grass in the centre of the village. They bounded up to the Christians, clubs and spears raised above their heads, ready to strike the defenseless people. But nothing happened!

They said later, "A power took possession of us and we couldn't use our clubs or spears. Our arms just couldn't move. What is this power that Joeli Bulu has over us?"
Later one of the tribesmen came forward carrying a special ceremonial whale's tooth, a token of peace for the Fijian people. "Joeli, you are a true man," he said, "We have stolen your pigs, we've killed your chickens, we've spoiled your gardens. We've treated you very badly. But you are a true man and your God is a true God. Take this whale's tooth as a sign of peace between us, and feel free to tell us about your God."

Joeli Bulu trained young men to be evangelists and teachers, multiplying the number of workers who would go and plant new churches in the interior and to the western side of Viti Levu. He also spent eight years on the island of Ono.

Some of the evangelists he trained there were amongst those who went to New Britain (Papua New Guinea).

On one occasion Joeli borrowed a deep-sea canoe from the king to visit a distant island. They ran into a hurricane and the canoe was thrown was thrown about in the raging sea. The sail support was jerked from its place on the bow and fell into the sea. Tugging and straining, they got it back into place, but the men on board were beginning to despair of surviving this storm.

They let down the sail and allowed the canoe to run before the wind. They began to pray. "God, save us! Rescue us from this hurricane!"
"Lord of the waves and the storms, have mercy on us and help us!" cried Joeli. No sooner had he finished praying than the wind suddenly stopped and there was calm. They began to secure the canoe's fastenings where they had been parted.
"There's an island just over there." cried one of the men, "I saw it when the wind stopped." "Let's make for it, then," said Joeli with a tone of urgency in his voice.

As they drew near the reef surrounding the island a cable parted and they lost an anchor, but they managed to find their way through the reef and beach the canoe just as the hurricane wind began to blow again at full force from the opposite direction. There were trees completely over-turned, their roots reaching into the air. The houses in a village near the beach had been flattened. But Joeli recorded later that they were able to "sing praises to God for His wonderful goodness in rescuing them from the hurricane."

In his later years, Joeli Bulu became a Bible teacher to King Cakobau and his extended family. He was a great help to Cakobau in learning about the Christian faith and the younger members of the family loved him dearly. In his last days they stayed beside him, fanning him and watching over him.

Joeli experienced many storms of life during his forty years serving the Lord in Fiji. It was the manner in which he faced and dealt with the storms, trusting God to direct and strengthen him that made him such a great man.

Adapted from: *Deep Sea Canoe,* Alan R Tippett, William Carey Library, Pasadena, California
To Live among the Stars, John Garret, University of the South Pacific, Suva, Fiji

Joeli Bulu (2)

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 - Cross and Cargill. Not long afterwards three English couples arrived, the Hunts, the Calverts and the Jaggers.

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

One hundred and fifty years ago a sixteen-year-old boy was ploughing a field on the other side of the world in England. This young man's name was John Hunt. He had hardly been to school and could not read. He worked hard on the farm during the day, and in the evenings often got into trouble with his friends in the town.

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 learned how to read. Once he could read, he worked hard at nights studying what he would have learned had he gone to school. Of course 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. 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 Vitilevu, 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 yeas 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.

John Paton of New Hebrides (Vanuatu)

John Paton was from Glasgow, Scotland, where for ten years he helped the poor, by providing food and clothes, preaching the Gospel and running Sunday schools fir the children. But for several months he had been challenged by news of the death of John Williams, a missionary in the Pacific Islands.

"Who will go to these people, to tell them of the love of Jesus, God's Son?"
Many times he had heard the appeal from his church.
"Somebody should go," he thought. One day God spoke to him clearly, "Don't expect someone else to go if you're not willing to go yourself. Are you willing?"

John prayed about it. "I've completed three years of a medical course. I've done Bible training and I have ten years' experience helping the poor."

John knew that God wanted him to go. He knew that the young people in his Bible classes would miss him, but he knew God would raise up another leader to serve in the mission to help the poor in Glasgow.

He set out for the New Hebrides, (now Vanuatu) in 1858, at the age of thirty-three. He had just been married, and his new bride, Mary, knew that God was also calling her to be a missionary.

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They sailed to Australia, and stayed for a short time, then received a message, "There is an American ship sailing for the South East Asian region. The captain is willing to take you to the New Hebrides on his way and land you at the island of Aneityum, the southern-most island of the group."

John and Mary were excited.

“What is there on Aneityum?” they asked their friends.
“As you know, Tanna and Erromanga are islands a little further north in the New Hebrides group. It’s nearly twenty years sincethe missionaries John Williams and his friend Harris were killed when they tried to land on Erromanga. John Williams had left three Samoan teachers on Tanna just the day before they died, but they became ill from the fever and two of them died. Since then there have been seven different attempts by the London Missionary Society to place missionaries on Tanna, but all have failed because of the hostility of the people and the constant sickness and fever. However, about ten years ago a couple from Nova Scotia, Rev and Mrs. John Geddie, settled on Aneityum. They have had a hard time, but with the help of Rev and Mrs. Inglis, who joined them four years later, they have a group of people around them now who are growing in their Christian life. You will go first to Aneityum to meet Mr Geddie and receive your directions from him.”

After a journey north along the eastern Australian coast they were eventually landed on the shore at Aneityum. John Geddie welcomed them warmly. “It’s so good to have you people here with us. The task is so huge and we are so few.”

Mr. Geddie explained to them, “Tanna is a most difficult island, and as you know there have been a number of failed attempts to set up a mission station there. I want you to go to Port Resolution, on the eastern coast. There are high mountains in the centre of the island. I’ll send a group of my young men from here to work with you. They can help you build your houses. They will be able to learn the local language more quickly than you can, and they can begin to teach the Christian message in the people’s own language, until you are able to master it yourselves.

The next morning they set out from Aneityum on the mission boat, called *John Knox*, and landed on the beach at Port Resolution some hours later. On arrival they heard a screaming group of warriors being chased by another group. One of their team, who understood a little of the local language spoke with a village man, “Why all this chasing and yelling and carrying of spears and clubs?” he asked.

“We always have war here,” was the reply. “The people who live in the mountain always fight with us people who live by the coast. We fight all the time.”

This was soon evident. There would be the yelling of warriors coming out of the bush, then close behind them their enemy, brandishing clubs, spears and muskets. A trader who lived around the north side of the bay had supplied the guns and ammunition.

The mission team looked around for a site suitable to build their houses on. They chose a position close to the beach. “We should get all the breezes from the sea here; it would be cooler than up the hill away from the water. And it will be easier for loading and unloading boats.”

With the help of the team members from Aneityum, they gained the permission of the village chiefs to build on this site, paid them with knives and axes, and proceeded with the building.

At first the new-comers were a novelty and the villagers stood at a distance watching proceedings, but after a time they became tired of observing the strangers and turned back to their old sport of fighting. One day the sounds of war were uncomfortably close

in the nearby bush. The discharge of muskets, the horrible yelling of armed men rushing about, feathers in their twisted hair, faces painted red, black, white or yellow; excitement and terror were on every face. The mission team left their building work and retired to the village house they had been loaned. There they prayed earnestly to God for the people to whom they were sent. As the afternoon wore on the noises of war gradually faded and towards evening they all went back to their villages.

Next morning one of the team members from Aneityum went to the nearby spring for water to make tea for the mission team. He returned without the water. “They told me that they killed six men from the mountains yesterday. Last night they had a cannibal feast near the spring and they’ve spoiled the water. I couldn’t get clean water for your tea.”

The village people began to make life more difficult for John and Mary Paton. One day a village head man came to see John. “You didn’t give us enough knives and axes for our land that you took. You only gave us half. You must pay the rest or we‘ll kill you all. You must not do any more building until it is all paid.” Although John knew he had paid what they first asked, he knew they would be killed unless they paid again. This kept the chiefs happy for a while.

The Paton’s house down beside the beach was finished and they moved in, happy to have a place for themselves. But soon disaster struck. They both contracted fever and realised that their choice of building site was a mistake, for it was not only near the beach, but also beside a mosquito-breeding swamp. At night-fall the mosquitoes descended in their thousands, causing malaria.

Only four months after they landed on Tanna, Mary gave birth to a baby boy. She had had a bout of fever three days before the birth, but seemed to recover and both mother and baby were well. John and Mary were so happy to have a son. But after three days after the birth, Mary was again affected with fever and for the next fortnight she fought a losing battle against the disease, and after two weeks she died. John was devastated. Weakened from fever himself, depressed from the sudden loss of his loved one, left with a new baby to care for alone, he found enough strength from God to dig a grave beside the house. To add sorrow to sorrow, a week later the precious baby also died of fever, and he was laid to rest beside his mother.

There were a few weeks of dry weather, causing the village food crops to suffer. Two village chiefs visited John. “It’s your fault that our food gardens are dying,” they said accusingly. “You and your God are not welcome here, our gods don’t like your God. If there is no rain very soon our people have orders to kill you. If the coastal people don’t kill you then the mountain people will.”

The Mission team prayed, and the following morning, Sunday, heavy rain began to fall. The village people met and agreed that it must have been the missionaries’ God who sent the rain, so they would allow them to stay. It lasted for many days; hurricane winds blew, damaging trees and food gardens, causing the people to say, “It’s because you are still here that this rain keeps on falling and our fruit trees are spoiled.” However, they were still allowed to remain on Tanna.

John Paton, supported by his helpers from Aneityum, struggled on. Sometimes the task seemed impossible. Constantly they were confronted with cannibalism, worship of idols,

strangling of widows, and belief in the power of witch-doctors. There were few, if any, signs that the people were receiving the Christian message. However, John would look at the helpers from Aneityum who had been the same as the people of Tanna not many years before, and think, “If God could change their hearts and lives then He can, and will, change the people of Tanna.” This was the hope he clung to, which kept him on Tanna in spite of friends and captains of passing ships, who tried to persuade him to leave.

One small, encouraging sign came when a small group of village men began visiting John after dark. They would check that all doors and windows of his house were shut so they could not be seen by anyone, then they would start asking all kinds of questions. One of this group, a chief, said to John one day, “I would like to be a Christian man but I’m afraid the others would laugh at me.”

The wife of one of these men died, and the husband decided that he wanted a Christian funeral, that he had seen when Mary Paton died. Another chief called Nowar, also friendly towards John Paton, offered to conduct the funeral service. This would be the first such burial on Tanna. Nowar, though not yet a Christian believer, prayed a prayer to the Jehovah God he did not yet know, in the presence of all the people, many of whom were against the gospel.

One time John was struck down with another serious bout of fever, so severe he believed he was dying. He attempted to crawl up the hill to catch the refreshing breezes, but half-way up he fainted and could go no further. A faithful old helper named Abraham came to his rescue and with the help of his wife, Nafatu, carried him to a shaded spot on the hill-side. There they laid him, under a coconut-leaf shade, gave him coconut milk to drink, yams and taro to eat, and kept him living. He was semi-conscious for some time, but gradually regained strength. Abraham and Nafatu stayed with him faithfully for the remainder of his time on Tanna, helping him build the house on the hill and serving him in whatever way they could.

Around the other side of the harbour lived a trader, Captain Winchester. The white traders were not Christians and tried to take advantage of the people of Tanna. Captain Winchester presented the chiefs with guns and ammunition to encourage them to fight. In return they brought him pigs and chickens which he sold. The Christian gospel did not please him because it encouraged people not to fight. John visited him one day. “If you would stop supplying these people with guns and ammunition they wouldn’t do so much killing of each other. You’re only doing them harm.”

But the trader took no notice of John and supplied even more arms and ammunition to the rival tribes who continued to fight and kill each other.

The younger brother of the war-chief, Miaki, came to John and said, “I don’t want this fighting. It’s not good to kill men. I want to leave the fighting and live with you.”

But Miaki came and forced his brother, Rarip, to join the fight. He was placed among the warriors, right next to Miaki, where he was hit by a bullet from a musket and mortally wounded. John hurried to the village as soon as he heard of Rarip’s death. He was given a Christian burial amidst much loud weeping and wailing.

But the wars dragged on until finally Miaki went to the trader. “You led us into this war. You deceived us and we began it. Rarip is dead, and so are many others. Your life will go for this.” The trader pleaded for mercy. He asked John if one of the teachers could come and live with him to protect him. He begged to be allowed to stay at the mission house with John, but John Paton would not allow it. The trader ended his days on Tanna sleeping out in the harbour on his boat until a trading vessel came by and took him off the island, much to the relief of everyone on Tanna.

One day John took a long journey to help another missionary couple on the other side of the island. They were running out of supplies and were in poor health. So john decided he should go by a large canoe, with Nowar and some others who were friendly to him.

A large pot was filled with flour and packed well down with a lid tied firmly on top of it. The pot was then fastened firmly in the centre of the canoe. Paton was placed directly in front of a strong swimmer in case the canoe rolled over, for John could not swim.

The hazardous journey began, the men paddling the canoe as close to the shore as was possible, until they reached a point only a couple of miles from the mission station. But here the waves were breaking over the reef quite dangerously and the crew said, “We can go no further. We have to wait for a smaller wave and ride in to shore over the reef.”

For a time they waited, watching each wave as it came towards them. Then suddenly their captain cried, “John, hold on. There’s a smaller wave coming, we’ll ride in on that.” The wave came rolling on; each man paddled with all his strength and the canoe was flying like a sea-gull on the crest of the wave towards the shore. Then the wave broke on the reef and the canoe emptied out its crew into the water. They struggled ashore and retrieved their pots of flour.

The missionary friends, the Mathiesons, were very pleased to see John Paton arrive, and to accept the flour. After they had prayed together and encouraged each other, John decided to walk back home to the other side of the island. His guide left him once the sun set, too afraid to walk through the bush in the dark. John was told he would be killed if he went on alone, for there were very hostile tribes in villages he would have to pass on the way back. Walking alone through the bush in the dark placed him at great risk, but waiting till daylight made it more likely he would be caught by hostile villagers.

He set out, following the shore line as far as he could, but when he heard voices he took to the protection of the bush until the people had safely passed, then groped his way back to the shore line, which was his only way of finding a path. Halfway on his journey he came to a perpendicular rock face which he succeeded in climbing, holding on precariously to roots and bushes until he safely reached the top. Trying to stay near the shore, but at the same time needing to avoid hostile villages when he happened to get too close to them, he missed the path he was looking for and found himself on the edge of a great rocky outcrop. He had to crawl along the edge of this huge rock, a sheer drop to the sea on one side, the bush on the other. He wrote later, “I could never have done this even in daylight, but I felt I was supported and guided in that entire life or death journey by my dear Lord Jesus.”

Eventually he came to a land-mark he recognised, another huge rock which he knew was sheer down to the sea on one side, so groping around in the dark he found what he thought was the right side. He threw stones down to try and gauge the height of the rock

above the sea, but he heard nothing. He threw down his umbrella, but it told him nothing. He knew it was unsafe to stay there till daylight; he must take action now. Trusting in God's protection he fastened all his clothes around him as securely as possible, he lay down on the rock on his back, feet first and head held forward. He let himself down as far as possible, hanging on to a branch of a nearby bush, and then let go, throwing his arms forward and keeping his feet well up. For what seemed an age he was flying through the air, then his feet struck the water. It was low tide so he was able to wade ashore and quickly found the pathway around the beach that brought him to a village quite near his house. Here he promised some young men fish-hooks if they would guide him the nearest way home.

He was soon home and more than ready for a long refreshing sleep after this hazardous journey of fifteen or twenty miles on foot, in the dark and through hostile territory. When the village people heard next day about his remarkable journey they exclaimed, "How is it that you were not killed! Your Jehovah God alone protects you and brings you safely home."

John Paton's silent response was, "Yes, and He'll be your helper and protector too if only you'll obey and trust Him."

John Paton's life was constantly under threat, more than ever before. Once, at daybreak, he heard noises outside. He found that his house was surrounded. One of the chiefs told him they had come to kill him. Seeing he was at their mercy he knelt down and surrendered himself to God, for what seemed to him then the last time. The warriors were so surprised by this act of devotion they didn't know what to do, and they did not touch him.

"Why do you want to kill me?" he asked them. "What harm have I done to you? I've only ever done good things for you."

Some of the chiefs who attended the church services regularly responded by saying, "Our conduct has been bad, but now we will fight for you and kill all those who hate you." "Please don't kill anyone on my behalf," he pleaded, "God wants you to live in peace, not war." The men finally left the house and once again Paton's life was saved.

On another occasion the missionary heard loud noises outside in the nearby bush. On going out to investigate he suddenly found himself surrounded by warriors, spears at the ready to kill him. Immediately he raised his hands to heaven and began to pray for these men that God would save them. The men grew so ashamed that one by one they slunk away into the bush, leaving John unharmed. Like St. Paul he was in dangers often, threatened constantly by the people of Tanna.

Another source of trouble came from the traders who tried to bribe the chiefs of Tanna to kill John. The traders did not like John because he tried to stop illegal sandalwood trading. One day four vessels entered the harbour and cast anchor. The captains strode up to John Paton's house and said, "We know how to get rid of the people of Tanna!"

"Surely you don't intend to attack and destroy these poor people!" exclaimed John.
"Sure," he laughed back, "We've sent the measles into their midst. It kills them by the dozen."

John learned that they had taken a boy from a nearby village and thrown him into the hold of a ship with a group of others who were all suffering from the measles.

“We’ll put them ashore on other islands and soon the epidemic will spread all through the islands.” laughed their leader.

Sure enough hundreds of villagers were affected by the disease. Because it was new to them they had no idea how to deal with it. When their bodies grew hot with fever they ran down to the sea to cool off in the water. This brought on pneumonia and death.

Thirteen members of the missionary team died, leaving so few that when the mission boat, John Knox, visited the island they all packed up and went back to Aneityum, leaving John Paton with his faithful friend Abraham and his little dog.

Of the six mission posts he had established around the island only one now remained, the one where John lived and worked. Determined to get rid of the last trace of this worship of Jehovah God, Miaki called a meeting of all the village people and did not rest until they had resolved to kill the missionary. One of the chiefs addressed John:
“Our fathers loved and worshipped the devil, the evil spirit, and we are determined to do the same. We have killed or sent away all the others who came to tell us about Jehovah, and we are determined to kill you, too. You are changing our customs and destroying our worship and we hate Jehovah worship.”

Other chiefs spoke in a similar way, then John Paton spoke with them kindly, and no harm was done to him that day. However, the threats to his life were becoming daily more persistent, until the day came when Miaki and his warriors broke down the locked doors and invaded his house. John narrowly missed being killed with a tomahawk. Then, to the amazement of all, he appeared on the verandah of his house with a pistol in his hand. It had been a gift he had never used and even now it wasn’t loaded, but the sight of it had the desired effect. The warriors cried, “He’ll kill us all!” And they fled into the bush.

When the excitement had abated Miaki came to see John, and said, “I’m very sorry for what happened to you and your house. It won’t happen again, I promise.”

But Nowar, a friendly chief, warned John, “Don’t believe Miaki, he’s telling lies. The warriors are planning to attack again tomorrow.”

Nowar sent a canoe for John to escape from the danger, but he refused to leave his place.
Next morning John looked out his window to see great numbers of warriors emerging from the bush and decided finally that he must leave to save his life. Quickly he grabbed his Bible, his scripture translations in the local language, and a blanket and ran to Nowar’s village. Even there he wasn’t safe so another friendly chief from a mountain village came to his rescue and offered to escort him over the mountains to the mission post held by his friends, the Mathiesons. They were followed by hostile warriors on their way and their lives were miraculously preserved several times. At last they reached the Mathieson’s place.

“Thank God you are alive!” cried Mr. Mathieson when they saw him. “We heard that your place has all been burned down and we feared you were dead.”

They praised the Lord together and prayed for His protection as they continued to face the threat of ever-present warriors. That night they lay down, exhausted from all the fearful excitement, but trying to keep watch in case of another invasion of the Mathieson's house. But they fell asleep.

During the night a flickering light in the room woke his faithful dog, which had stayed with him through all the turmoil. John was instantly alert at the sound of its alarmed barking. A quick glance out the window told John that the reed fence surrounding the house had been set on fire. In a few minutes the house would also be ablaze.

Taking his harmless revolver in his left hand and a tomahawk in his right, John pleaded with Mr. Mathieson to let him out of the house and lock the door behind him.
"No, I can't do that," objected Mathieson, "Stay in the house and let us all die together!"

But John persisted, so Mathieson let him out of the door, locking it from the inside once again.Immediately he attacked the blazing fence, chopping it into pieces which he threw back into a pile where they burned without allowing the fire to spread to the house. As he was completing this task he realised there were seven or eight warriors surrounding him, with clubs ready to attack.

"Kill him! Kill him!" some of them cried. But their hands were restrained, and not one of them could strike the fatal blow. God was still in control. At that point an amazing thing happened. There came a rushing, roaring sound which they all recognised immediately as an approaching tornado, bringing powerful winds and rain. The wind blew the flames from the burning fence away from the house and poured down a deluge of rain that completely extinguished the fire, though not before it had destroyed the church.

The warriors fled from the scene, seeking refuge from the tornado, but overawed at the sudden turn of events. "This is Jehovah's wind and rain," they said to one another. Truly their Jehovah God is fighting for them and helping them. Let's get away from here."
John Paton returned to the door of the house, "Let me in!" he called, "I'm all alone. It's safe." Together they praised the Lord for once again preserving their lives."

Next morning a group of friendly villagers came weeping around the missionaries. "They say that today they are going to kill you all, plunder your house, then set fire to it. You can hear them coming now." Sure enough the shouting of the warriors could be heard approaching their house. But then, above the sound of warriors came another, welcome sound. "Sail O!"

Were they imagining this or was it real? But the cry was repeated, "Sail O! Sail O!"
The shouting of approaching warriors suddenly faded; the people seemed to have melted away. Was this just a trick to get them out of the house? John Paton cautiously peered out the door, and saw it was no trick, there was a ship sailing in to the harbour. The missionaries on Aneityum, having heard of the troubles on Tanna had sent Captain Hastings on his ship, the *Blue Bell*, with twenty armed men to rescue the missionaries, if they were still alive. The Mathieson's belongings were packed and loaded on the *Blue Bell* with the help of the helpers from Aneityum and the next day they arrived safely at Aneityum.

The Mathiesons were both in poor health and Mrs. Mathieson died not long after they left Tanna, her husband only survived her by three months, which meant that John Paton was the only missionary left who could tell the story of those pioneering days on Tanna.

John Paton had seen the urgent need for a boat owned by the mission that could help them care for the islander teachers and missionaries stationed in isolated posts around the islands and extend the work of evangelism. Obtaining a boat meant raising money, so John agreed to visit Australia to stir up interest in such a project and gain the financial support of church congregations. After his visit to Australia, he returned home to Scotland to do the same. There he met his second wife, Margaret, who accompanied him back to Aneityum, in their own new mission boat called the *Dayspring*.

The islander people were amazed as the boat sailed from island to island. “How is this?” they exclaimed, “We drove them away, we killed many of them. We plundered their houses and robbed them. If we had been treated like that we would never return. But these people come back with a wonderful new ship and more and more missionaries!”

The Patons agreed not to return to Tanna, but to settle on a nearby island, Aniwa, about fifteen miles away. The *Dayspring* had to call at Tanna on the way to Aniwa and bad weather caused them to anchor in the harbour there for some days. The old friendly chief, Nowar, came out in his canoe to visit the Patons on the ship. “I’m very sad that you are not going to stay on my island,” he said, “Won’t you change your mind?” After further discussion Nowar realised the Patons would definitely be living on Aniwa. So he called the Aniwan sacred man to him, removed the white shells, the token of chieftanship, from his own arm and tied them on the Aniwan’s arm. He spoke firmly to the sacred man, “By these you promise to protect John Paton and his wife and child on Aniwa. Let no evil come to them, or I and my people will avenge it.”

Settling on Aniwa meant first obtaining a plot of ground and negotiating with the village people to secure it. From past experience on Tanna they knew it must be higher ground, away from the swamps. Their first choice was not approved by the villagers who suggested another site covered with mounds that had to be cleared away. On clearing them they discovered heaps of bones, the remains of cannibal feasts from ages past. No-one but their sacred men were allowed to touch these bones and it became clear that they had been offered this land in the hope that their gods would strike them dead. The villagers stood around watching the missionaries and their islander helpers digging and clearing away the bones with no bad effect. The people of Aniwa had seen that the Jehovah God of the missionaries was stronger than their own idols and this understanding, even before they had heard any teaching about the Christian message, made it easier for them to receive and believe it.

The first Christian believer on Aniwa was an old chief named Namakei, on whose land the missionaries had built their houses. One day he brought his daughter, Litsi, to the mission house with the request, “Please, John, would you train Litsi for Jesus?” She was the appointed Queen of her tribe and her conversion exerted quite an influence on her followers. Shortly afterwards Namakei’s brother brought his daughter to the mission house also, for the mothers of both girls had died. As often as they cared to, these two girls returned to their villages and told their relatives what they had learned. As a result many parents brought their children to the mission school and begged the missionaries to teach them about Jehovah God and His Son Jesus. Some of these children became

the best missionaries for they spoke favourably of the mission and also spread the message of the gospel as they learned it.

In the early days those who attended Sunday worship came fully armed, bow and arrow, spear, tomahawk or club always at the ready. People were still very fearful and did not trust their neighbours. Much of their fear was generated by their life-time service of evil spirits. One morning a village man came to John saying, “I’ve killed the devil! He came to catch me last night but I called all the people and we fought him around the house with our clubs. At daybreak he came out and I killed him dead. We will have no more bad behaviour now. The devil is dead!”

John Paton went with the man to view the dead snake, which turned out to be a huge sea-snake. “You didn’t kill the devil, my friend,” explained John, “You just killed a snake. But it was good that you were brave enough to kill it.” John knew that in time past snakes were the symbol of evil and men were afraid to kill them.

One day, as John was working on an extension to his house, a village man named Nelwang, tomahawk in hand, hovered nearby. “Can I help you, Nelwang?” asked Paton.
“If you will help me now I’ll be your friend for ever,” declared Nelwang. “I want you to help me get married.”
“What do you want me to do?” asked John.
“The trouble is, the woman I want to marry is a chief’s widow, Yakin, who lives up in an inland village.”
“Then why don’t you ask her to marry you?”
“There are thirty young men in the village looking for wives. Each one of them wants her, but no one is brave enough to take her because the others would kill him. Now, if you were in my position, what would you do?” asked Nelwang.

After some thought, John suggested a plan. Two of Nelwang’s trusted friends were placed as lookouts one at each end of the coral rocks above the village. Nelwang cut a passage through the fence at the back that led into the bush. Then, at dead of night he carried off his bride and escaped into the seclusion of the bush. In the morning there was some outcry because Yakin’s house was deserted, then on checking all houses, Nelwang’s was also found to be deserted, so the conclusion was reached that they had run away together. For revenge their houses were plundered and the village people enjoyed a feast at the expense of the missing couple. It was thought they had escaped by canoe to Tanna.

Three weeks later Nelwang appeared again at the mission house when there was no one else around. “Hello,” said Paton, “where have you come from? And where is Yakin?”
“I can’t tell you yet, but I’ve come to keep my promise. I will help you and Yakin will help Mrs. Paton and we will be your friends. We will come and live with you until peace comes to our island.”

So began a wonderful partnership as Nelwang became a faithful disciple helping John Paton in many ways, while Yakin soon learned to attend to cleaning, washing and cooking to assist Mrs Paton who spent much time teaching the women and girls to sew and to sing. They loved the music and were fascinated by the organ she played.

On the first Sunday after Nelwang and Yakin returned, John persuaded them to appear in church to announce their marriage. Nelwang came in a little cautiously, tomakawk in

hand, just in case, and sat as near as he could to John. Then Yakin appeared at the door on the women's side. Nelwang held his tomahawk at the ready, poised across his shoulder, proudly watching as his bride entered the church. The day ended in peace, the village men accepted Nelwang's claim of Yakin as his bride, and bloodshed had been avoided.

Aniwa was a coral island, so there were no high mountains to attract rain clouds, which meant that shortage of water was a constant problem. John showed the people of the island how to dig a well to obtain underground water.

The village people did not believe that water could be ontained from the ground in this fashion.

"Come tomorrow," said John, "and I hope and believe that Jehovah God will send you the rain water up from the earth."

There was a great faith in John's heart that there would be water, despite the doubts that it may be salty. The next morning he went out early to inspect the hole and sank a small hole a further two feet down. Suddenly water gushed up and began to fill the hole. Muddy though it was he tasted it eagerly. It was slightly brackish but not enough to prevent anyone drinking it. The chiefs had gathered nearby, waiting expectantly. John waited for the water to settle and clear, then he got a jug, allowed the chiefs to see it was empty, then went down the ladder to fill it with water from the well. The chiefs gathered round. Namakei shook the jug to see if it would spill. He touched it to see if it felt like water. Finally he tasted it, rolling the liquid around in his mouth for a moment. Then he swallowed it and cried, "Rain! Rain! Yes, it is rain! But how did you get it?"

"Jehovah God gave it out of His own earth in answer to our prayers and hard work. Go and see it springing up for yourselves."

Although every one of them could scale a tree or a cliff without any difficulty, not one of these men dared to walk to the edge of the well and look in. To them this was miraculous, something to be feared. However, they overcame their problem by forming a line, holding hands, and one by one the man at the front looked into the well to view Jehovah's rain, then passed to the end of the line until everyone had seen the water in the well.

When they had all seen the water with their own eyes the chief said, "How, wonderful is the work of your Jehovah God! No god of Aniwa ever helped us in this way. The world is turned upside down since Jehovah God came to Aniwa. But will it always rain up through the earth? Or will it come and go like the rain from the clouds?"

"There will always be water in the well, my friend. It is a good gift from Jehovah God for us to use," John assured him. "You and your people and all the people of the island can come and drink and carry away as much as you please."

The chief looked thoughtful for a moment, then asked, "What can we do to help now?"
"You can help me build a fence around the well to make it stronger," said John.

No sooner was this said than everyone rushed for the shore to bring back coral rocks and stones which John placed carefully in position, round and round the wall of the well.

When the well was finished and neatly fenced in the old chief Namakei said, “John, I think I could help you next Sunday. Will you let me preach a sermon?”

The people believed that the miracle of water appearing from the earth was due to the fact that John knew how to pray to his God. The chief thought that he too needed to pray to John Paton’s God, in order for the water to keep springing up.

Word was passed around that the chief would be speaking on the Sunday so everyone was there waiting to hear what he had to say. “Friends,” he began, "we have seen and heard many strange things since John Paton came to Aniwa, things too wonderful for us to understand, and we said they must be lies. The strangest of all was when he said rain could come from out of the earth. But now the world is turned upside down. We have seen rain come from the earth. Only John Paton’s God could do this, our gods never could. The water was there under the ground all the time but we could not see it until the coral and sand were removed. Now it has been cleared away and we can see the water. I have been blind and could not believe in Jehovah God, but the sand has been taken from my mind and I promise to follow Him for the rest of my days. I am old now, but when I die I shall see Him with my own eyes.

If any of you listening to me feel as I do, then go and fetch the idols from your houses and bring them back here. We will burn and bury them. Let us follow Jehovah God and learn from John how to worship and serve Him.”

That afternoon the chief and several of his friends returned to John’s house bringing their idols to be disposed of. Day after day people in small groups came to add to the pile of idols outside the mission house. To the accompaniment of loud sobs and tears, there was a great, excited burning of all the wooden idols. A deep pit was dug in which stone idols were thrown, and a few were loaded into canoes and dropped out in the deep sea.

After the initial grand disposal of their idols, two men were appointed to search out anyone who pretended to get rid of everything heathen but was still holding on to an idol. These men had the task of encouraging the undecided to be wholehearted in serving God. John Paton wrote in his diary at that time, “In these intensely exciting days we ‘stood still and saw the salvation of the Lord.’”

There was a complete change in the way of life of the people on Aniwa. They began to say a prayer of thanks before every meal, they conducted family prayers in their homes morning and evening. The total population attended the Sunday worship service. One remarkable change was the increase of trust of each other regarding property. Before the mass conversion to Christianity everyone carried all their valuables with them; a brood of chickens or a litter of piglets would be carried in bags if the owner travelled any distance from his home. As a result there were some lively episodes during the Sunday services, with the chirping of chickens, the squealing of pigs and yapping of puppies accompanying the singing and preaching. The missionaries tolerated the interruptions rather than offend any of the people, until the time came when the people themselves voiced their objections.

“Surely now we are Christians we should be honest with everybody’s property,” the chiefs urged, “Couldn’t we all leave our things at home, then there won’t be interruptions

to the worship times and we will all learn to be honest and trust each other." A meeting of all the people was called to discuss the problem. Dishonesty was soundly condemned and everyone agreed to leave their animals at home.

They agreed on a system of fines for those who stole someone else's property, and the chiefs worked hard to enforce the law. John Paton also encouraged the chiefs to use the Bible teaching they had to develop other laws fitting for their village way of life, repressing crime and encouraging a Christian way of life.

Soon the schools were crowded, for the islanders were eager to learn to read and write and study the Bible in their own tongue. John Paton had lost the printing press he had on Tanna, but there was an old dilapidated one on Aneityum with parts missing. He was handy with tools, so he made replacement parts from scrap metal or wood and eventually had the press in working order. He soon had passages from the book of Genesis, a hymn book and other smaller books in the local language printed on the renovated press.

The teachers from Aneityum were wholehearted in their support of the school teaching program and as the Aniwans learned enough of the Christian way of living they in turn became teachers of their own people. One of the most helpful of these was the good chief Namakei who became very interested in how John Paton could 'make books speak' When the passages from Genesis were printed Namakei listened eagerly as John Paton read from it.

"It speaks my language! Give me the book!" Namakei grasped it eagerly, waiting for it to speak to him, then when it was silent he handed it back to the missionary, a look of great disappointment on his face.
"It will not speak to me. Show me how to make it speak!"
"My friend," said John, "you don't know how to read yet, how to make it speak to you; but I will teach you to read, then it will speak to you as it does to me."

Paton realised that Namakei was straining his eyes in trying to see the print, and suspected that his eyes were affected by age, so he found a pair of glasses that suited his eyes. After an initial reluctance to put on the glasses, fearing some magic, he looked through them and exclaimed in delight, "Oh I can see it all now! This is what you told us about Jesus. He opened the eyes of a blind man. The word of Jesus has just come to Aniwa. He has sent me these glass eyes and I've got back the sight I had when I was a boy. Missi, please make the book speak to me now."

John took Namakei out to the village public ground where he drew three large letters in the dust, A, B, C., then showed him those letters on the first page of the book. Soon he was back.
"I have lifted up A, B, C, They are here in my head and I will hold them fast. Give me another three," he said.

This was repeated time after time until he had mastered the whole alphabet and then was spelling out some simple words. He was so keen to learn that he actually memorised the whole book just by hearing John Paton read it to him, before he could actually read all the words. When people came around him he would say, "Come, hear how this book speaks our Aniwan language. You say it is hard to learn to read, but be strong and try. If an old man like me can do it, it ought to be easier for you."

He had a very retentive memory so he quickly learned to read what Paton printed and was his right hand helper in the conversion of the Aniwan people.

Another source of wonder and a useful tool in teaching the Christian message was the organ which Mrs. Paton played. The people loved the 'singing bokis' and whenever they heard it being played they flocked around to enjoy the singing. No sooner did they hear a song played than they would insist on learning it by heart and singing it as they worked on their plantations.

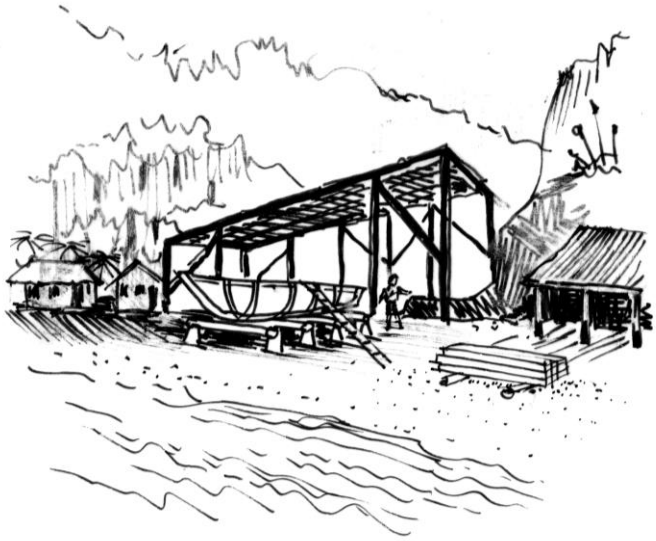
After three years of building, teaching and ministering on Aniwa people were becoming Christians and being baptized. Whenever John had to leave the island he could depend on the island leaders to maintain their Christian worship and the Christian village way of life.

In 1883, when he was 59 years old, he left the work on Aniwa, his son succeeding him, and spent the next 24 years still working hard to further the work of missions. He visited Great Britain, his homeland Scotland, North America, Australia, speaking frequently to churches and mission groups, raising financial support, and most importantly, inspiring young people to volunteer for mission work, which expanded until every island of the New Hebrides group had been evangelised.

When he was 76 years old John Paton and his wife returned to Aniwa to spend a year among their beloved friends, but Mrs. Paton was in poor health so they returned to live in Australia. Mrs. Paton died in 1905 and John Paton a year later, at the age of 83, a grand old man with long white hair and long, flowing white beard, honoured and revered by Christians world-wide. An extract from some of his last writing speaks of the man he was:
"If God gave me back my life over again I would lay it on the altar to Christ, that He might use it especially among those who have never heard the name of Jesus.... God gave His best, His Son, for me, and I give back my best, my all, for Him.

Adapted from: *John G Paton, Missionary to the New Hebrides, 1824-1907,* J. Theodore Mueller, Zondervan, 1941

John Williams



During the late eighteenth century, there was a great spiritual awakening in Great Britain. During the same period, the English, Spanish, French and Dutch governments had become interested in the Pacific Ocean and its numerous island groups. As early as the 16th century Magellan, and later de Quiros, serving the King of Spain, explored the area. Drake, the Englishman, crossed the Pacific during his circumnavigation of the world. In the 17th century, Tasman (from Holland), and Dampier (from England), extended European interest in the Pacific. Captain Cook in the 18th century opened up the area even more. There were many other explorers less well known, but each contributed to this time of empire building. These European nations were trying to out-do each other in claiming the island groups, their produce and their people for themselves.

As the treasures of the islands were revealed, (sandal wood, pearl shell, sea cucumber, spices and spar timber), trading ships appeared carrying ruthless men whose aim was to plunder the produce of the islands, grabbing all they could and treating the islanders cruelly.

But Christian men and women in Britain, stirred to action through the move of God's Holy Spirit on them, saw these same islands in another light, as places where people lived in spiritual darkness, with no knowledge of the Creator God and His Son, Jesus Christ. They read in Isaiah's prophecy, "and the isles shall wait for His law" (Isaiah 42:4.) and saw this as God's call to them to go to the Pacific Islanders with the Christian message.

But the missionaries from Great Britain were not alone in reaching out to the islanders with God's love. There were many more indigenous pastors and teachers who went to other Pacific island groups from their own homes. They had discovered the difference it made to a community when the people became Christians and they wanted other island

groups to live in peace as they did. There were hundreds of new islander Christians who went out with the white missionaries and supported them in pioneering new missions.

A small group of white missionaries stood on the shore of a village settlement at Eimeo, on the island of Tahiti, gazing out to sea as they watched the sails of a large ship loom ever closer to them. This was the year 1817 and these were the pioneers on Tahiti of the London Missionary Society's work in the Pacific. They had been there since the final years of the 18th century. The arrival of a ship in the harbour was a rare sight not to be missed.

"I wonder if there will be any new missionaries to join our team here," one of the watchers commented.
"I do hope so," replied another, "there are so many people here who live in darkness, worshipping idols. We need many helpers to reach them all."
"There are sure to be letters from home for us. We haven't heard from anyone for nearly a year. It will be good to hear news from the family."
There was a long wait while the ship anchored out in the harbour, the small boats were lowered and people climbed down the rope ladder to be rowed ashore. The ship's captain stepped out on to the sand, followed by a tall man who helped his wife to step out of the boat on to the beach.

"This is John Williams and his wife Mary," said the captain as he introduced the new couple to the missionaries on the shore. "They have come out from England to join you good people here on Eimeo."
"You are most welcome."
"How good it is to have more people here to share the work."
"We trust you've had a comfortable journey out here."

The missionaries were so pleased to have new colleagues join them in the task of evangelism. The ship's crew was unloading all of Williams's possessions into the small boats and many willing hands were there to carry everything up to the house where they were to stay.

There were so many new experiences to adjust to, different food, different houses, the hot climate, learning the language of the local people. One new experience John Williams had was to prove invaluable to him a few years later. One of the missionaries was repairing a small boat belonging to the mission. He called on John Williams to help him, even though he had never had any experience with boats before. Being a practical man he used his God-given common sense as he worked to repair the boat with the other missionary and stored away what he had learned in the back of his mind.

There was another incident which occurred two years before they arrived at Eimeo that was to have significance in John Williams's life. A small vessel with a missionary, Mr Wilson, Chief Pomare and 19 Tahitians on board was anchored in Eimeo harbour one night when a violent gale struck the ship with all the mission party still on board. The ship broke away from its anchorage and was driven out to sea by the gale force winds, finally arriving at a distant island called Raiatea.

The Raiateans welcomed them, "Come ashore," they said, "we'll find you fresh food and houses to stay in while you repair your ship."

“Thank you for helping us,” Chief Pomare said. “Could we tell you about the new God we worship? He is the Creator God who made everything in our world.”

The Raiateans listened with great interest, always wanting to know more, so the mission team repaired their ship, and those not busy with the ship met with the Raiateans to tell them more of God the Creator and His Son Jesus.

A number of them responded to the gospel and became Christians. “Please tell us more,” they would plead. Among the new believers were several chiefs, one of whom was Tamatoa. When he began to understand the gospel message he declared, “I want to live this new way. I don’t need the witch doctor and his tricks. I want to trust God.”

After three months on Raiatea the missionaries and crew had made their vessel seaworthy again after its damage in the gale. They sailed back to Eimeo, but they left behind a group of Raiateans who wanted to worship the God they had just begun to learn about.

Chief Tamatoa called together a few other chiefs. “Now we are worshipping the one true God we need to put up a building where we can meet together to worship and continue learning about the Christian way.”

The chiefs agreed and together with the village men they built their first place of worship.
Some months later Tamatoa visited Huahine, where the missionary headquarters was.
“Please will you send teachers to our island, Raiatea?” pleaded Tamatoa. “We heard about the true God when your people arrived on our island after the big storm. We would like to have teachers come and live with us to teach us more about God and His Son, Jesus.”

The missionaries were pleased to have such an open invitation to tell the gospel story and they prepared a team to go to Raiatea to establish a mission station. John Williams was one of that team.

The missionaries learned the language of Raiatea with the help of the local people, and eventually the Gospel of Luke was translated. They printed it on the printing press Mr. Ellis had brought out from England and set up on Huahine. Elementary reading books followed. Everybody, young and old, went to school on Raiatea. Grandfathers and their grand-children sat side by side learning the simple alphabet sounds, and progressing eventually to reading Luke’s Gospel.

The people of Raiatea responded gladly to the gospel and developed quickly into a largely Christian community.
“These people live together in peace now,” he thought. “The Christian way of life has brought peace to them and their community. How wonderful it would be to go to these other islands and teach them the gospel of peace, too.” His heart longed for them to come into the Kingdom of God. But how would they hear without a preacher?

“If only the mission had a ship big enough to sail on the open seas,” he would think, “we could reach so many more people on the distant islands. As it is we have to depend on the trading ships and they aren’t reliable.”

One island John Williams had heard good reports about was Rarotonga. There was a small group of Rarotongans at Raiatea who were learning the Christian way. They wanted teachers to go to Rarotonga to share the Gospel with their friends and families. But no-one from the London Missionary Society staff had actually located Rarotonga, knowing only that it was somewhere to the south of the Tahitian Islands where they were then stationed.

In 1823 Williams set out from Raiatea in a trading vessel to try to locate Rarotonga. He also had with him a number of teachers and their wives, including some Rarotongans, whom he had trained at Raiatea. On this trip he was seeking islands where he could place the teachers. His policy was to first meet with the village chiefs of an island.

“I have trained teachers here who are willing to stay in your village and teach your people about the Creator God and Jesus His Son,” he would say. “Would you supply them with food until they can produce enough from their own gardens, and provide a house where they can live, until they build their own?”

If the chiefs were willing, then the teacher and his wife would be left there to become part of the island community and teach them about God and His Son, Jesus. John Williams promised he would visit once or twice a year to see how they were getting on and give them some encouragement.

One teacher who was with John Williams on this trip was Papeiha, a fine Christian and a good teacher. He and his friend Vahapata had worked together on the island of Aitutaki and the people had responded well to the Gospel message. When the ship reached the island of Mangaia they sailed around it, searching for an entrance through the reef.
“I can’t see any gap in the reef where the ship could get through,” said the captain, “we may have to by-pass this island.”
Papeiha came forward. “I’m a strong swimmer. I could swim ashore and see if the people are friendly.” he offered.

John Williams agreed and Papeiha dived in to the sea, swam through the uncertain waters over the reef and in towards the shore. When he was within a few metres of the beach he noticed that all the men on shore were carrying spears.
“I come in peace,” he called to them, “I mean no harm to any of you. Tie up your spears in bundles. That will tell me you don’t intend to hurt me.”

Papeiha waited until all the spears were tied up, then he waded ashore. Addressing the village chiefs, he explained that there were two teachers and their wives on the ship, who were willing to stay and live with them. They would like to teach them, if they wished to learn, about God the Creator and Jesus His Son.

The chiefs and their villagers appeared to be in agreement and all seemed to be proceeding peacefully. Papeiha swam back to the ship and reported to John Williams, “The chiefs and the village people are happy for us to bring the two teachers and their wives to settle amongst them and teach them the Christian Gospel.”

“Very well,” said John, “Papeiha, at high tide, you go with the two teachers and their wives in the small boat to introduce them to the chiefs. We’ll send some trade goods with you as gifts for the chiefs. Gather all your things together and be ready for high tide.”

The mission team landed in the small boat which came in to shore on the in-coming tide. Their possessions had just been landed when the villagers caught sight of the trade goods. The temptation was too great. Suddenly they attacked the mission party and grabbed all their possessions, and the trade goods. They were taken by such surprise that they barely escaped with their lives.

Papeiha and the teachers made a hasty retreat in the small boat back to the ship.
"It seems we are not welcome in Mangaia at the moment. We will have to come back to them at a later date," John Williams decided.

The ship next visited the island of Atiu, where Chief Roma came on board. The teachers from Raiatea spoke to him about the Christian message.
"We would like to tell you about the Creator God and His Son, Jesus," they said." Would you like to hear about Him? "

Chief Roma was very interested and listened keenly to what the teachers told him.
"Please tell me more," he would say. "I want to know all about your God."
When he became a worshipper of God he asked the missionaries, "What about the idols I've served all these years? I don't worship them or serve them any more."
"If they're no use to you, you could throw them away," responded the missionaries, knowing that this was a decision Roma had to make for himself. He thought about it for only a short time before he agreed to throw them away and serve only the true God.

John Williams was talking with Roma one day. "Do you see those two small islands across the water over there?" said Roma, pointing to two islands on the horizon, "I'm the chief of those islands as well as Atiu."
"If you're their chief, you could go and tell the people there about the true God," suggested John Williams. Roma agreed and became a missionary to his own people, telling them what he had learned from the teachers on the ship. He did this so successfully that the people of both islands embraced the Christian faith.

"We would like to leave teachers with you here at Atiu to continue the Christian teaching," John Williams said, when they were preparing to leave on the next stage of their journey, "but there are none available from the people we have on the ship. We will send a teacher to you after we return to Raiatea."

Chief Roma and his people were disappointed, but God had His own way of providing teaching for these new believers. A canoe, with Christians on board, was returning from Tahiti to Raiatea when it was blown off course by a severe storm. They were driven about the ocean for six weeks, during which time they suffered badly from hunger and thirst. Eventually they sighted land and came ashore on Atiu, where Chief Roma took care of them.

"A ship called here not long ago," Roma told the weary travellers, "There were people on board who taught us to worship the Creator God and His Son, Jesus. We've thrown away the idols we used to serve."

Weary as they were from being carried about on the ocean for six weeks, the Raiateans were excited to learn that they had been washed up on an island where the people wanted to learn more about the Christian way of life. As soon as they had recovered enough from their ordeal they began to share their Christian teaching with the new

Christians on Atiu. Day by day the Raiateans helped these villagers to understand more of what it meant to be a Christian.

There were some villagers who had not been wholehearted in their change away from idols to the Christian way, but these people observed the loving way the Raiatean Christians lived among them and they said, “Now we know this religion is true; these people have not come here to deceive us. They really love us and love each other. They were driven by the waves of the ocean. They have their books with them, and the God to whom they prayed has preserved them. The Christian God is the true God. We will serve Him with all our hearts His way is a way of peace.”

Before John Williams left Atiu with the remainder of his team of teachers, Roma gave him correct directions to find Rarotonga: south-west by west, as it proved to be, and “a day and a night’s sail”. But for several days they were blown about by contrary winds. Their food supply was seriously short, and the ship’s captain came to John Williams early one morning to say, “We must give up the search for Rarotonga and turn back to Raiatea, or we’ll all be starved.”

John replied, “Could we continue the search until eight o’clock? If we don’t see the island by then we’ll turn for home.”

Four times in the next few hours Williams sent a crew member up the mast to scan the horizon for sight of land, but there was only ocean to be seen. Time was slipping by, everyone was anxious. It was just half an hour before the agreed time to give up the search when, for the fifth time, the boy ascended the mast. But this time there was the cry, “There’s the land we’ve been looking for! There’s Rarotonga!” Suddenly the gloom turned to joy and thankfulness to God for bringing them safely to the island they had been seeking.

A canoe with Papeiha and a Rarotongan, who had been brought back on the ship from Aitutaki, went ashore and received a good welcome. The family of the returned Rarotongan was pleased to welcome him home. An island chief went on board ship and found his own cousin among the group who had returned to Rarotonga.

Papeiha spoke to the chief. “We have come from Raiatea where we learned about the Christian way of life. Would you give us permission to leave some teachers here with you? They would teach you the Christian way of worshipping God. Your brothers who came back to you with us will tell you about it.”

The chief and villagers discussed the matter among themselves for a while, then the chief said, “We agree to your teachers living with us to teach us the Christian way.”
All seemed to be very promising as the teachers spent the night on the ship preparing their things ready to disembark in the morning. However, in the morning a more powerful chief arrived just as they were coming ashore. He looked at the party of teachers and their wives and pointed out one of the women. “I want her for myself. She will be my wife. Give her to me!”

Once again trouble broke out as the chief and the mission team argued over the unfortunate woman. “I’m afraid we’ll have to give up the plan to land teachers here at present,” said John Williams, “we can’t leave them here when there is a risk to their lives.”

They were about to return to the ship in the small boat when once again Papeiha courageously stepped forward.
"I'm willing to stay here and teach the Rarotongans about the Christian way," he offered. "Maybe they will kill me, maybe they will let me live, but I will land among them. Jehovah God is my shield. I am in His hands."

The chiefs agreed to this arrangement, so Papeiha stayed alone. His only request was that they send him a helper from Raiatea, his friend Tiberio. Papeiha was not entirely friendless there, as the six Rarotongans who had returned from Aitutaki on the ship were all Christian believers. They promised to help him. Tiberio arrived in due course and within a year the whole population of the island had renounced the worship of their idols and begun to learn about God the Creator and Jesus His Son.

More than four years had passed since John Williams left Papeiha and Tiberio on Rarotonga and now, in 1827, he and another missionary with six Tahitian teachers were on board a trading vessel bound for Rarotonga. The intention was for the missionary and the six Tahitian teachers to stay at Rarotonga to establish a teaching institution there. John Williams's wife and two little boys accompanied them. "We will stay at Rarotonga long enough to help establish the training institution," John Williams told his wife, "then we will return to Raiatea on the first trading vessel that comes this way."

Weeks passed, the new missionaries had settled in well, the Bible school was under way and John Williams was searching the horizon every day for any sign of a ship coming in to their harbour, for he was now anxious to return to Raiatea. But time passed with not a vessel to be seen that would transport them. Rarotonga was not on the main routes of the trading vessels, so ships were infrequent.

"I can't stay here for ever," thought John Williams, "What can I do?"
Being very practical as well as very creative, John Williams began to do the impossible. He set to work to build a ship. Here he was on a remote island in the Pacific, with only the minimum of tools, a little experience in boat building, from his time at Eimeo when he first arrived in Tahiti. There were no materials at hand except the trees in the forest and no plans on paper for the design of the ship. What he did have was a great vision and determination to have his own vessel to enable him to evangelise these other islands he constantly thought about. He also had the labouring help of the village people whom he paid with the usual trade goods.

First he had a large open shed built of bush materials, making the roof higher than normal to avoid sparks getting into the highly flammable coconut leaf thatch. His anvil was a huge block of volcanic rock. The bellows were a fantastic invention using air in the same way as water is drawn up and thrown out in a pump. Two long, heavy pieces of iron-wood worked the bellows that blew the air to keep the fire burning steadily. It took thirty men to work the bellows continuously, half of them working and half resting.

He used pick-axes, an adze, old hoops of iron and a hoe to make anchors and a rudder. He made some nails on the forge from scrap iron, but as there wasn't enough metal he also made wooden pegs to hold the vessel together.

The young men climbed the coconut trees for coconuts, then split them and tore out the fibre which was used to caulk up the gaps between the wooden planks. The women

were set to work to weave pandanus sails. First they gathered the long pandanus leaves from the bush, boiled them in a large pot, and laid them out on mats to dry in the sun. When the leaves were ready the women gathered in a group to weave them into large sails.

The village men cut down suitable trees in the forest to be split into lengths for the hull of the ship. Williams constructed a lathe to shape the timbers, and a machine to spin the ropes and cords from plant fibres. In four months, they had achieved the impossible and completed the "Messenger of Peace", a vessel of about sixty tons, and were ready to take the ship on a trial run. There was great rejoicing and praise to God who had enabled them to complete the ship under such impossible conditions.

Now John Williams was considering his next step.
"It's a long way to Raiatea. If I take the ship there first there may be trouble. I need to take it a shorter distance for a trial run somewhere closer."

After discussing it with the chiefs who knew the islands of the area, they set out for Aitutaki, about 150 miles away. The trial voyage proved most satisfactory. The weather fortunately was kind to them and the ship performed well in the water.

On his return to Rarotonga Williams spoke to the crew, "This ship is good enough to take the trip back to Raiatea. Get everything ready and we'll leave as soon as possible."
John Williams went to his home. "My dear, "he said to his wife, "our days of waiting are over. We can pack up our things and go back to Raiatea on the Messenger of Peace."

Mrs. Williams was as relieved as her husband that they could return to Raiatea and they were able to leave with their two little boys in a couple of days. Fortunately the weather was favourable so that they had a fair trip. Even so, by the time they arrived at Raiatea the Messenger of Peace looked much the worse for wear. John Williams looked at the long strips of coconut fibre caulking that had come adrift from between the planks and were now hanging like festoons down the sides of the ship.

"What a blessing that the Lord of the wind and the waves was watching over us on our voyage" he thought. "Had He sent rough weather, all the caulking would have dropped out of the timbers. Then the rough seas would have broken up the hull completely and we would all have been lost. Thank you Lord for Your protection."

John Williams was able to purchase canvas to make more durable sails and proper oakum for caulking, so that the vessel was more sea-worthy for later trips. Nevertheless, the construction of the Messenger of Peace on Rarotonga was a miracle of creativity and determination.

John Williams was excited at having his own ship. Now it was possible for him to plan visits to the other island groups in the vicinity without having to depend on the arrival of trading vessels. He visited the Leeward and Windward Islands, the Hervey group and others further west.

Wherever he travelled he followed the same method. He prepared and trained a team of Tahitians to be evangelists and teachers who joined him on the ship. Then he would speak to the chief of the island he had chosen to visit, asking him, "Do you want to have teachers in your island who will teach you about the Creator God and His Son, Jesus

Christ?" If the chief said," Yes." the next question was, "Are you willing to receive them with their wives into your village, provide them with a house to live in, land for their food garden, and food from your gardens, until such time as they can harvest their own crops?" Provided the chief agreed to this, two of the Tahitian teachers with their wives would be left there to begin their task of evangelism and teaching. Williams also used his ship to make visits back to the teachers from time to time, to help and encourage them.

As the people took on the Christian faith their way of life changed. Peace came where there had been inter-tribal war; cleanliness and better health where there had been dirt and sickness; the heathen idols were burned as the people began to worship God the Creator Spirit. Truly John Williams had been prophetic in naming his ship the "*Messenger of Peace*."

During the next several years his eyes and his mind were on other groups of islands further to the west. First he visited Samoa, leaving teachers at several points to continue sharing the Gospel. From Samoa he visited Tonga. The people he had trained worked in Tonga and Fiji.

John Williams still had the vision to extend into the islands further west.
"I believe the islands of the New Hebrides would be the best place to establish a mission. From there we could reach out into New Guinea, New Caledonia and other island groups in the vicinity," he thought to himself. He was forever planning ways to reach out westwards to those unreached islands.

In 1837 John Williams and his family sailed to England where he told the church people about the "*Messenger of Peace*", why he built it and how he built it. The story aroused so much interest that people gave enough money to purchase a new, larger boat to replace the "*Messenger of Peace*".

The new ship, the "*the Camden*", would make it possible to venture further west than they had been before. On their return voyage from England to Raiatea John Williams spent much time thinking and planning missionary trips to the western Pacific Islands. He was refreshed and ready to set out on this extension of the mission's work.

By 1839 he had a number of Tahitians trained as teachers ready to venture into unknown islands with the Christian message. With two other white missionaries on board they set sail in the Camden, heading west from Tahiti. Their aim was to reach the New Hebrides where they would investigate the possibility of establishing a mission station which would be a spring-board for working in New Guinea and New Caledonia.

On the way they called at Samoa, meeting the teachers and pastors they had trained at Raiatea. The Christian community in Samoa was growing in numbers as well as in understanding of the Christian way of life. They spent a few days with the Christians there, worshipping, teaching and feasting, enjoying wonderful fellowship together. After a brief stop at Rotuma, north of Fiji, they set out westwards for the New Hebrides.

As *the Camden* was approaching Tanna, at the southern point of the New Hebrides group, they wondered how the islanders would the islanders receive them. Would they be friendly, or not? Next morning a group went ashore in a small boat to visit the people and ascertain what kind of welcome they could expect. To their great relief they were

welcomed gladly and showered with gifts of yams, pigs and coconuts. Plans were made for two of the Tahitian teachers to be left there in the future.

They sailed on later the same day and stood off the island of Erromanga, ready to land early the next morning. Encouraged by the happy reception at Tanna, Williams was keen to go ashore and test the attitude of the people of Erromanga. A group of Erromagan men in a canoe approached the ship but stayed at a distance, too timid to come any closer. The missionary party in the ship's small boat rowed further along the shore, some villagers following them on land. One member of the party, Mr. Harris, ventured on shore to look around, without any adverse reaction from the villagers. Thinking it was safe, John Williams followed.

Mr. Harris had been exploring a small stream when suddenly he burst out of the bushes yelling, "Run!" He was followed and struck down by a group of villagers who clubbed him to death. John Williams ran for the sea, but stumbled on the stony beach, giving the men time to catch him, club and spear him to death also. The others of the missionary party left in the small boat escaped to the ship. The ship's captain and the team left on the ship had watched in horror as they saw John Williams and Harris so suddenly and unexpectedly taken from them.

They saw the villagers drag the bodies into the bushes. Next day a small group from the ship went back to the shore in the small boat hoping to find the remains of their friends to return to Raiatea, but they found only the remains of a cannibal feast.

What a sudden and tragic end to the life of such a great man of God! But "the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church" and when the tragic news of Williams's death reached England it stirred up another wave of active interest in the cause of missions to the Pacific.

It was some years later that missionaries were told the reason why John Williams and Harris were killed. Not long before *the Camden* visited Tanna and Erromanga a trading vessel had called in there. The sandal-wood trader on board had ruthlessly killed the son of a chief of Erromanga, and the killing of John Williams and Harris was a 'pay-back' for that. For these villagers all white men were 'the enemy' and must be killed.

Although the London missionary society made seven moret attempts to establish teaching centres on Tanna, twenty years were to pass before a successful Christian work was established in the New Hebrides (Vanuatu). John Paton from Scotland was the courageous missionary that God used to turn the people of Tanna to Himself.

Adapted from:
History of the London Missionary Society 1795-1895, Richard Lovett, Oxford University Press, London
Memoirs of The Life of Rev. John Williams, Ebenezer Prout, John Snow, Paternoster Row, London. 1843

Lolohea Akosita Waqairawai, Fiji

Lolohea Akosita Waqairawai was born on 18 March 1893, the third child of Maikeli Ratu of Narewa, Nadi, and Litiana Neileqe Saurogo of Nakavu, Nadi, and had three sisters. Her father was a Methodist minister, and taught Lolohea to work hard to improve her life. She was educated at the first girls' school in Fiji (Matavelo Girls
School in Ba) by the missionary sisters under the watchful eye of the Rev C.O. Lelean, the Talatala Qase (Lelean High School is named after him.) Lolohea was very intelligent and displayed unusual ability, so when she was 17 years old Rev Lelean made arrangements for her to do further study at Manly Public School in Sydney, Australia, and then teacher-training at the Sydney Teachers College. She returned to Fiji at the end of 1914. *(Question: If she was born in 1893, how old was she when she returned to Fiji?)*

Lolohea first taught at Butt Street Primary School in Suva, and later at Davuilevu Primary School where she met and married Mosese Bulu. They had four children in five years, and then Mosese died. Later Lolohea married Timoci Waqairawai, a teacher from Jona, Kadavu. She had four sons from this marriage.

Lolohea and Timoci taught at Nadraivatu. In addition to her busy job as a teacher, and raising her eight children, Lolohea began her Work with Women, visiting them in their homes and teaching them simple principles of hygiene, ante-natal care, child welfare, homecraft, sewing and general village sanitation. The family were moved to Vunidawa where they taught for 16 years from 1934-590. Lolohea helped some poor but talented children to go to secondary school (one was Emori Naqova who graduated in Engineering and became Chief Executive of the Fiji Posts and telecommunication Service before he died in 1994).

Lolohea helped set up a number of women's organizations which worked to improve the lives of women so that they could contribute to the development of their families and hence that of their communities and society. She believed that women play an important role in the development of any society, and that education was very important. When the *Qele ni Ruve* (an organization for Fijian women), was started by Mrs. Derrick in 1924, Waqairawai became its Vice President. *Qele ni Ruve* membership later spread throughout Fiji and the organization changed its name to *I Soqosoqo Vakamarama.* During her community training sessions for rural Fijian women, Waqairawai appealed to Fijian men to lighten the burden of women by doing gardening and other domestic chores so that women could devote more time to family health and home management. She also advocated the use of local resources to upgrade the standard of living of rural families. Her commitment to family health and women's health culminated in her translating a book about childbirth into Fijian language *(Na Tina Ni Gone i Taukei).*

She thought the best way to enhance the status of women in Fiji was to promote their education. While working in the province of Naitasiri, she contributed to the initial thinking that there was a need for government to establish a learning institution for Fijian girls. Her foresight resulted in the establishment of the Adi Ciakobau School as a government secondary school for Fijian girls in 1948. This institution was later to produce females who excelled in various sectors.

Waqairawai's contribution to community education and service continued even after she retired from teaching. She became a child welfare officer in 1950 and traveled extensively throughout Viti Levu conducting health education sessions. On many occasions she walked from one village to the next.

In 1956 she became the acting national leader for the Soqosoqo Vakamarama in Fiji. Waqairawai was the first indigenous Fijian woman to represent Fiji in an nternational women's conference. As a member of the Pan Pacific South East Asian Women's Association (PPSEAWA), Waqairawai was also actively involved in the promotion of the status of all Women in Fiji through racial tolerance and harmony. She believed that women could play a leading role in racial tolerance and encouraged women of different ethnic groups to learn and understand each other's culture.

Lolohea was awarded the British Empire Medal in 1948 and the Queen's Award for Meritorious Service to the Community in 1953. She was chosen to clothe the first President of the Methodist Church, the Rev. Setareki Tuilovoni, with the Presidential robe during the installation service at the Centenary Church, Suva, in July 1964. She had been a dedicated member of the-Methodist Church all her life, and contributed two hymns to the Fijian Methodist Hymn book (Nos. 69 and 214). Lolohea died in February 1967 at the age of 74. She was honoured for her inner strength and serenity, her dignity and humility. At her funeral service, Ratu Penaia Ganilau, (then Secretary for Fijian Affairs and Local Government), said "Lolohea's monument will be found in the closely knit and effective societies she built up in the remote parts of Viti Levu."

Revision:
An important aspect of Lolohea's work is that she enlisted the help of men and government agencies to work together to improve the status and role of women in Fiji. Many 'leaders' prefer to form their own new groups to support their dreams and visions, but a good leader should also be able to work within the structures.

Lord of the volcano

The “Big Island” of the Hawaiian Islands group in the north Pacific was created by volcano activity. It rises up from the ocean bed to a height of over 4000 metres above sea level. There are numerous craters on the island, many inactive, but a few still likely to erupt on occasion.

The Hawaiian people had believed for generations that the great goddess Pele lived in the largest and most active volcano, Mauna Loa. They prayed to her and made gifts to the Hawaiian priests who served Pele.

The volcano was a terrifying sight. In the huge crater there burned a lake of molten lava that rose and fell within the crater, sometimes boiling over and spilling down the mountain side, leaving burning trees and a trail of destruction in its wake. The danger of an eruption was always present so it was no wonder the Hawaiians feared the goddess Pele above all else.

But the Christian missionaries came to Hawaii in 1820, and in a few years there were many who had become Christians. The new faith was to them so new that they still trembled when the priests called on the name of Pele Perhaps, after all, Pele was greater that their new-found God, the Father of Jesus Christ.

“Do not neglect Pele,” said the old chiefs. “If you do, her anger will spill over in boiling lava, with merciless ruin and desolation to the country-side.”

“She will pour down her anger into the sea and spoil all your fishing grounds,” said the priests, who were angry themselves, now that the people no longer brought them gifts. “Great is Pele, and greatly to be feared.”

But there was one woman who did not fear. She was a woman of the royal family, a chieftainess named Kapiolani. She looked out with strong, fearless eyes at the priests and said scornfully, “The Lord God, the Creator, is stronger than Pele!”

The people heard her, and in terror cried, “That is Kapiolani! Pele will destroy her!”

“Pele is powerless!” declared the new Christian. “I believe that God will defend the province of Pele, to the very edge of the crater, where it spills out its lava. Pele will not touch me. Jehovah, my God, is the great God and Pele is as nothing.”
The people gazed at Kapiolani with mingled fear and admiration.
“My God made these mountains,” added the great lady,” and the lava too. He is the only strong One.”

The Hawaiians talked of nothing else.
“Our chieftainess, Kapiolani, is going to defy the great goddess Pele, who lives in the boiling crater, and who rules our island.”
Eighty of her people agreed to go up the mountain with her as she climbed the lower valleys densed with trees, then up and up until she stood on the rough rocks at the very edge of the crater.

During the ascent Kapiolani broke off a branch of a low bush that bore red and yellow berries. Everyone knew that these were Pele’s berries. From of old they had been taught that no-one must touch them without asking her. Not only had the daring Kapiolani broken off the berries. The people feared that this was carrying her daring a little too far. Certainly no harm had come to her yet, but there was still time.

It was cold at the top of the mountain, but the sulphurous fumes gave the air a clammy warmth as they drew near the crater. The ground was hot with the molten lava in the crater. It sent up a cloud of vapour from the rain which had fallen into the fissures in the rocks. It was an awesome sight, but Kapiolani did not hesitate.

From a distance the people watched uneasily. Would Pele reach out and slay their courageous leader? From her robe Kapiolani drew forth a copy of the New Testament, and there, with ringing voice, she read within hearing of the heathen goddess, the message of the one true God. The people waited as Kapiolani did this, their hearts trembling. Then they saw her step to the edge of the crater and let herself down over the side. The vapour rose about her. There she stood, unafraid. They watched her take some of the berries and cast them down into the fiery heart of the volcano.

Defiantly she sent one stone after another hurtling down into the crater. There was no greater insult she could heap upon Pele. Would she rise in her anger and consume Kapiolani? Nothing happened. The people waited. Still nothing happened. There she stood, a solitary figure, offering prayer and praise to her God, Jehovah, the One who created the volcano, the One who had given her the courage to defy the goddess who had held her people in fearful bondage for generations.

Kapiolani rejoined the group who had accompanied her. She called upon them to praise God who had proved Himself the Lord over all creation. So that day, praises of God rang out across the crater, the song of a free people, no longer subject to the greed of the priests and the fear of a mountain goddess.

Adapted from Safety Last, by Rita Snowden, Epworth Press.

Activities

1. How many years ago is it since Christian missionaries first came to Hawaii?

2. Find words in the story that mean: alone, eat up, throw up lava, melted from heat, climb upwards, large cracks?

Makea of Rarotonga

John Williams had set out from England in 1817, for the Pacific islands. He decided that he would build his own ship from the materials he could find on the island of Rarotonga where he was stranded in 1827. As he prepared for the task, gathering odd tools, looking for timber among the trees of the forest, employing some of the strong young men from the villages around to help him, one man, a chief named Makea, took a special interest in what he was doing.

“I’d like to help you, Mr. Williams,” he offered. “I’m big and strong and can lift those heavy timbers easily. Just tell me what to do and I’ll do it for you.”

Makea certainly was big and strong. He was about 190 cms. (6 feet 2 inches) tall. He was also very heavily built. His upper legs were the same size as the missionary’s body. His feet and legs were beautifully decorated with tattoos up to two inches above the knee. Similarly, his hands and arms were decorated up to and above the elbows. His movement and general appearance gave the impression that he was born to rule. It was said that before the coming of the Christian missionaries he ruled with violence and tyranny, but he abandoned his cruel ways to a great extent with the coming of the gospel.

After the boat, ‘*Messenger of Peace’* was completed John Williams was preparing to return to Raiatea, Tahiti. He spoke to Makea, “Makea, you have been such a great help to me in the building of the ship. I’d like to do something for you as a reward. Would you like to come on the ship with me when we return to Tahiti?”

“Thank you, Mr. Williams,” Makea responded enthusiastically, “that would be wonderful.”

So Makea visited Raiatea, Tahiti on the "*Messenger of Peace*" and became friendly with the local chiefs and people of Raiatea. They put on great feasts for him and generally showed him much kindness. But one chief began to doubt the missionaries.

"Why do you do so much for the missionaries?" he asked. "You don't need to give them so much food, or work so much for them."

Makea listened to these comments and began to act on them. He returned to Rarotonga in a small ship that was laden with food and presents from the Raiateans. When he arrived home, he was greatly puffed up with pride as he showed off his ship-load of goods. But his attitude to the missionary on Rarotonga, Aaron Buzzacott, had changed. Because Makea, the chief, was distant and not as helpful as he used to be, his people adopted the same attitudes. Aaron was feeling suddenly very unwelcome in the island. He called a meeting of the chiefs and the people and spoke plainly to them.

"There seems to be something different in the attitude of you people towards us. If we have offended you in some way, please tell us and we can make it right. If you are tired of having us on your island, then we can pack up and go to another island. There are plenty of other islanders who would be glad to welcome us and treat us more kindly than you are at present. We have made many sacrifices to come here for your good. The least you could do is show us a little kindness and respect in return."

Aaron's words had the desired effect and from then on the unhelpful attitudes were gone and friendliness and goodwill were restored. That evening Makea visited Mr. Buzzacott, a scripture portion in his hand. Holding it up Makea promised, "Mr. Buzzacott, don't be sad or heavy hearted. From now on I will follow this." Although Makea was sympathetic to the missionaries and could see the good that the Christian teaching brought to the community, he had no personal commitment to following in the Christian way. But a change was to come.

Two women came to Aaron for counsel. One was Makea's wife and the other was a woman from Aitutaki. This woman, named Tapaeru, was very helpful in placing and protecting the first teachers on Rarotonga. Both women appeared very agitated and were obviously convicted of their sins.

"I feel so guilty and full of sins, Mr. Buzzacott," cried Tapaeru, "would you allow me to confess some of them to you. The burden of them is too great."

Most of the sins she confessed were sins of adultery, and some of them had involved her with Makea. The chief himself was suffering under his own guilty convictions. His brother, the 'chief judge' of the area under the mission's system of law and order, had recently died. This had left Makea in the position of chief judge.

"But how can I judge others when I am guilty of the same sins myself?" he thought.
Makea went to see Aaron. "I am in deep trouble," he began. "I have had to judge several men recently and found them guilty of adultery. But you know that I have been guilty of the same sins. I have no right to judge another man when I am guilty myself."

"You're right, Makea," responded Aaron, "What do you think you should do about it?"

“But Mr. Buzzacott, that’s not all I’ve done. There’s a lot more.” And Makea poured out a long list of other sins he had committed, making a clean breast of it all.

“You ask me what I think I should do.” he went on. “I shouldn’t have special treatment because I’m a chief. I should be tried for my sins the same as everyone else.”

Naturally, no-one from the local area was willing to act as judge of the judge and chief, Makea, so they called for the chiefs and judges of the two nearby mission stations to come.

A large crowd of people, chiefs, judges and onlookers, assembled at the entrance of Makea’s house, which was the usual place for trials. Makea stood up before them all and solemnly confessed his sins, as did Tapaeru. The highly-respected judge of the other mission station passed the sentence on them both. They were required to pay fines and they listened while the judge spoke to them of their need to sin no more, faithfully following the examples of scripture. This one act of total humility by their chief impressed and changed the people far more than many sermons or lectures from the authorities.

One Sunday Aaron preached about the story of Zacchaeus, emphasizing the need for restitution if anyone has done wrong to another person. This message brought a strong response. People came to the missionary’s house with goods they had stolen, either from Mr. Williams during his visit, or from Mr. Buzzacott. There were various tools, knives from the kitchen, plates, articles of clothing, bed sheets; it was a remarkable array.

“I’ve brought you a chicken, Mr. Buzzacott, because I kept your tools for so long,” said one.
“Here is some taro in this basket, Mr. Buzzacott. I’m sorry I stole your plates,” offered another.

So the stolen goods were returned and other gifts of restitution were offered and accepted.

Makea had not taken any goods, but he had robbed some of the lesser chiefs of their lands, placing his favourites as tenants on the land. He sent a message to all the people he had offended in this way.

“Would you all come to a feast I am preparing for you,” he requested.
The people all came for the feast, which was a wonderful array of pigs, chickens and taro cooked in the earth oven, spread out on banana leaves. They were wondering why they had been invited. After they had finished eating, Makea stood up before them, “I have done you many wrongs in the days before the Christian gospel came to our island. I took away your lands, but now I’m sorry I did that. Now we understand how the Creator God wants us to live I can’t keep your lands any longer. I want you to go back again to your own lands and stay on them. I promise that no-one will disturb you again.”

Every-one was amazed at this change in Makea’s attitude.
“What a wonderful thing is the gospel!” they cried.

It was these events that brought Makea to the place of commitment of his life to Christ.

“I must follow after God’s way truly, Mr Buzzacott,” he said. “Will you teach me all about God the Creator and His Son Jesus,” he begged. “I really want to know them in my heart. I also want to learn to read well, so I can read the scriptures.”

He attended the adult reading class every morning, sharing the group with a reformed sorcerer, a former heathen priest, and three old warriors, all of whom had been notorious in their day for their cruelties and ‘heathen abominations. If there was no-one else to teach them, the most advanced students from the children’s school were placed in charge of this group of adults. It was truly an example of ‘a little child shall lead them’, as these children were to be seen teaching Makea and the older men the mysteries of reading and writing. After nearly two years of teaching Makea became a member of the church and from then on lived out his new-found faith in God.

Makea lived long enough after his conversion to prove the reality of the change brought about by having God in his life. As a chief he saw that the laws were enforced fairly for everyone. He had wide roads made to connect the villages. He prepared a list of prices for goods they traded in when whaling ships called. Previously the whalers had taken advantage of the islanders, but Makea wanted to see a fair deal for his people. The changes in his personality when he began to live the Christian life were so marked that he became highly respected by his islander people as well as Europeans.

“His rule began in times of fearful darkness and bloodshed. When it closed everything seemed changed”, wrote Aaron Buzzacott of Makea. “The customs, the manners, the habits, the worship, the life of his people, were all changed. Makea was an example of the mighty way in which God can change people.

Adapted from: *Mission Life in the Islands of the Pacific*, Rev A. Buzzacott, John Snow & Co., London , 1866

Mataika

A storm-battered canoe was beached on the shore of Lifu Island in the Loyalty Islands group, situated between the New Hebrides (Vanuatu) and New Caledonia islands. A weary Tongan man stepped ashore, relieved to be on solid ground again. When a small group of villagers came down to greet him it was difficult to communicate at first. But after a time, using signs and discovering words common to their two languages, they ascertained that he had been on a trading trip out from Tonga when a severe storm swept him far off course to the west. The villagers on Lifu made him welcome and he became one of their communities.

Later on he noticed an attractive young woman.
"May I have that young woman for my wife?" he asked the village chief.
"You should ask her father if you can have her," replied the chief. "If he agrees to it, then so do I."

The Tongan approached the father, received his permission and in due course a baby boy was born to them. This boy was named Mataika.

At about the same time as this, a ship arrived on Lifu carrying a team of missionaries. Their leader asked to see the island chief. "We have a great story to tell your people. It's about the Creator God and Jesus His Son. We have other island people with us who can tell you how this message has changed their lives and their community. May we stay and teach you about our God?"

The chief was impressed with these visitors and gave them a piece of land to build houses on and plant food gardens. The Tongan man, baby Mataika's father, heard of the missionaries' arrival and went to see the chief.

"I come from Tonga, as you know," he began. "My people have believed in the Christian God for some time, and I do too. Since we began to follow the Christian way, He has

changed our lives. My people used to fight and kill each other, but now we are at peace. We used to be afraid of evil spirits, but now we know God's Holy Spirit who is stronger than all the evil spirits of your priests."

The chief listened attentively, and then said thoughtfully, "I have begun to listen to the missionary teachers. Would you help me to understand all that they teach us? I believe it is a good thing for my people to follow."

So the Tongan man spent much time explaining the Christian message to the chief, Bula by name. Because the chief accepted the Gospel message readily his people gladly believed on the Lord Jesus Christ also.

Mataika attended the missionaries' school on Lifu and grew up into a strong believer in Jesus Christ as His Lord.
In 1871, the ship, the *John Williams*, sailed from Rarotonga to Samoa with some newly trained missionaries going to British New Guinea (now Papua New Guinea). They called in at Lifu to pick up Mataika and Gucheng, his friend who had both been chosen to join the pioneer team going to British New Guinea.

The *John Williams* sailed to Somerset, a new mission station on the northern tip of York Peninsula, Australia. At Somerset they changed from the *John Williams* to a smaller ship that could better negotiate the hazards of these uncharted waters. Gucheng and his wife were taken to Darnley Island. Mataika and his wife were chosen to settle on Mer in the Murray Islands to teach the Christian message there. But the captain of their ship came to the mission team leaders with a serious concern. "There is reef all through these waters. I don't have any maps or charts of these reefs to sail by, so we could very likely run up on a reef if I try to sail to the Murray Islands."

The mission team leaders prayed and considered the position. Calling Mataika and Gucheng to them they told them their decision.
"Mataika, you and your wife will stay here at Darnley with Gucheng. Trading boats come through here from time to time. You could wait here until one comes that will take you to Mer in the Murray Islands. Gucheng, are you happy with that?"

"Yes, I'll be pleased to have my friend with me as we start our work here," Gucheng replied.
Mataika was equally pleased. "We can encourage each other as we begin to learn about the language and the customs together."

The ship had off-loaded Mataika and Gucheng and their wives and goods and was ready to depart when Gucheng's wife suddenly burst into tears, overcome with terror at the situation.
"They're leaving us here all alone," she cried in panic, "I'm frightened! I want to go home to my own island. I don't want to stay here with these strange people in this strange place. Let me go home!"

Quietly but firmly Gucheng took her aside. "We must remember why we have come here," he said gently. "It's not to get trepang or pearl shell, or other earthly riches, but to tell these people about the true God and the loving Saviour Jesus Christ. We must think of what He suffered for us. If they kill us, or steal our goods, whatever we have to suffer, it will be very little compared with what He had to suffer for us."

So Gucheng and his wife went on together in that spirit of sacrifice.
In the early days on Darnley Island they discovered a group of Murray Islanders. These men had realised that having the missionaries on their islands was going to spoil their wrongful practices. They tried hard to frighten the new- comers.

"It's dangerous to go to the Murray Islands," said one, "there are snakes and alligators and centipedes there."
"Yes," came the reply, "but are there *men* there?"
"Oh, yes, there are men. But they're dreadful savages. It's no use thinking of living among them," persisted the Murray Islander.

"That will do," replied Mataika, "wherever there are men, the missionaries are bound to go."

Gucheng and Mataika waited many months but no trading vessel came by that could take Mataika and his wife to Mer.

Mataika said to Gucheng, "We've waited a long time and no trading ship has come by. I've looked around in the bush and there are plenty of trees that are good for building a canoe. I have tools here. What is to stop me from constructing a canoe that would take me to Mer?"

Gucheng encouraged him to go ahead with the work. Mataika searched in the bush for a suitable large tree and, with help from Gucheng and some of the friendly Darnley Islanders, he set to work to carve out the canoe for himself. It was dug out of a single tree, but raised a little at the sides to prevent water lapping into the canoe in rough seas.

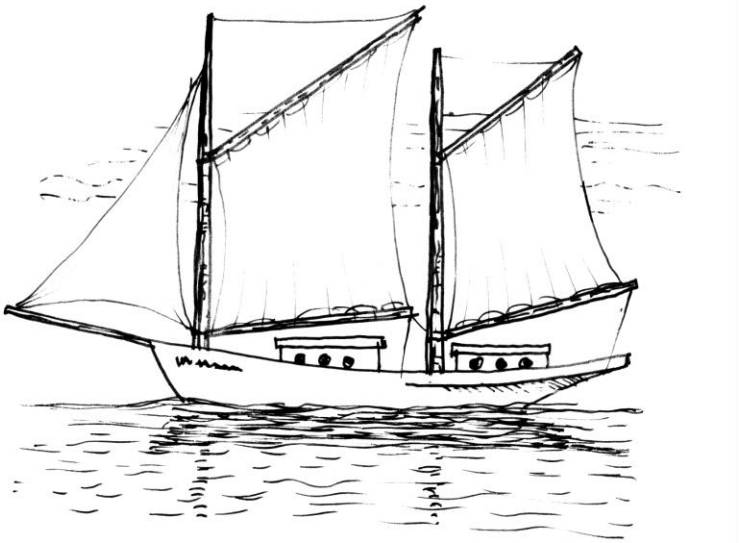
He chose four men to help paddle the canoe, two of them from the group of Murray Islanders living on Darnley and two others. It was a thirty-mile journey which they covered in two days and a night. Arriving at Mer, the two crew members from the Murray Islands were able to speak to the local chiefs, "These men are good people. They bring a good message that helps people to live together in peace. They would like your permission to come and live in our islands and tell everybody about this Christian way of living."

The chiefs gave their permission. "We would be happy to welcome you and your friends to our islands," they said, "and we promise to listen to the Christian message you bring."
They selected a piece of land where Mataika and his wife could have their home and their food garden, then set off back to Darnley. This time they hired a boat from a man living on Mer. Mataika's wife and their few possessions were loaded on to the boat and they set off to pioneer the Christian work on Mer in the Murray Islands.

Mataika was one of only three of that first mission team that went out on the *John Williams* who lived to return home to his native land after many years of service in the islands.

Adapted from: *History of the London Missionary Society*, 1795-1895, Richard Lovett, O.U.P. London.

Peter Ambuofa



"Dad there's a ship coming into the bay! It looks like the one that takes men to work in Australia."

Ambuofa was a young man who lived at the northern tip of the island of Malaita, in the eastern region of the Solomon Islands, during the early 1890's. He had been sitting on the hillside above the beach at Malu'u gazing out to sea when he noticed the sails on the horizon and watched as the lugger drew closer to the shore. He had rushed up the hill to where his father was working in the food garden to tell him about the approaching lugger.

"True, it is one of those ships," replied his father, "Now Ambuofa, you are old enough to go and work over there yourself. I want you to go on that ship and work for those sugar cane farmers."

The lugger pulled in as close to the shore as it could, then a small boat brought the master and an officer ashore.
"Look! Here come the men who went away three years ago!" cried Ambuofa. They watched as a second small boat approached the shore with several young men on board. They carried bundles in their arms and on their backs, clothing and other goods bought with their hard-earned wages.

"Are there any strong young men here who want to work in Australia?" the master called out.
"Yes, I'll go," responded Ambuofa as he lined up in front of the master. Several of his friends joined him. "We'll go and work in Australia, and then we can buy clothes and other things to bring back to our families, like our friends who just returned."

“Right,” said the master at last, “I have all your names. Get into the small boat and we’ll go. I want to visit another village down the coast before night-fall.”

“Goodbye!” called the men to their families on the shore. “We’ll come back with presents for you.”
“Goodbye,” the family members called back, some tearful, wondering when they would see their young men again.

“Get down below,” bullied the master of the lugger when they had scrambled aboard, “Keep out of the way while we get going. You can come up on deck when we are out to sea. All I want is to get you there in one piece. The stronger you are, the better the price I get for you.”

The young men had never been away from their island before and they watched sadly as the Malu’u bay disappeared from sight. Then at last even the highest mountains that formed a spine down the centre of the island had faded into the distance. It was a rough trip and many of the men were sea-sick.

“I’ll be glad to get on the land again,” said Ambuofa to his friends. “This rough sea is awful.”
“We’ll be arriving at Bundaberg soon,” came the captain’s rough voice one morning. “Get up on deck now, everyone. Hurry up!”

As the lugger drew in to the wharf at the port of Bundaberg, the young men stood on the deck gazing in wonder at the new world that was opening up before them.
“Look at those huge ships,” Ambuofa said to his friends. “What are they doing with all those bags on the wharf? What’s in them?”
“They’re loading bags of sugar on to the big ships to send to countries far away,” replied a man who had been there before.

A tall middle-aged Australian came striding along the wharf. The master of the lugger called him over to his vessel.
“I’ve got some good, strong young men for you this time, Mr. Young. They are from Malaita. Take a look at them. They look like a bunch of hard workers, don’t you think?”

“Yes,” he agreed, “I’ll take all of that group there.”
Having settled for a price the men from Malaita were herded on to a barge and taken up river. As the barge chugged slowly along they were able to have a good look at everything they passed. On either side of them were cane fields, their feathery plumes waving in the gentle breeze. Occasionally there was a break in the cane fields, and they saw the rolling green hills in the distance.

“Here we are,” said Mr. Young as they finally pulled in to a landing. “This is my cane farm, called Fairymead. You see the buildings over there?” He pointed to some long wooden sheds. “That’s where you will sleep and live. Find yourselves a bunk bed and settle in.”

The men from Malu’u found a space where they could all be together and looked around. There were crude shutters at the windows that could be closed when the heavy rains poured down during the wet season. The wooden bunk beds were the only furnishings in the building. This was to be their home for the next three years.

“That building over there is where our food is prepared and where we eat,” observed the man who had been there before. “The food is different - no yams or taro here. We mostly eat rice or bread with some meat. And there’s plenty of fruit around.”

The new-comers were soon put to work cutting cane.
“You’ll each take a machete and you’ll have to keep it sharpened with this file. Slash into the base of the cane stalk and toss it in a pile behind you. Another team of men will pick it up and load it on to the dray,” they were directed by the foreman.

The men looked towards the end of the cane field where they could see horses hitched to a large dray. “That’s a huge animal isn’t it?” they commented as they set to work on the cane cutting. It was the first time they had seen horses.

It was hard, sticky work bending over all day cutting cane. Their trousers and shirts were soon black and sticky with cane juice, and they were very thirsty.”

“I’m terribly thirsty,” Ambuofa complained to his friends, “it’s time to stop for a drink.”
There was a canvas water bag hanging in the shade of a tree so the men all put down their machetes and enjoyed a drink from the water bag. They had been up since sunrise and were sent out to the cane field straight after breakfast. Now the heat of the sun overhead was beating down on them so they welcomed the short break and the water. At the end of the day they were glad to trudge back to their living quarters for a meal and a well-earned sleep.

Six days a week this was the routine, but Sunday was different. It was a rest day and the Kanakas (the name given to imported labourers), were free to have a break from work. But there was something else that made Sunday different. It revolved around Miss Florence Young, the sister of the plantation owner, Mr.Young.

Some ten years before Ambuofa and his friends came to work at Fairymead, Florence Young came to stay there with her brother. She was to teach the Bible to the children of the white people there, but she became keenly interested in the islander men working in the cane fields.

“I feel so sorry for those men,” she thought, “they’ve never heard about Jesus, God’s Son, or about the Creator God. God loves them as much as He loves us, but no-one has told them about Him.”

She was sitting on the verandah of their timber home one day, looking out at the men slashing away at the cane in the fields when her brother joined her.
“You look very thoughtful, Florence,” he observed, “What’s on your mind?”

“I’m thinking about those workmen out there. God loves them as much as He loves you and me, but no-one has told them about Him. There isn’t a Christian missionary to help them anywhere in Queensland.”

“That’s true, Florence, but what can we do about it?” asked her brother.
“I believe God wants me to teach them. I could have a reading and Bible class on Sundays when the men don’t have to work. What do you think about that?”

“But these fellows have never had any schooling. They’ve never learned to read. They’ve never even seen a book before. Don’t you think you’d be wasting your time?”

As others heard about Florence’s project they were equally doubtful. “It won’t last,” they said. “They won’t be able to concentrate for very long. Why should you bother?”

However, Florence persisted, believing God was calling her to do it. Their overseer’s help was enlisted. He spoke to the workmen one evening explaining to them in Pidgin as best he could, “On Sunday Miss Young wants to talk to you. She will teach you how to read, and she will teach you about God our Creator and Jesus His Son. If you would like to join the class, come along on Sunday.”

Ten men came to the first class on the following Sunday. Florence had only one book, a reader which her sister had used in her early days, but she believed that as God had called her to do this He was going to give her wisdom to do it well. First she had to master the Pidgin language herself before she could teach her students anything, but bit by bit she learned enough to pass on each week. For the first lesson she produced a butterfly chrysalis and used it to illustrate the truth of death and resurrection, particularly relating to Jesus.

Week after week she prayed, “Lord, what do you want me to teach them this time?” And each week the Holy Spirit, the Teacher, gave her the wisdom to reach the minds and hearts of these men. The men were each given a large print New Testament from which they learned both to read and to learn about the Christian faith.

Contrary to the expectations of those around her, Florence saw the number of men in the class grow and their interest and understanding steadily increased. In 1885, nearly three years after the Sunday lessons began, one man, Jimmie Aoba, stayed behind after the class. Shyly, he confessed to Florence Young, “Missi, I want to belong to God. I want to know more about Him. We have a lesson on Sunday, then there are six days without lessons. Could you give us lessons every day?”

Florence was delighted to respond to Jimmie’s request, so every night, after the evening meal they found a quiet place sometimes on the verandah, or in a shed, or the wash-house, and Jimmie would bring along a few of his friends. Jimmie soaked up the teaching, now that he had turned his back on the evil spirits he used to believe in and trusted in God. He prayed earnestly for his friends, “Please Lord, help my friends to know you too.”

Jimmie was in poor health and some months after his conversion he died of tuberculosis. But within nine months of Jimmie’s death his prayers were answered and twelve of his friends had believed in Jesus and decided to live a Christian life.

One day, when the Young family was all together, they began discussing the growth of Florence’s work.
“God has been very good and has blessed our work at Fairymead.” observed Florence.
“But think of all the other sugar cane plantations where there are islander workmen. No-one is teaching them.”
“Do you think the teaching could be extended to other plantations?” asked Florence’s sister-in-law, who had joined Florence to help her with the Sunday Bible classes.

“We could write to all the plantation owners and ask them if they would be open to receiving a Christian teacher to come and teach their workmen.” suggested Florence’s brother.

So a letter was written to ‘all employers of South Sea Islanders’ and Christian friends, informing them of the appointment of a missionary to the Kanakas and asking them to provide facilities to hold a class on each plantation. The missionary would be supported by the freewill offerings of friends of the Queensland Kanaka Mission. It happened that Mr. George Muller, a Christian from England who had raised thousands of pounds to provide homes for needy children simply by praying to God, was in Sydney at this time. He saw a copy of the letter and said to Florence’s sister, “I think the Lord wants me to help with this work,” and he gave to Florence the first contribution to the mission.

“Tell your sister to expect great things from God and she will get them.” were his words of encouragement.

In 1886 the missionary, Mr. Johnson, was welcomed on the plantations and there were many lives transformed as the islanders responded to the Christian message. Other teachers joined the mission and the work grew.

Ambuofa, now known by his Christian name, Peter, with some friends from Malu’u, had become Christians and for the three years they spent at Fairymead in the early 1890s they learned about living a Christian life. Now the time was fast approaching when they would return to their island home.

”Our lives have changed such a lot since we came to Fairymead,” Peter said to his friends one day. “We’ve started to live the Christian way and we’re different from when we first arrived here.”
“Yes,” replied one of his friends,” we used to get angry and fight with anyone who crossed us. In the village we always had to carry a spear in case we needed to defend ourselves.”
“And we always had to have a ‘pay back’ if anyone did us wrong.”
“It’s much better now. Someone hurts us and we forgive him. We don’t have to fight all the time. Our villages would be much happier if everybody followed the Christian way.”
“We don’t have to be frightened of evil spirits or the witch doctor either, because God’s Holy Spirit is stronger and He protects us.”

Then Peter grew thoughtful, “You know, it’s going to be hard going back to our people in the village. They’ll want us to be like them, and that’s not the Christian way to live. I heard that some of the Christian men who went back were killed by their families because they didn’t want to return to the old ways in the village.”

“We should pray for our people and ask God to help them to know Him.”
So the men prayed a lot for their families and friends back on Malaita whom they would soon be meeting again, praying that God would keep them strong when they returned to their villages.

It was during the year 1894 that Peter and two of his friends boarded a lugger to return to their home village, Malu’u. After several days the mountains of their home island could be seen on the horizon.
“Look! There’s Malaita! You can just see the tallest mountains away over there.”

“Oh, it will be good to see our parents and brothers and sisters again!”
“It will be wonderful to have yams and taro to eat.”

But underneath all the excitement there was an underlying concern which Peter expressed,
“I am praying that they will believe the Christian message that we have learned,” he said seriously. “We know God loves us, but they haven’t heard about Him yet.”

These young men had experienced such a change in their lives since they learned to know Jesus, and they wanted their people to know Him, too. With growing excitement they watched as the lugger pulled in to Malu’u harbour. Finally, the small boat was lowered and the three young men came ashore, back on to their home land at last. It was not the custom for them to go straight into a village, even their own, without being invited by the people of the village. There were four young lads looking for crabs on the beach. Peter called them over and asked them, “Would you go up the mountain to our village and tell our families we have returned.”

The three young men sat on the sand under a tree to wait, watching the mountain path for the first sign of their family members. Then at last Peter recognised his parents coming down the path, his father carrying his spears and his mother laden with two large bundles.
“Is that you, Ambuofa?” asked his mother. His three years in Queensland had changed his appearance. His hair was close-cropped instead of being wild and shaggy and his face had a new expression inspired by God’s Spirit in him.

“What are you doing here?” they asked. “We hear you bring some strange stories. Who is this person you talk about?”
Peter began to tell them. “I am a voice of Jesus.” but the new ideas were meaningless to the parents who simply wanted their son to return with them to their mountain village.

His mother took a piece of cooked taro from the basket she carried. “Son,” she said, “come back with us to the village. This taro is your food, but if you don’t come back with us you’ll die of hunger.”
Peter slowly shook his head. He desperately wanted to be with his family again but he couldn’t go back to the old godless ways. His mother put the yam back in the basket, giving Peter nothing. He recognised this as a sign that they rejected him from the family unless he turned his back on his new way of life and came back to the village with them.
Peter remained steadfast. “I can’t change back to the old ways. The new Christian way is better for all of us.” he told his parents. Sadly he watched, with a heavy heart, as his parents climbed back up the mountain track without him.

The three remained at the beach for a few days, until the families of the other two heard they had returned and persuaded them both to go back to the village. Peter was left alone with very little food. Soon, he was joined by two of the four boys they had met on the beach when they first returned from Queensland. Now there were three people to feed and practically no food to eat, for there were few trees in the beach area.
“Lord, we have no food to eat here. Help us to find food, please.” he prayed desperately.
Looking up, he noticed a gnarled old tree called a nwanwa’o, with seed fruits on it. He picked the seeds and cooked them over a fire in a section of bamboo and all three ate the food. This tree continued to bear fruit for the next six months, which was a miracle,

for this tree would not normally bear both immature and ripe fruit at the same time or for so long a time.

“The first ting we must do is to make a food garden,” Peter told the boys. “The soil up the hill a little way over there is better.”

They set to work with digging sticks to prepare the garden. An old woman gave them some plants, taro, yams and young banana shoots. After six months, they were able to harvest the first food from their garden. One day, soon after their first harvest, Peter went to the nwanwa’o tree looking for fruit, but there was none. “Heavenly Father, you kept the nwanwa’o tree bearing fruit for as long as we needed it, but now we have our taro and yam we don’t need it. Thank you Father for providing the fruit. This is one of your miracles.”

Once the food garden was established Peter ventured to climb the mountain track to visit his people. When he told them the good news of Jesus one of his brothers and another boy came to Peter. “We want to know more of this Jesus story. Can we come back and live with you so we can hear more about it?”

Peter was delighted. “Of course you can. We can put up another bush house and make more food gardens. We would be pleased for you to join us.”

Peter was not particularly good at reading and writing, but he certainly had God’s word and life in his heart. He now had four boys to teach the Christian way. Often he thought about Miss Young and the teachers she appointed to the sugar plantations. “I wish she could send someone here to help us, “he thought.

One day they noticed a ship sailing into the harbour, bringing back labourers who had served their three years on the plantations. Quickly Peter sprang into his canoe and paddled at full speed to the lugger. As the men disembarked, he climbed up on deck, looking around for something to write on. This was his chance to send a message to Miss Young. He picked up an old hessian sack that had been tossed into a corner, chewed some betel nut to produce red ink’, and wrote with his finger on the sack, “Come, help me. Peter Ambuofa.

Tying it up with a length of bush string he handed it to a labourer who was boarding the lugger, returning to work in Queensland, with the request, “Would you please give this to Miss Young at Fairymead?” A thousand miles away and passed from hand to hand, who knows how, the message eventually reached Florence Young and her friends of the Queensland Kanaka Mission.

“What can we do about this?” they asked themselves, “It all seems too big and impossible for us”

Meanwhile Peter continued at the beach-side village at Malu’u, faithfully teaching his four disciples. One day he went up to a mountain village where a heathen feast was in progress.

“Let me sing for you,” he asked the village leader. Peter sang “Jesus loves me” which he had translated into the local language, and then told them the story of Jesus. The village people listened attentively.

Next day a young lad came down the mountain to Peter, saying, “I heard you sing that song yesterday, and I’ve come to stay with you to learn more about Jesus.”
“You’re welcome to stay and learn with us,” replied a smiling Peter. We want you to know Jesus and to tell the other village people about Him.”

Then a tragedy happened. Peter’s young brother, who had been living with him to learn the Christian way, suddenly died.
“You’ve brought white man’s devils to kill our young brother. We’ll kill you for this.” the older brothers threatened. Peter knew they meant what they said and was always on the alert, watching out for danger. But Peter’s life was preserved time and again. Several times, as he was going to sleep at night, the thought came to him, “I won’t sleep there tonight, I’ll move to the other side of the house.” Sure enough, a spear was thrust through the coconut leaf wall but failed to hit the target, for Peter had moved his sleeping mats. Several times men lay in ambush on the mountain track to catch and kill him, but on those occasions Peter had decided to go by a different track.

One night armed bushmen crept up near his hut, spears and clubs in hand, prepared to kill him.
“What’s that bright light in the hut?” they said as they drew near.
“I don’t know what it is but I’m scared,” replied another, “I’m not staying here.” And they all fled off through the bush back to their village to tell of the amazing thing they had seen. God’s angels had once again preserved Peter’s life.

Another time, Peter was planting taro when a group of village men, armed with muskets, crept up behind him, preparing to shoot. But heavy rain wet the gunpowder and once again Peter’s life was spared.

“Peter’s God must be very powerful,” they decided as they talked together in the villages.

Peter faithfully continued sharing the gospel with those around him who would listen. For four years there was not a lot to encourage him. Then there was a drought. The mountain village people watched their food gardens die off without rain, while Peter’s garden flourished and provided all the food they needed. The villagers discussed the situation, “Peter’s God must be great if He can make his garden grow in a drought,” said one.
“And He protects Peter from us when we try to kill him.” observed another.
“Perhaps we should send someone down to learn about Peter’s God,” suggested a village leader.

“We’d better send the women and children down,” said another. “After all, they’re only women; it won’t matter if any harm comes to them.”
So they chose some of the women and children to go down to the coastal village to learn from Peter.

Some little time later, the cry echoed around the Malu’u settlement, “There’s a ship coming in to the harbour!” Everyone rushed down to the beach to see who would be on the ship returning from Australia this time. They watched eagerly as the lugger drew as near to the shore as possible. The small boat was lowered over the side and several Malaitan men joined the ship’s master as they rowed to the shore.

“That looks like our friends Silas Dindi and Charlie Lofea. It will be great to have them back,” cried Peter who was rushing to the water’s edge to welcome his old friends. Silas and Charlie were shown around the little settlement which had grown around Peter’s work. By now there were several bush material houses, and productive food gardens. Peter showed Charlie and Silas around their village.

“Will you stay and help me, my friends? I need help teaching these people, and you have just come back from Australia where you learnt the Bible from Miss Young.”
Charlie and Silas gladly agreed.
“Peter,” they said, “You have done a great work for God here all by yourself. We will be very pleased to stay and work with you.”

Other Christian men returned and joined Peter and his friends in praying for Malaita, that the day would soon come when all Malaitans would be Christian. Charles Pillans, who was working with the Queensland Kanaka Mission on a plantation in Queensland felt God was calling him to go to Malaita to help Peter. But his health suffered in the Solomons due to malaria and difficult living conditions, and after only a few months he died.

Two years later Frederick Schweiger arrived with the intention of continuing Charles Pillans’ work, but he died at Malu’u and his companion became seriously ill, so returned home.

Then in 1900 the new Australian Federal Government passed a law which changed the thinking of the mission. It stated, *“All labourers imported from the islands are to be returned to their homes by 1906. No more labourers are to be recruited.”*

When the Young family and other supporters of the Queensland Kanaka Mission heard this they discussed the matter together.
“This means we won’t have any labourers to teach in five years.” stated Mr. Young.
“Maybe God is telling us to respond to Peter Ambuofa’s calls for help.” suggested his brother.

For months they prayed about it then finally decided that they should establish a mission in the Solomons and that a team should visit the islands to investigate the situation.

The first party to visit Malaita consisted of Florence Young, her friend Mrs. Fricke, and three men newly appointed as missionaries. They came well prepared, with six months’ supplies, a pre-fabricated house and a ten-ton ketch named “*Daphne*”, specially built for travel around the reef-encircled islands. They travelled by the steamer *S.S.Moresby* to Gavutu, a trading and watering station, in sight of the island of Malaita, with its high mountains stretching down its hundred-mile spine.

Here they disembarked and prepared the *Daphne* for their venture into the Eastern Solomons, particularly Malaita. But it was not all plain sailing. At Gavutu the British Resident Commissioner met with the mission party.

“Yes, Miss Young,” he said politely, “I know I gave you permission to travel into the Malaita area when I met you in Sydney. But I really don’t think it’s wise for you and Mrs. Fricke to go any further. You’ll both have to return to Sydney. I made a mistake telling you I would allow you to come.”

“But you promised,” cried Florence desperately, “You must let us continue our journey as we planned, both of us. If you send Mrs. Fricke back I will be left travelling alone with three men, and that’s not right.”

Florence persisted and the Commissioner finally and reluctantly gave in allowing both women to continue the journey. Setting off on the *Daphne* with a fair wind in their favour, they came to Langa Langa lagoon at the southern end of Malaita later the same day. There for the first time they saw the man-made islands which were home to large numbers of ‘salt-water people’. These islets were built up on the floor of the lagoon. Large boulders of coral rock were gathered and loaded on to rafts, then placed in position on the shallow reef, building up a mound of rocks until it was well above high tide level, sand filling the spaces between the rocks. Then houses were built on top of the mounds. They couldn’t grow food gardens there so every three days the ‘salt water people’ brought fish, crabs and shellfish to the shore of the main island to trade with the ‘mountain people’ who brought yams, taro, coconuts and fruit. The party in the *Daphne* visited several such islands as they headed north-west up the West Coast of Malaita.

The next day, about noon, they sighted a large canoe coming towards them.
“Are they friends or not?” they wondered.
As they drew near someone observed, “They’re wearing shirts and trousers, they must be friends who have been in Australia “
“Let’s signal to them that we’re their friends. Let’s sing a song they’ll know.”
So the strains of “O for a thousand tongues to sing my great Redeemer’s praise.” rang out across the water. What a thrill it was to hear the response from the men in the canoe as they joined in the familiar hymn.

“We’ve come from Malu’u this morning,” explained one of the Malaitans when they met and the canoe pulled along-side. “We’re taking this food to our brothers in the Christian village down the coast. It’s new and their gardens aren’t ready for harvesting yet so we are helping them out with food until their gardens are ready.”

The people on the *Daphne* looked into the canoe and were impressed with the amount of food, taro, yams, bananas and coconuts they carried in coconut leaf baskets in the bottom of the canoe.
“We’re very happy to welcome you to our island,” said another man. “We’re really very proud to be the first ones to greet you “

After a short chat they separated and each went their way. Later in the day the *Daphne* sailed into the bay and anchored off the white sandy beach near Malu’u. They could see and hear the great excitement as word spread that the ship had arrived. The visitors came ashore in their dinghy to be warmly welcomed by a crowd of young people all eager to shake hands with them.

Then they met Peter Ambuofa, with his wife and little daughter. They listened in amazement as Peter told them of all the Lord had done during his ten years there. His parents and four of his brothers had become Christians; only one brother would still not believe in Jesus, God’s Son. Many others came for teaching. On Sundays there were around two hundred at the worship and teaching meetings.

"God has been very good to us here. It was very hard at first when so many were against me and against God, but He looked after us and provided the food we needed. We thank
Him for His goodness. And I want to thank you, my friends, for coming to visit us. It is a great encouragement to see you here."

"Peter, you're such an encouragement to us," Florence Young replied, "When I started those classes back at Fairymead I had no idea how they would grow, but God expanded the mission far beyond what I expected. Now, we've come out to you here and we have two men who are willing to come back and stay with you to help with the Bible teaching here at Malu'u, if you would like them to."

"Miss Young, that would be the answer to my prayers I've prayed for a long time. It will be wonderful to have their help." responded Peter, his eyes full of tears.

The missionary party had planned to continue their journey down the east coast of Malaita on their way back to Gavutu, but they were all suffering serious bouts of malaria. They needed crew to help them with the *Daphne*, as the mission men were too ill to do anything, so they took on some 'salt-water people' as crew. The night before their departure Florence could not sleep so she spent the time praying for guidance, not knowing why she was feeling so disturbed in spirit.

The next morning Charlie Lofia came to Florence. "You know those Ata'a men you signed on as crew?" he began. "Last night I heard them talking. I understand their language a little bit and they were planning to run your boat on to the reef and then kill you all and rob the ship."

Florence Young listened attentively, beginning to realise why she had been kept awake during the night to pray.
Charlie continued, "Miss Young, last night God spoke to me and said, "Charlie, you go on board and look after Miss Young. And take your friend Johnny with you."

"Charlie, I'm very grateful to you. Yes, we'll sign you on as crew as well as Johnny." Both these were 'mountain men' with no knowledge of the sea, but they were trustworthy men who would take care of the mission party.

The trip down the east coast of Malaita was cancelled and the *Daphne* set sail for Gavutu with all five missionaries lying in the open boat suffering from malaria, exposed to the burning tropical sun. The winds were very light, or non-existent, so several times they were becalmed and lay rocking helplessly on the flat sea. The nightmare trip ended at last and they were never happier to land on shore at Gavutu. They spent several weeks there recovering and waiting for a ship to take Florence and Mrs. Fricke back to Australia. When it finally came, the ship's doctor also ordered Mr. Thomas back home as he was too ill to stay.

The remaining two men began to plan how they would establish centres on the island, but they struck unexpected difficulties from the local people. Those who had spent time in Queensland had seen how the white man had taken Australian Aboriginal land without their consent and claimed it for their own. They were afraid they would be treated the same way, so it took many months of negotiating with Peter and other tribal elders

before they were able to put up bush material buildings at Malu'u for residence and for school and worship.

Next was Nongosila on the east coast of Malaita and a year after it had arrived at Gavutu, the pre-fabricated building was brought to One Pusu on the south west coast and erected there as part of the head station for the mission, chosen for its convenient central position.
Peter paused one day as he climbed the steep hill. Now there were steps carved into the hillside and a road for easier access to the Christian village. All of this work had been done by the willing helpers at the village. He looked up the hill and could see the buildings erected in recent months. Nearby were the food gardens with healthy looking crops promising a good harvest. Around the houses were fruit trees and brightly coloured plants, all reflecting the joy and happiness of the residents.

"What a long way we've come," Peter thought as his mind went back to his solitary existence on the beach, the many times his life had been threatened, the times when food was scarce. But then he remembered too the goodness of his God who had delivered him out of all his troubles, had provided food miraculously, and had saved his life many times. He thought of the numbers of people who had become Christians and been baptised in recent years. Then there were the eleven young trainees who had recently gone to One Pusu to share in the task of setting up the new station there.

"My God," prayed Peter, "You have done so many good things. Thank You for all your great mercies and goodness."

Adapted from:
Pearls from the Pacific, Florence S.H.Young, Marshall Bros., London
Fire in the Islands, Alison Griffiths, Harold Shaw Pub.,Wheaton, Illinois,
Footsteps in the Sea, John Garret, Institute of Pacific Studies, U.S.P., Suva, Fiji

Piri and Maki

As a young man living in a village on Rarotonga, Piri had a bad reputation as a drunk and a trouble maker. He had gone to the mission school as a lad and had learned to read and write. But after he left school he got in with a group of young men who had found out from some Tahitians how to make orange beer from fruit growing in the bush**.** They got involved in drunken parties. Things got worse when the trading ships brought in other alcoholic drinks**,** and there were serious problems with bad behaviour amongst the young men. Piri was regarded as a ring-leader in the brewing of orange beer, and of course drinking it. So he was often caught and made to pay fines for law-breaking.

"We'll have to come down harder on these young fellows," the authorities decided. "Piri is one of the worst. We need to get him under control."
So Piri at the age of twenty became a target for the authorities, who kept a close watch on him.

"It's that missionary's fault," Piri muttered, "he's the one who turned the authorities against me. One of these days I'll get that man and kill him with my own hands!"

A day came when Piri had been drinking heavily. This was going to be Piri's day of revenge. He grabbed a garden spade and made for the missionary's house. Fortunately his friends saw what he had in mind and went after him with sticks and a rope**.** Piri had just reached the veranda of the house when they seized him and in spite of his struggles, tied him up with the rope. His friends took him away and kept him at the coast for a few days. When he had sobered up he began to think about his behaviour. "How stupid I've been to go on like that. The missionary did nothing to me yet I nearly killed him. It's the beer that made me so stupid. I promise I'll never drink another drop**."**

Piri went to see the missionary. “I’m sorry I’ve been behaving so badly,” he began. “I can see that living the Christian way is the only thing that will help me.”

“You’re right, Piri,” the missionary agreed. “You come to the worship services on Sundays and to the Bible classes through the week and you will learn to know God. Then you’ll find out how He can help you live a good life.”

Piri did this and became a strong Christian. His greatest desire was to tell those who weren’t Christians the wonderful stories of Jesus. He entered the Training School on Rarotonga where he spent four years being prepared for work as a Bible teacher. At the end of that time the missionary came to him. “Piri, there is a group of Cook Islanders living in Samoa. They need someone to care for them spiritually. Would you and your wife like to go and be their Bible teacher?”

Piri and his wife agreed to go and they spent some time together there. But one day his wife became ill and never recovered. Piri was left alone to carry on the work in Samoa.
Meanwhile, far off to the west, in the New Hebrides (Vanuatu), a party of teachers had been left on Tanna to try to establish a mission station. This was one of the seven attempts to follow up the fatal visit of John Williams and his party to the New Hebrides in 1839**.** All the party except two of the teachers’ wives had died of fever**.** Maki was the name of one of these women.

“I’m afraid of what they might do with us now our husbands are dead,” Maki said to the other woman.
“Yes, so am I,” she agreed. “The chiefs might fight over which one of them will take us. Then who knows what will happen to us?”

But a kindly old chief saw the difficulty they were in. “You two come home with me,” he offered, “I’ll look after you. You can be like my own daughters.”
“Thank you so much,” they said with great relief, “we’ll be happy to live with you and care for you.”

The women knew that the mission ship came to visit the out-stations regularly.
“I wonder if the ship will come today?’ they would say each morning. Then, no matter how ill they were from fever, they would climb the hill at the back of the village to watch for the hoped-for sails to appear on the horizon. But day after day they returned disappointed to the village.

Then one day Maki was left alone, for the other widow died of fever. Maki waited two years and had given up all hope of ever seeing her home island again, when one day as she watched from her lookout on the hill; she could see a speck on the horizon.
“Could that be the mission ship?” she wondered, “Perhaps I’ll be able to go home after all.”

She watched the ship approach and when she saw people being lowered into the small boat she rushed down to the beach to meet them.
“Oh! I thought you’d never come. I thought you had forgotten about us!” And she told them the sad story of their mission party. They, in turn, told her why she had to wait two years for the ship to come. “The ship has been to England and back since we left your party of teachers here. We’re sorry you had to wait here so long. We’ll leave in the morning and take you home to your island, Mangaia.”

The elderly chief who had guarded Maki so kindly was broken-hearted at losing his adopted daughter and ran beside her to the boat, weeping bitterly. Maki was grateful to him and thanked him for his care of her. Nevertheless she was so relieved to be returning home.

When they reached Samoa the ship's captain said to Maki, "You'll have to leave this ship here and wait for a smaller one to take you to Mangaia."

It was during this time in Samoa that Piri and Maki met. Maki never did get home to Mangaia as she married Piri and together they continued to serve the Cook Islanders in Samoa.

"I hear the missionary society is preparing to take a team of teachers to British New Guinea, (now called Papua New Guinea). They want to establish mission stations in villages all along the south coast." Piri had rushed home to tell Maki the news.

"I believe God wants me to go with them, Maki. I've always wanted to go to people who haven't yet heard about Jesus. Would you come with me, Maki?"

Maki was willing to go wherever her husband went, so Piri went to see the leaders of the missionary team, Mr. Murray and Mr. Wyatt Gill.

"Please will you take us with you in the team going to British New Guinea," Piri pleaded. For a long time my heart has been with the lost people of these other islands. Please may we join you?"

The two leaders were so impressed at the eagerness of Piri's request that they agreed to take them along with the five other couples in the group. The leaders explained to the team what the mission's plan was. "New Guinea has a long coast line on the south side. We will find villages where the people are willing to have you live with them and we'll leave you there to teach them about Jehovah God and Jesus His Son."

Piri and Maki were placed at Boera, a little distance north along the coast from Port Moresby. Unfortunately a number of the teachers became ill with malaria and other fevers. Some of them died, so the mission brought those who were left to live in Port Moresby. Piri and Maki encouraged the teachers.

"Always remember to pray," Piri would tell them. "And always remember that Jesus is very near. He will help you if you ask Him."

Piri frequently traveled around the coast westwards with the missionary James Chalmers on his many journeys, visiting the mission teachers and always searching for further villages where they could place teachers. He helped Chalmers by making friends with the village people who trusted him. Chalmers received a welcome because Piri was with him.

On one of his trips, Chalmers stopped at Boera, Piri's village, to spend the night. "The small boat is safe on the beach," Piri assured Chalmers. "The people here are trustworthy."

In the morning Chalmers went to his small boat to find the rowlocks were all missing. Piri and Maki happened to be on the beach.

“The rowlocks have been taken from the small boat, Piri,” Chalmers told him. “How do you think we can get them back?”

Maki stormed through the village demanding the return of the rowlocks. “Whoever has those rowlocks had better bring them back at once or there will be big trouble,” she threatened. But no one owned up.

Piri called the village chief and head men to a meeting in Piri’s house.
“Those rowlocks must be returned,” Piri told them quietly, “I want you men to go through the village and speak to everyone. You must bring them back.”

The head men went to everyone, but still no-one produced any rowlocks. Piri grew angry.
“I told Mr Chalmers you people are honest, that you’d never steal anything. Now you’ve shown us I was wrong. Someone has stolen Mr. Chalmers’ property and I want it returned at once. Every house will be searched thoroughly. No-one is allowed to leave the village until the rowlocks are returned.”

Piri was so angry the people knew he meant what he said. Then, along came a village woman, the rowlocks in her hand. “I found these on a path in the village,” she said, looking very guilty.

Everybody knew that wasn’t true, but at least James Chalmers had his rowlocks back and could proceed with his journey. Piri and Maki were on a trip around the coast to Motumotu when Piri became ill. He recovered a little and said to Maki, “I think I am strong enough to travel back to Boera.”

They set off in their canoe, deciding to travel to Port Moresby for treatment. But Piri died on the way. Only three months later Maki died. They rest side by side on the hill behind the village at Boera, two faithful servants of the Lord.

Adapted from: *James Chalmers, His Autobiography and Letters,* Richard Lovett, The Religious Tract Society, London.

Ratu Cakobau of Fiji

Ratu Cakobau was the great cannibal king of Bau, a small island off Viti Levu, the largest island in the Fiji group. He was a giant of a man, and terrifying. He had killed and eaten 1000 bodies before his conversion to Christ and at the time of his conversion he was at war with neighbouring communities on Viti Levu.

He heard the Christian message from both white missionaries and fellow Fijians and he thought, “Some day I’ll become a Christian, but I still have a few wars to fight.” He knew the Christian way was right and good for the people but he put off making a commitment to it himself. But as time went on, it became clearer that he would have to give himself to the Lord. The Lord wanted him and he could not go on saying “No”.

Cakobau’s wife had already become a believer and she spoke to him often of his need to become a Christian. One day Cakobau said to his wife, “Call the evangelist, I’m ready to become a Christian.” And there in his house with his wife and the evangelist he “bowed his knee” to the Lord. He told the evangelist that at next Sunday’s worship service he would make a public confession of his faith. But his culture did not allow him to simply make an individual decision. He sent out a message to the people of his extended family, which was quite large. They came together at the chiefly house, big enough for some hundreds of people to meet. Cakobau told all his family he wanted to become a Christian. He needed the approval of his family because without it they could just dispose of him and appoint another leader. So he said, “I want to become a Christian, and I want all of you to become Christians too.”

One of the family members, an older man, stood up and said, “Well, Ratu, we approve of you becoming a Christian, but with the situation among the other tribes like it is we don’t think you should do it yet.” And for the best part of the day they talked it over. Many of

them said, “Yes, we should all become Christians”. Some said, “We don’t want to stop it but we don’t think the time is right.”

They discussed the question all day, but at the end of the day they said, “Alright, we’ll let Ratu Cakobau become Christian, and all those who want to follow him may become Christian too.”

The next day he called together all the leaders of his kingdom and said to them, “I want to become a Christian.” The same thing happened as had happened in the family; for another day they discussed whether or not it was safe for Ratu Cakobau to become a Christian. At the end of the day they reached the same decision.

This decision was important, because he was still at war, and he knew that if he said, “Well, the war is over, I’m not fighting any more, his enemy would still come down and want to fight. He had to be sure that all the groups of his kingdom would still be loyal. He was not free to make an individual decision without the support of members of his family and the leaders of the wider clan. Then, on the following Sunday, as good as his word, he came forward during the worship service and bowed the knee to the Lord in public, and about three or four hundred of his family joined him in a public commitment to the Lord.

They did not do it just because he did it; they did it because they, too, wanted to become Christians and also maintain the family and social cohesion. It took three or four years before these people were all fully involved in the church, but this event was the beginning of a people movement within the kingdom of Bau.

Cakobau had been a great leader of his people before his conversion. He remained a great leader as a Christian but his skills were used for the Kingdom of God. Not only was his personal life transformed, he also greatly helped in organizing the growing church.

On the island of Bau, where he lived, there used to be a cannibal killing stone. The captives in war, who were still alive when they were brought to the island, were killed on that stone in a savage manner. When Cakobau became a Christian he told his people that the stone must never again be used for that purpose. He declared he would build a church house, and he pulled down all 17 of the heathen temples that were on Bau. From the foundation stones of these temples he built a church, the walls of which are three feet (1 metre) thick. Then he took the killing stone on which the war victims had been killed before being cooked in the cannibal ovens, and he said, “This stone will from now on be used for the glory of God.”

The stone was brought to the church, and stone remains to this day as a reminder to the people of how God brought them out of darkness into His marvelous light.

Adapted from: *Deep Sea Canoe*, Alan R Tippett, William Carey Library, Pasadena, California

Ruatoka and Tungane

In the year 1871, James Chalmers and other members of the London Missionary Society at Rarotonga met to plan a new venture. They had heard the call of God to send out a team of trained islander teachers to bring the Christian message to the people of British New Guinea. They met to select the team from among their graduates from the Institution. Mr. Murray and Mr. Wyatt Gill who were to lead the team joined them.

“I believe Ruatoka should be included,” said James Chalmers, the Principal of the missionary training school. “He’s a good man. He was an excellent student in the mission school on Mangaia. He has also done well here.”

“All that is true, James, but he has been very ill lately. He actually had a complete breakdown in health. I don’t think he would be strong enough physically to stand up to the hard life of a pioneer missionary. He would have to cope with different food, malaria and all the other tropical diseases. It’s a different climate. He is a good man, but I doubt if he would survive life in a strange country. It would be a waste of a good life to send him out.”

Nevertheless, Ruatoka and his wife, Tungane, were chosen to go with the team.

“I’ll improve in health, Tungane. If God wants me to go to British New Guinea, He will make me well,” Ruatoka said.

Sometimes he had doubts and wondered if his health might fail again, but he did continue to improve and was ready to join the other four couples. When the ship left Rarotonga they went first to Samoa where they picked up Piri and Maki, then proceeded to Lifu in the Loyalty Islands to take Mataika and his wife on board before going to Port Moresby.

The mission teachers were placed in villages around the south coast of British New Guinea, east and west from Port Moresby, but Ruatoka and Tungane stayed in the town. In the early years the teachers experienced very difficul times. Sometimes they were short of food. There was the constant battle with malaria and other tropical diseases. At night they would hear the sounds of village people stalking around their houses and they would lie awake, afraid to fall asleep in case they were attacked.

When teachers became ill with fever they would be brought in to Port Moresby where Ruatoka and Tungane cared for them and encouraged them. Sadly, sometimes a teacher did not recover and Ruatoka gave him a Christian burial.

However as the years passed by and people began to accept the Christian message, they saw changes in the lives of those who believed in the Creator God and His Son Jesus Christ.

Ruatoka and Tungane soon learned the language and began to understand the culture of the people. Then, when new teachers came from Rarotonga, before they went out to the coastal village where they were to serve, they spent their first weeks in New Guinea with Ruatoka in Port Moresby. Ruatoka's helped them learn the local language and the culture.

One day, in 1878, Ruatoka noticed a small group of white strangers in the town.
"I wonder what those men want?" he said," they don't look like traders. And they're carrying digging tools."

"They're looking for gold," replied another missionary. "They've heard that there's gold in the mountains behind Port Moresby. They want to get in and find it first, because it's worth a lot of money. It's sure to bring in a lot more gold-seekers."

Sure enough, each time a ship arrived in the port, there were more prospectors trekking in to the mountains, joining the growing number already there. They set up a camp in the mountains near the gold deposit, and made Port Moresby their headquarters.

Ruatoka and Tungane built up a friendship with them. Whenever one became ill or was hurt they took care of him until he recovered. They were for ever caring for the gold prospectors, whatever their needs.

One day a village man came to Ruatoka.
"I heard that some of the inland tribal villagers are planning to attack the prospectors' camp," he told him.
"We'll have to stop that," replied Ruatoka. "Thank you for telling me, my friend."

He visited the prospectors in their camp. "Just be careful," he warned. "I've heard that some of the mountain villages are planning to attack you."
"Yes," commented one of the gold-diggers, "We've noticed a number of them sneaking around the camp at night. We've had a feeling they were planning something."
"I'll go and talk with them and try to persuade them not to attack," said Ruatoka,
"We'll send some men with you," offered the prospectors, who promptly gathered a group of men armed with guns to join Ruatoka.
"No, we don't need guns, men," Ruatoka objected, "That will only make things worse."

Ruatoka chose a few of his friends and set off unarmed for the village of Moumiri where the attacking tribes had planned to gather. When they arrived at Moumiri they found several tribes had assembled there, all in a war-like frame of mind. The situation looked very threatening.
“You missionary, you get out of this village or we’ll kill you,” they warned.
“Why do you want to kill me?” Ruatoka asked, standing his ground. “What have I done to you?”

He reasoned with them, preached to them, prayed for them, until in the end they went back to their villages without any weapons being used. After this incident, with Ruatoka’s intervention, the prospectors had no more difficulties.

One day, late in the afternoon, two village men came to Ruatoka, “We found a man lying beside the track to the gold-diggers’ camp. He was staying in the camp for a while but became ill. He was on his way to Port Moresby, but was too sick. We left him lying beside the track.”

“Why didn’t you carry him in to the town?” Ruatoka asked them. “You know I would help anyone who is in trouble.”
“The man was nearly dead,” replied the villagers, “if he died while we were carrying him his spirit would haunt us for ever. So we left him there, but we thought we would tell you.”
“Will you come back with me and show me where he is?” asked Ruatoka.

But the men refused to go, out of fear that the man would die. Although it was now almost dark, Ruatoka took a long piece of cloth, a small lantern and a bottle of water and started out in search of the man. About five miles out he heard low moaning in the long grass. Following the sound he finally located the sick man, close to death and quite unconscious. After giving him a little water, he fastened the cloth around the man, took the two ends in his hands, bent down and managed to lift him on to his back. Then he began the return journey, crossing a range of hills and finally arriving back at his home as dawn was breaking. Carefully, he lay the sick man down on their bed and left Tungane to care for him, while Ruatoka lay down to recover from a most exhausting journey.

Next to the mission property where Ruatoka had his home and his church, there lived a German trader. He wanted to make money out of the gold-diggers. He built a store near the track that led to the prospectors’ camp, so that when the prospectors struck gold they would come in to town and spend their money at his store. It just happened that the store was also near the grounds of the church and Ruatoka’s home.

When the store was completed the German was very pleased with the result.
“Now, I really need a cook-house behind the store,” he decided.
There was a Scotsman who was a builder living in the town, so the German employed him to build the cook-house near the store.

The following Sunday, at the time of the worship service in the church, there was the noise of loud hammering as the Scotsman banged nails into the iron roof of the new cook-house. It was very distracting for Ruatoka and the congregation in the nearby church. Finally Ruatoka could not stand it any more so sent the congregation home. He then found an English Bible.

Marching up to the new cook-house, he read in English the fourth commandment: “Keep the Sabbath holy.” He stood directly underneath the surprised Scotsman, looked up at him, and ordered, “You come down!”

The builder ignored him.
“You heard me. Come down at once!” he repeated.

The Scotsman did not move, but swore angrily.

“What are you saying, you white fellows?” he began “You sent missionaries to my land and our people changed for good. One thing we learned was to respect the Sabbath. Before, my people would have eaten you, but not now. I came to New Guinea and I taught the people not to work on the Sabbath, yet you, a white man, are working and disturbing those who want to worship God. Why are you doing this? Come down at once!”

The Scotsman did not move and Ruatoka made as if to climb the ladder and help him down.The German store owner was nearby, watching. When he saw the powerful Ruatoka move towards the builder he called out, “Rua, my friend, stop!”
Then to the Scotsman, “You’d better come down at once, you fool. Can’t you see that this is our friend the teacher, and he is right and we are wrong?”

Ruatoka was determined to make his point. When the Scotsman was back down on the ground, Ruatoka held the Bible in front of him. Pointing to the fourth commandment he said firmly, “Now, you read that verse out loud.”

Reluctantly the builder did as he was told.
Ruatoka had the final say, “Now, God has spoken to you. Put down your hammer and don’t do any more work on the Sabbath.”
There was quiet for the rest of the day.

Like Piri, Ruatoka often went on trips with the missionary James Chalmers, encouraging the teachers in the coastal villages and ever searching for more distant places to evangelise. One time when Ruatoka was away Tungane was left in charge of the work in their Port Moresby church. She conducted the worship service on the Sunday and did the Bible teaching just as her husband would do. In the afternoon she spoke about the work of the Holy Spirit in their hearts, changing them to love Jesus and obey Him.

It was very late that night, almost midnight, when there was an urgent knock at the door of Tungane’s house. Her girls were awakened and they recognised the voice of a man who had been in the Bible class that afternoon.
“Open the door and let me in!” he pleaded. He sounded as if he were in great distress.
Tungane called, “Come back in the morning, it’s too late now. We’re all in bed.”
“No, it can’t wait till morning,” came the reply. Tungane lit a lantern and let him in.
“What is it?” she asked.
“I don’t know what it is, but I think it must be the Spirit you spoke of working in my heart. I’m afraid to lie down and go to sleep in case I die, for I know I’m bad.”

So there and then Tungane told him of Jesus, how He took the punishment for our sins. The man prayed a prayer of thanks to Jesus for dying on the cross for him. Tungane prayed for him then said, “Go home now and sleep. You can come back in the morning.” “Please pray for me once more,” he begged. “Tell me again about Jesus.”

Finally he went home, but before daylight he was back on the door step wanting to hear more about Jesus and His love. He became a changed man after he accepted Jesus into his life. He was the first New Guinean from that mission to be baptised.

Ruatoka, the young student in Rarotonga who was almost left out of the mission team due to poor health, became a powerful teacher in British New Guinea. He remained there for the rest of his life. He outlived all the other members of that team, spending nearly thirty years serving there. He was highly respected by government officials as well as the community in general, a great ambassador for Christ.

Adapted from: *James Chalmers, His Autobiography and Letters*, Richard Lovett

The Religious Tract Society. London

Sefanaia Sukanaivalu

The Second World War was a defining moment in the history of the Pacific Islands. It exposed Islanders to the global theatre of war and brought home to them the many disparate worlds of Westerners. Over 11,000 men passed through the Fiji military forces, which peaked in size in August 1943 at 8,513 men. Of these, 6,371 were Fijians, 1,878 were Europeans and 264 were Indians: In this bloody episode of human conflict, unprecedented in the Pacific Islands, Corporal Sefanaia Sukanaivalu demonstrated one of the finest qualities of the human spirit by making- the ultimate sacrifice in Bougainville, Solomon Islands. He was posthumously awarded the Victoria Cross, the highest medal in the British military. His citation eloquently describes what happened on that fateful afternoon in the middle of 1944:
"On 23 June 1944, at Mawaraka, Bougainville, in the Solomon Islands, Corporal Sefanaia Sukanaivalu crawled forward to rescue men who had been wounded when their platoon was ambushed and -some leading elements had become casualties. After two wounded men had been successfully recovered, this N CO, who was in command of the rear section, volunteered to go on further along and try to rescue another man in spite of the mortar and machine gun fire, but on the way back he himself was seriously wounded in the groin and thigh and he fell to the ground unable to move.

Several attempts were made to rescue Corporal Sefania but without success owing to heavy firing encountered on each occasion and further casualties were caused. This gallant NCO then called .to his men not to try to get him as he was in a very exposed position, but they replied they would never leave him alive into the hands of the enemy. Realizing his men would not leave him as long as they could see he was alive, and knowing that they were all in danger of being killed or captured as long as they remained where they were, Corporal Sefania, well aware of the consequences, raised himself up in front of the Japanese machine guns and was riddled with bullets.

This brave Fiji soldier, after rescuing two wounded men and being gravely wounded himself, deliberately sacrificed his life because he knew it was the only way in which the remainder of his platoon could be induced to retire from a situation in which, had they remained, they must have been annihilated.

Corporal Sefanaia Sukanaivalu, VC, was 26 years of age when he gave his life to save his fellow I soldiers.

Revision Questions:
1. Which races from Fiji fought in World War 2? (Answer: Fijians, Europeans and Indians).
2. In which country was Corporal Sukanaivalu killed? Answer: Bougainville which is part of Papua New Guinea)
3. What medal was awarded to Corporal Sefanaia Sukanaivalu?
4. What does 'posthumously' mean?

Discussion:
1. Discuss John 15:13, and how Corporal Sukanaivalu was an example of what Jesus taught in this verse.

Taufa'ahau

When Nathaniel Turner began his missionary work on the Tongan island of Ha'abai in 1830, he looked for a local man who could help him learn the Tongan language. He needed a good man who could help him translate the scriptures as well as speak the language. He chose Vi, a young man of chiefly rank.

Turner began work on translating the Gospel of Matthew. Vi listened enthusiastically to the stories about Jesus as they worked together on the translation, and heard the preaching in the worship service on Sundays.

"I want to turn from the old ways we have followed for so long," he thought, "we fight amongst ourselves, we are always unhappy because we are afraid of the gods we serve. People get drunk on the liquor the trading ships bring in, and that makes us fight all the more. This Christian way Mr. Turner talks about sounds much better for us. I must learn more about it."

Vi joined a Bible class run by Nathaniel, and soon he was baptised. Vi took the Christian name Peter and went on to become the first Tongan to become a church minister.

Peter found such peace and joy in following the Christian way. "I want all my friends and family to follow this way. We would all be so much happier," he declared.

Whenever he had an opportunity he talked with them about Jesus, and one by one they joined him in worship with the missionaries. It was around this time that Taufa'ahau, another man of high chiefly rank, and a relative of Peter Vi, began to show interest in learning about the Christian way.

"I want Christian missionaries on my island, Ha'abai, like they have on Ata," he declared. (Ata is an island in the south of the group.)

Taufa'ahau spoke to the missionary, Mr. Thomas, "Please won't you come to Ha'abai and teach the people of my island?" he pleaded.

"I'm sorry," he replied, "I have been appointed to Ata by the mission board and must stay where they place me. I suggest you have Peter Vi stay with you and become your instructor."

Peter agreed to this arrangement and began to teach Taufa'ahau first to read, then to learn about the Christian way. One day Taufa began to think about the old gods he used to serve, and the priestess on his island who served the gods. "I wonder who is greater, the priestess who serves the old gods, or the Creator God of the Christians? If God is the greatest, then He should be stronger than the priestess. I'm going to test her, to see how strong she really is."
He went to his garden and cut a banana stalk, not a very big one, not too hard, but just right for what he wanted to do. He walked up to the priestess and hit her, not too hard, with his 'club' made from banana stalk. She fell to the ground, surprised at the sudden attack, but she did not fight back or react in any way. The onlookers were amazed. "Why doesn't the priestess strike Taufa'ahau down?" they wondered. "Surely, if she has power over him she should show it by putting him in his place." But she did nothing, and Taufa'ahau was encouraged.

"I'll test the priestess in another way," he thought. While he was sailing in his canoe with Peter Vi and a friend, he noticed a shark following them. Believing it to be the god he had offended when he hit the priestess, he tried to spear it, but the shark escaped. Peter and his friend were pushed overboard to retrieve the spear and bring it to shore. This they did without coming to any harm from the shark. Taufa'ahau was even more impressed and determined to become a believer.

"Yes!" he cried, "The Christian God is the greatest! I will follow Him!"

Some of the people still loyal to the heathen priestess were angry with Taufa'ahau, "You had no right to strike down our priestess. We'll kill you for that,' they threatened.

They plotted to kill him, but someone discovered the plot, warned Taufa, and his life was spared. The young chief demonstrated an understanding of the Christian way of forgiveness by standing up in a public place to say, "You people who tried to kill me, I want you to know that I don't feel angry with you, I forgive you. I won't hold it against you."

Some people were surprised at this change in Taufa's character. "He doesn't fight back any more," they said amongst themselves. "The Christians' God is changing him."

Full of zeal, Taufa'ahau attacked the gods and burned their shrines around the island. This brought down the anger of the unbelievers on him once again. Finau, the chief of the nearby island of Vavau and a relative of Taufa'ahau, was visiting Ha'abai. Taufa celebrated his visit by preparing a great feast. During the feast a group of the heathen chiefs who were angry with Taufa'ahau for getting rid of their idols and burning their shrines, poisoned the food served specially to Taufa'ahau. He became desperately ill.

“Let’s call the missionaries,” said one of his friends, a Christian chief, “they will be able to help him.”

The missionaries came quickly to help. They treated Taufa to get rid of the poison from his body. While they treated him, a large group of Christian friends prayed for him throughout the night. By morning Taufa had recovered and Finau returned home to Vavau.

“I’m amazed that your God could heal you so quickly,” he commented to Taufa. “I see also that the Christian way of life is changing you and all the Christian believers,” he added thoughtfully.

Not long after this visit Taufa’ahau crossed the waters in his canoe to the island of Vavau to visit Finau. Taufa’ahau spoke to him about his faith in God.

“I know how being a Christian has changed my life. The Christian God is the greatest. My brother, you would have peace and joy in your heart all the time if you believed in Him. The old gods didn’t make us happy, did they?”

Finau had to agree with Taufa, “No, they didn’t,” he said, “but how can I prove that the Christian God is the greatest?”

Finau thought for a minute, then he went off to the shrines where the sacred objects and idols were kept. Gathering them all together, he stood them up in front of him and spoke strongly to them, “I’ve brought you here to prove you,” he said, “I’ll tell you beforehand what I’m going to do, so you will have no excuse. I’m going to burn you. If you are true gods you will escape! If you don’t escape I’ll know you aren’t true.”

None of the idols moved, so Finau ordered his men to burn the gods and the shrines where they had been housed. It was wet weather at the time, which dampened the wood so that it was four days before they were totally burned. During those four days the islanders sat around watching in fear and trembling, expecting that the gods would pay them back for the way they had been treated. But no act of revenge came, and at last the people knew that the gods had no power over them any more.

“That is amazing,” they all said, “those idols we worshipped are not powerful at all.”

They talked about the event everywhere they went and right throughout the Tongan islands it became well known that Finau had defied the old gods and proved God the Creator to be the greatest.

“We want to know more about this God who is more powerful than our gods we’ve worshipped all our lives,” they said. “We’ll go to the missionaries and the Tongan teachers and ask them about this.”

As a result, many people embraced Christianity as a group, but the real, personal, inner change that happens when someone knows he is a sinner and asks Jesus, Son of God, to rule his life, was not common. This was to change dramatically.

In 1834, on the island of Vavau, a local preacher named Isaiah Vovole was preaching to his village. Isaiah Vovole spoke to his people about God’s love for them. ”God loves us

all, even when we do wrong things that hurt Him. He has loved us through all the years before the missionaries came to tell us about Him. His heart is longing for each of us to come into His Kingdom and love and serve Him with our whole hearts. But you refuse to come to Him. Won't you turn and come to Him?"

There was the sound of sobbing amongst the people. They began to cry out to God for forgiveness. "Forgive me Lord Jesus, I'm sorry I have sinned against You."
"Lord God I want You to make me clean. Forgive my sins, please Lord."
"Thank You Lord Jesus that You have always loved me, even when I didn't know You."

The sound of crying and prayers of repentance soon drowned out the sound of the preacher's voice. But that was not important now, God was doing His work in the people's lives and there was no need of more preaching at that time.

When God had moved in their hearts and they had a sense that God had forgiven them, the people burst into joyful praise as they knew they had new life from God. Nightfall came and people were still praying and crying for forgiveness. The village people went home for the night, but there was little sleep; they were waiting for the morning when they would gather again to pray and praise their new-found God. From village to village the news spread as God worked in the lives of people all over the island of Vavau. Everyone was stirred, some villages holding as many as six prayer meetings a day, some in churches, some in homes. Schools were closed; priority was for everyone to attend the prayer meetings where God was sovereignly working.

Taufa'ahau in Ha'abai heard about the exciting events that were happening, but he hadn't been in church to witness them first hand. He had taken a second wife the previous year, which was not acceptable for a Christian. The missionaries had been praying constantly for him to return to his Christian faith, so Nathaniel Turner was pleased when Taufa'ahau came to see him. He asked Nathaniel, "I've heard people speak about amazing things happening to the people when they come together to worship God. What do these events mean? Are they evil or good? Why are the people crying and singing, and worshipping God all the time?"

"My friend," replied Nathaniel, "After Jesus rose from the dead, and went back to heaven, He sent His Holy Spirit to the disciples He had left on earth. When the Holy Spirit came people began to feel guilty and ashamed of their wrong-doing. They cried out for God to forgive them, and when they were forgiven they began to praise God. Thus is the same as what has been happening right here on Vavau, just like on the day of Pentecost in the book of Acts."

"It's amazing that God's Holy Spirit would visit us on this little island," said Taufa'ahau.
"God has been visiting other places as well," Nathaniel went on, "In England in recent years there were great meetings where George Whitfield, John Wesley and Charles Wesley preached The Holy Spirit moved on the people there in the same way. There were wonderful revivals of Christian faith all over England and Wales."

"May I come and see these things for myself?" asked Taufa'ahau.
Nathaniel gladly went with him to a church at Feletoa. Taufa was surprised to see up to two hundred people lying on the floor, weeping before God.

The sound of weeping could be heard coming from other villages nearby, followed by the sounds of joy and praise to God that followed prayers of repentance. Taufa'ahau was overcome by the Spirit of God; sometimes he knelt, sometimes he stood unsteadily. His wife also was challenged by Spirit of God. In the middle of the night Taufa sent a message to Nathaniel Turner, "Please will you come and help us. We feel so ashamed of ourselves for all the wrong things we have done. We are so unhappy. Please come."

The missionaries were overjoyed to receive the message. They had been praying for Taufa'ahau for some time, and now they could see the answer to their prayers. They prayed with Taufa'ahau, encouraging him to allow God to work in his life. At a prayer meeting shortly afterwards he fell on his knees, trembling and wailing, asking forgiveness of God. This was a truly life-changing experience. He received instruction from the missionaries and ten weeks later he became a local preacher.

The move of the Holy Spirit spread to Ha'abai, central Tonga, where there were two thousand conversions in a few days. Over all the islands people were deeply convicted of their sin, then followed repentance and joyous praise as they knew God had forgiven their sin. Over a period of six years, about 9.000 people became Christians in Tonga.

One significant result of this time was that people shared their experiences and began their own prayer meetings from house to house and from village to village. Visitors from other islands who saw the events in Tonga took the good news back to their home villages and islands.

It was this sharing, not only from house to house, but from island to island along the trade routes between Tonga, Fiji, Samoa and Tongatabu, that spread the Christian message throughout the South Pacific Islands, in many instances before any European missionary arrived. The stories of Wai on the island of Ono, and Joeli Bulu in Fiji are two such examples, but there were many other similar cases.

Taufa'ahau later became King George Tupou 1 of Tonga, using his Christian influence for good in his island nation. In the early 1850s he visited Cakobau, the Fijian warrior-ruler of Bau, Fiji who had resisted the Christian message for over twenty years. Taufa'ahau spoke to Cakobau about the Christian faith, "You really should become a Christian, my friend," urged Taufa'ahau. "Our people in Tonga are living happily together now that we are a Christian nation. We've stopped fighting and killing each other. The Tongan Islands are peaceful now." It was only a short time, a couple of years, after this that Cakobau became a Christian.

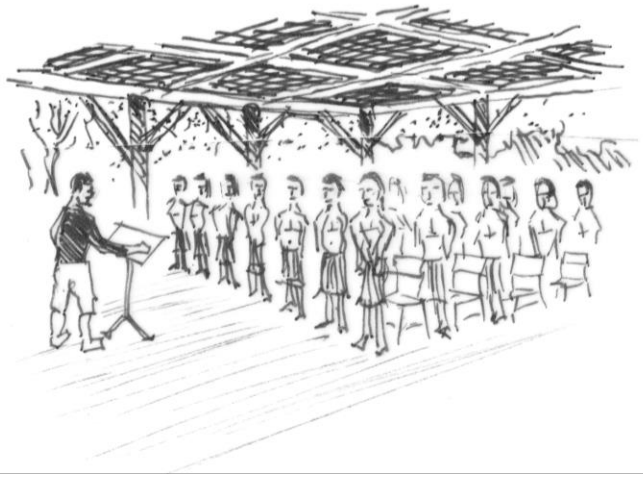
Taufa'ahau, now King George of Tonga, visited Christian churches in Australia as well as Fiji and was received with honour wherever he went. His descendants have continued the royal line as faithful Christians leading their nation with Christian values and Christian example.

The seven white missionaries who were in Tonga at the time of the spiritual awakening were from the Methodist Missionary Society. At their church conference in Tonga in 1835 the people expressed their desire to send missionaries to their neighbouring islands.
"Since we became Christians our people have all been at peace. We don't fight and kill each other any more. We should go to our brothers and sisters in Fiji and Samoa. They would become peaceful places too if they would believe the Christian message."

Of the seven white missionaries at that conference, two were to lead a party of Tongans to Fiji and one would go with a group to Samoa. This generous missionary spirit has continued in the Tongan church and Tonga has always been well represented in church and missionary activity throughout the Pacific Islands to this day.

Adapted from:
Evangelical Awakenings in the South Seas, J. Edwin orr, Bethany Fellowship Inc. Minneapolis, Minnesota
To Live Among the Stars, John Garrett, Institute of Pacific Studies, University of the South Pacific, Suva, Fiji
The March of Methodism, Cyril J. Davey, Epworth Press, London

The Fijian call to New Guinea



By the mid 1870s Fijians as a whole had embraced the Christian faith and the church was asking itself, “All the people have turned away from heathen idols and have begun to worship Jehovah God and His Son, Jesus. What do we do now?”

As they thought and prayed about it they began to see the answer to their question. “The Tongan Christians left their homes to bring the message of Jesus to us. We must do the same and take the Christian gospel to others who have not heard it yet.”

The Methodist Church in Australia was pleased that the young Fijian church had a vision to extend their borders beyond their own islands. They came to an agreement that the church in Australia would supply the ships, materials and money whilst the Fijian church would supply the missionaries from among their own people.

At about this time a measles epidemic hit Fiji. Measles was previously unknown in the Pacific Islands so they had no immunity to the disease. When their bodies burned with the high temperature the natural thing for them to do was to go down to the sea and cool off in the water. This brought on pneumonia for which they had no remedy, and thousands of Fijians died at that time. Many Christian pastors and teachers were among the victims.

When the epidemic had passed its peak the church leaders began to assess their situation.
“What will happen to our plans to take missionaries to the islands to the west?” some asked.

“We have lost so many pastors and teachers. There aren’t enough to serve our own home churches at present. Why should we send any to other islands? Shouldn’t we look after our own churches first?”

Then a ship arrived from Australia bringing Dr. George Brown, the head of the Mission Board of the Methodist Church in Australia. He had come to seek for volunteers who would come with him to help establish the New Guinea Mission. This was the first ship to arrive in Fiji since the measles epidemic took hold, so it was the first anyone outside Fiji knew of the devastation it had caused. As Dr. Brown listened to the missionaries' accounts of the losses of people to the epidemic he was shocked. He began to review his plans. "I don't have the heart to ask these people to give up any of their pastors and teachers. They have so few left," he said. "But I'll go to the training school and tell them why I have come here. There might be someone who will go with me to the west, to New Guinea."

That evening the students were called together and Dr. George Brown was introduced.
"You know how we had planned to send some of your pastors and teachers on a mission to New Guinea," began Dr. Brown. The students were all listening attentively. "Since we decided on this plan you have suffered great losses in the measles epidemic. I really don't know what to do. It is hard to ask the church here to send out men when your home church has lost so many. However, I'll put this question to you tonight. Don't make any decision until you have prayed about it with your wives. I am asking if there is perhaps one among you who would volunteer to go with me to New Guinea. I must warn you that there will be many trials and hardships. There are sicknesses there that you don't know here. The people will most likely be hostile when we first arrive. You may never see your homes in Fiji again. You must count the cost of going, but if God calls and you agree to go, He will help you all the way."

The principal spoke to the students. "Don't make any decision now. Please think carefully about all that Dr. Brown has said. Pray with your wives about this question. We'll talk about it further tomorrow."

Next morning the 84 students gathered together and sat down. There was a quiet stillness in the room. The principal addressed the students: "You heard Dr Brown's request last night. I'm sure you have all prayed about it with your wives. Now, I'd like to hear from you. Is anyone among you willing to go with Dr Brown to New Guinea? If so, would he please stand up."

An amazing thing happened. All 84 students stood up! This solved one problem, but created another. Not all of the 84 students could go, so there had to be a selection of the ones most suitable to go, and the equally important ones whose calling was to stay home and serve God and their own people in the home church.

They had begun to get visas and traveling papers ready for those who were preparing to go to New Guinea when some outside gossip was passed around.

"You know, these poor Fijians are being forced to go to New Guinea. They're going against their will," was the word coming from some people in government circles.
As a result, the Administrator of Fiji called together the men who were preparing to go.

"You know you don't have to go if you don't want to," he told them. "I want you to know that nobody can make you go unless you really want to."

The only response was, "Yes, we do want to go. We have decided to go of our own free will. God has called us and we will obey Him."

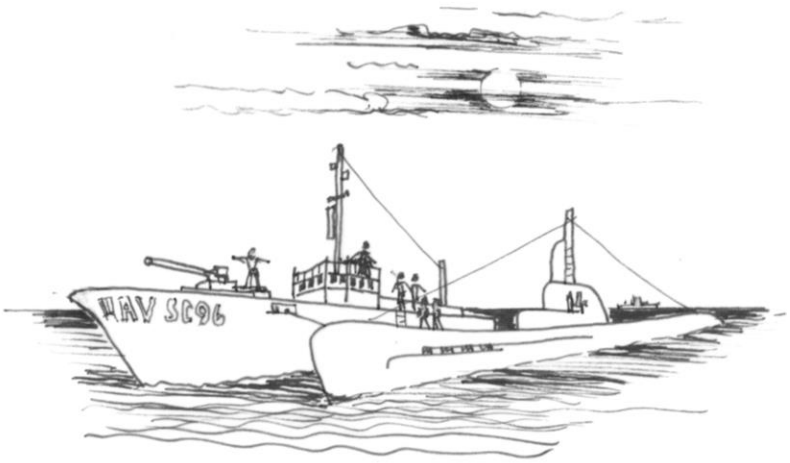
The Administrator began talking more strongly. He was doing all he could to discourage them. “Do you people want to die in a foreign land?” he asked, knowing that a Fijian’s one desire if he is dying, is to be in his own land. Dr Brown later wrote in his diary that when he heard that question he was afraid it would change the men’s minds. The discouraging talk went on for some time until a Fijian spokesman for the group, Aminio Bale, asked permission to speak.

“Dr. Brown told us of all the hardships we will meet when we go to New Guinea. We know there will be sicknesses, the people will be hostile to begin with and they might try to kill us. We have fully considered the matter and our minds are made up. No one has pressed us in any way. We have heard the call of God, we have given ourselves to God’s work and it is our mind to go to New Guinea. If we live, we live. If we die, we die.”

That was the end of the matter, and they went. Most of them did die there, mainly from tropical diseases. Over the years hundreds more have followed. They planted a church in New Guinea that is still there today, and very much alive.

Adapted from:
An Autobiography, George Brown, Hodder & Stoughton, London, 1908
Deep Sea Canoe, Alan R. Tippett, William Carey Linrary, Pasadena, California, 1977

Usaia Sotutu



The chiefs of the Bua area on Viti Levu, Fiji were considering which students from their village primary schools should be selected to progress to Queen Victoria School, which was the government secondary school. It was the year 1919.

“We have some very good students, but I believe Usaia Sotutu is the most outstanding,” observed the chief of the Tavea area. “The teacher there often speaks of Usaia as the brightest student he has ever taught.”

So it was agreed that Usaia would join the group of boys who would, in the following year, progress to the first year of the best government primary school in Fiji. Usaia felt honoured to be chosen. There were very few good primary schools in Fiji at the time, so he was very pleased and looked forward to his new school the following year.

One day he and his friends were out in a canoe on the sea when suddenly a storm blew up. A strong gust of wind overturned their canoe, throwing all the boys into the rough water. Fortunately some men in a canoe nearby saw them, came to their rescue and they were saved from drowning.

Usaia knew they had been in serious danger and that they would have drowned if the men in the canoe hadn’t rescued them. When he reached the shore and had time to think about this episode his thoughts turned to God, for his parents had trained him to follow in the Christian way.

“Thank you, God, for sending those men to rescue us.” he prayed... “I promise I’ll do whatever you tell me to do from now on. I want to serve you for the rest of my life.”

From that time on Usaia began to have a sense that God was speaking to him and the message he was hearing did not please him at first. It seemed God was saying, “Usaia, I

don't want you to go to Queen Victoria School. I want you to go to the Methodist School at Davuilevu."

Never before had he been so sure this was truly God speaking to him, not just his imagination. Some weeks before the start of the new school year Usaia went to his parents, "I know the chiefs have chosen me to go to Queen Victoria School," he began, "but since I was rescued from that boating accident God has been speaking to me."

"What has He been saying?" His father asked.
"God is telling me I should go to Davuilevu instead of Queen Victoria School. I made a promise to God after I was rescued from the sea that I would do whatever He wanted me to do."
"Then you'd do well to keep your promise to God," said his father. "It's more important to obey God than anyone else."

So Usaia's father visited the local chief to explain the situation and Usaia prepared himself to attend the Methodist Mission's Industrial School at Davuilevu. His mother proudly prepared new shirts, sulus and sandals for him and wove him two beautiful mats for his bedding and for carrying his things in. His father bought him a brand new cane knife and a file to sharpen it. This was essential equipment for all students to cut grass and firewood and work in their food gardens. Clothing and all other necessary articles were packed carefully into the mats, folded into neat bundles and tied with bush string. The week before Usaia was due to enter his new school he and his father set off from Tavea, each with a mat bundle slung over a shoulder. They followed a track around the coast to Nausori, and then climbed a hill to reach the Davuilevu compound.

After enrolling Usaia they found their way to the dormitory he would share with twenty other boys. Some mosquito nets had already been hung up in long open building with its shutter windows. Usaia unpacked his mats and placed his few possessions on his allocated shelf. His father waited until his son was settled then said goodbye. "It will be only twelve weeks until you come home for holidays. We'll look forward to that time. God bless you, my boy." And he was gone.

Usaia soon made friends with the boys around him and made the most of his opportunity to learn. Besides the academic subjects the boys were taught carpentry and mechanics. This equipped them for building houses, making furniture, running a mission boat or an engine to produce power for lighting on a mission station, among other things. Along with the industrial training there was a Bible and pastoral training course to prepare the men for Christian leadership.

During Usaia's time at Davuilevu Dr. George Brown from the Methodist Mission office in Sydney, Australia, visited Fiji and spoke to all the students. He was recruiting volunteers to go to the new mission stations in New Guinea and the Solomon Islands. Usaia was 19 years old at the time and his heart was stirred. He went to speak to Dr Brown.

"I'd like to offer to go as a missionary to a new mission station, sir. I know I'm young, but I believe God is speaking to me so I have come to volunteer."

Dr. Brown encouraged Usaia to complete the training he was doing at Davuilevu, then he would be welcome to join the mission staff. In 1921 he went out as a single man to the Western Solomons first, then transferred to Skotolan, Buka, a small island just north

of Bougainville. He was mission boat engineer and general assistant for the Solomon Islands Methodist Mission, so his technical training served well.

Usaia's co-worker was Allan Cropp from Australia. They were a good team and worked together very happily. Together they built a large house for use in their mission work; it was partly Fijian and partly local in design. They were both able to adapt to their situation, learning how to include the local people in their building projects.

Usaia quickly learned the language of Buka, which was used in their churches, the Petats language. He wrote a book of stories about Jesus in Petats for the children to read in the mission schools. He was also a 'barefoot doctor', able to use the small quantity of medical supplies that were available. But he was also familiar with the 'bush medicine' used in Fiji and was able to find similar remedies in the bush on Skotolan. Fijians are skilled in massage and Usaia was also able to use these skills on injured people from time to time.

When Usaia was preparing for leave after his first term of missionary service, Allan Cropp gave him a piece of good advice. "My friend," he said, "while you are in Fiji you must find yourself a wife."

Usais met Makereta, a gifted teacher and strong in the Christian faith. She and Usaia were married in Fiji and went back together to serve on Bougainville. Makereta taught in the mission school and translated Bible stories into Petats. She taught the women and girls the Fijian crafts of weaving mats and baskets, methods of gardening and food preparation.

Usaia and Makereta had five children - two boys and three girls. Makereta loved to sing hymns and pray. This strength in both Usaia and Makereta helped them to survive the years of testing when the Japanese entered the war in the Pacific in 1941.

As the Japanese infiltrated the islands from the north, ships loaded with Japanese soldiers wove their way south establishing bases on islands in strategic places. Noisy, threatening planes screamed overhead, dropping bombs. The people living in the coastal towns and villages packed up their few possessions and fled for protection to the dense mountain jungle. Usaia knew the jungle as well as any local person and he became leader of a 'spy-ring', the 'coast-watchers'. A handful of Australian soldiers were stationed in a strategic spot at the top of the mountains with a radio transmitter. Usaia posted the message-bearers at intervals of 2 or 3 miles from the coast right up the mountain to the radio operators post. Information about enemy placements was passed from the coast-watchers to message-bearers who relayed it up the mountain to the Australian radio operators. The location of placements was made easy by the provision of United States Air Force grid maps. The signalers on the mountain top received the information and were able to pass it on to military Headquarters. The following night U.S. bombers would target the enemy sites reported to them the day before.

Usaia became a 'wanted man' by the Japanese, so when they bombed Buka and his coast-watching activities began, he said to Makereta, "It's not safe for you and the children to be with me. The Japanese want to capture me. You take the children and go up into the mountain jungle in the centre of Bougainville Island. There are many of our friends staying there, you will be safe with them. I must help the allied forces against the Japanese."

Usaia and Makereta were separated by distance, but they remained one in spirit. They both had dreams and intuitions given by God that brought direction to one or the other of them. They found on many occasions that they both received the same guidance through dreams or in prayer as to where to go and what to avoid.

They managed to survive the hazards of living in the jungle until the end of 1942, when orders came for Makereta and the children to prepare to be evacuated by submarine. But they were delayed and the submarine left without them. They continued their jungle existence for three or four more months when another message came, “A submarine will be in Kekesu harbour on Sunday night. Makereta and the children must be ready to be evacuated on it.” Kekesu is on the north coast of Bougainville.

This meant a long and hazardous climb down the mountain and a wait in the dense jungle in sight of the harbour. To their dismay a Japanese boat was anchored in the exact spot where the submarine was to pick them up. They waited all day and through the night until Monday morning, expecting to see Japanese troops land, but nothing happened and the enemy ship moved on.

There were sentries posted every half-mile along the coast, watching to report any sightings of Japanese. When they concluded it was safe the evacuees boarded the submarine. There were 12 Australian soldiers and 36 civilians including Makereta and the children, who boarded the submarine which left on the Monday evening. During the night the submarine surfaced, but traveled under water during daylight hours. On Wednesday evening an American sub-chaser came alongside the submarine. Under cover of darkness, one by one the evacuees were passed from one crew member to the next until all 48 evacuees were transferred from the submarine to the sub-chaser. There were Japanese vessels everywhere and the rescue ship had to weave around and circumnavigate islands to avoid detection by the enemy. They arrived at Honiara, on Guadalcanal, on Thursday morning, relieved to have come safely this far.

After the evacuees had waited three weeks sheltering in the bushland near Honiara a large convoy of ships was sighted sailing into the harbour. There had been a rumor around the islands that there was a contingent of Fijian commandos coming to support the US and Australian troops. Everyone watching the ships felt growing excitement at the thought that relief was near, especially the Fijians who were pleased that their fellow countrymen were in the relief party.

That night every populated centre around Guadalcanal was heavily bombed by the Japanese but the people sheltering in the jungle escaped air attack. While they waited in Honiara, Makereta and the children met a relative, Sergeant Joe Kindon, who was a commando in the first contingent to come from Fiji. This contingent was now preparing to return home to Fiji, having completed their term of service in the Guadalcanal area. Joe needed to go back to the gold mine in the mountains to get some personal possessions he had left behind there. Makereta’s second child, Paul, aged 9 years, spoke up at once, looking pleadingly at his mother. “Please may I go with him?”

“It should be safe enough, I think,” Joe said, “I don’t expect there will be any Japanese up there. I’d be happy for him to go with me. I promise to look after him.”

On Sunday morning Paul and his uncle Joe set out for the gold mining camp in the mountains. It proved to be far more hazardous than Joe expected. There were enemy troops everywhere, making it necessary for them to hide frequently to avoid being captured. However they did get through to collect Joe's goods without being detected and arrived back at Honiara on the Wednesday morning, as planned.

In the meantime, on the Monday night, Makereta and her children were ordered to board the submarine along with the other evacuees who had left Bougainville with them.

"What about my son, Paul?" she asked. "He's still away in the mountains with his uncle." "We'll look after him," the authorities assured her. "We'll see he is on the next vessel leaving Honiara. You look after the four children with you. We'll see Paul is safe."

With a prayer to God for Paul and Joe to be kept safe, Makereta and the four children boarded a submarine to be taken to Noumea, New Caledonia. It was at times like this when Makereta's faith in God kept her from undue worry and made her an inspiration to those around her. Eventually a submarine took them home to Fiji where they landed, very relieved to be out of the danger zone.

Paul spent the next three weeks in a military camp on Guadalcanal staying with his uncle, Joe, waiting for the next opportunity to escape from the war zone around Bougainville. It came three weeks later, when a US troop ship sailed into the harbour, A Fijian evacuee was assigned to look after Paul who became the mascot for the troops and civilians on the ship. He wore shirt and shorts that his mother had made from parachute silk. And he carried a small .22 rifle with which he killed rats. (It was reported wrongly in the U.S. that he killed Japanese solderis with it!)

They sailed first to Noumea, New Caledonia, where they disembarked. After waiting there for two weeks, another troop ship arrived which was going to Fiji. The last leg of the journey home to Fiji was uneventful. After stopping at Lautoka to drop off some passengers, Paul was welcomed home in Suva a few days later by a very relieved mother.
Usaia returned to Fiji for a short time, but three months later he was recalled by the commander of the allied forces on Bougainville. He had such an intimate knowledge of the jungle tracks and of the allied forces in the Pacific that his services were considered indispensable.

After the allied forces had landed at Torokina, on Bougainville they prepared to build an airstrip high up in the mountains. Usaia Sotutu was given the task of choosing a suitable site and suggested a position on a small plateau high up on the side of the mountain. Five hundred men in a battalion of Fijian commandos were assigned to go up, clear the ground of all growth and prepare the airstrip. They were not expecting any enemy attack, believing the Japanese knew nothing about it, so they were only lightly armed. However, a local man, who was helping the Japanese, betrayed the Fijians and reported the allied forces' activities at the airstrip to Japanese headquarters on Bougainville.

The Japanese were elated. Not long before this, in the Western Solomons, the Fijian commando force had completely routed the Japanese. Now they could see a way to have revenge on the Fijians. Posting large groups of soldiers all around the mountain below the airstrip, they blocked off every exit point they could find from the coast up to the air strip The allied commanders were distressed, "There's no way we can get those

men out They're completely surrounded by the enemy. We'll lose every one of them," they cried.
Usaia heard of their dilemma. He went to the US officer in command. "I can get the men out, sir," he said with great assurance. "I know every track on the whole of these mountains. If they close off ninety-nine exits I'll find the hundredth one. At least let me have a try."

Usaia spoke with such confidence that the officer finally relented. Usaia was sent off in a small, light plane, and dropped off quickly on to the roughly-finished airstrip. The plane quickly took off again. "I'll lead you and your men out of here, sir," Usaia assured the Fijian officer in charge, "but first we must pray for God's protection as we go."

Usaia prayed for the safety of the men, their protection from the enemy and commended the whole exercise to God. As they began their exit torrential rain poured down. This was the very best means of protection for them, reducing visibility and covering their tracks as all 500 men followed Usaia single file out from the airstrip to safety. They crawled through heavy undergrowth, slipped on wet rocks and waded through swollen streams, following Usaia on a trail few people had any knowledge of. For a week nobody heard anything of them.

The Japanese forces surrounding the airstrip attacked, and were astounded to find the place quite deserted. How could those Fijians possibly get past the huge number of troops they had watching every track through the bush? Usaia's detailed knowledge of the bush tracks, combined with his trust in God, had performed the miracle.

When the Fijians did eventually arrive back at their camp in the jungle near the coast, the commanding officer listened to their story in amazement. He was full of praise for Usaia and wrote a report recommending he be awarded the Victoria Cross, the highest British military honor. Unfortunately that citation was lost in transit and the award was never made.

When the war was over Usaia returned to Fiji for a time, then he and Makereta returned with the two youngest children to help rebuild the war-torn Methodist Mission in the northern part of Bougainville They served a three-year term before returning home to Fiji because of Usaia's poor health. After a time of recuperation he was able to return to active work in the church in Fiji. He had been ordained into the Methodist ministry in Bougainville, some time before World War 11, so back in his home country he continued in ministry, serving his people and his God faithfully. He died in 1983.

On their return to Fiji, Makereta went back to teaching, continuing to use her Christian leadership gifts until her death in 1992, at the age of 84.
Usaia and Makereta were much loved and respected by everyone; they lived out their faith in God amongst their people. Their children rise up and call them blessed.

Varani

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

A church minister, John Hunt, was an early missionary to Fiji. He first met Vatea in 1944. She was the highest ranked wife of Namosirnalua, high chief of Viwa. She was the daughter of Caucau of Balu and was forty years younger than her husband Namosirnalua. 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 26th 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 2nd 1845. He began baptism classes immediately and was baptized on November 25th, 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 Namisimalua, 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, Namosirnalua 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 t 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. Koroivaluo 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

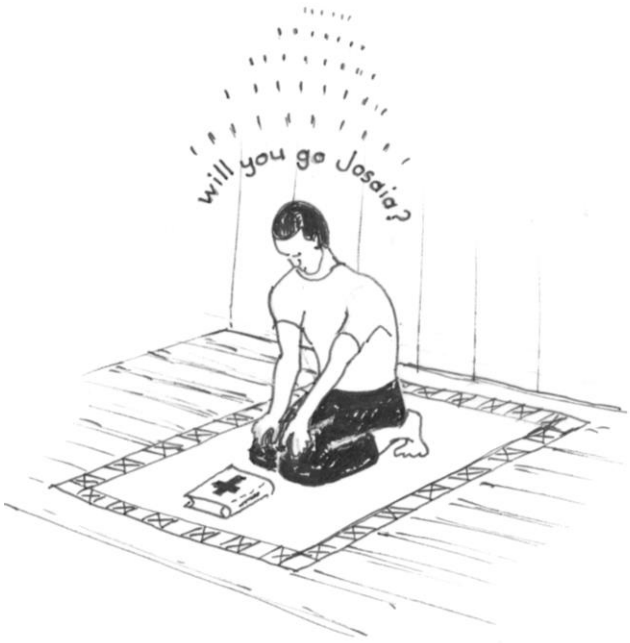
Revision Questions

1. Who was Vatea's father?
2. What qas the name of Vatea's first husband?
3. What the missionaries give to Vatea?
4. Name the years she was she 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?

Wai of Ono, Fiji



Two Fijian men were traveling on a trading ship to Lakemba, on a trade route between Tonga and Fiji. One was Wai, a messenger for his people on the little island of Ono, about 50 miles south of Suva. The other was Takai who had worked on a number of trade vessels traveling between the island groups.

“I’m tired of all the fighting and drunken behaviour amongst the people on my island,” said Wai. His heart was heavy because of the sorry state his community was in. There is so much sickness and unhappiness. I wish I could find a way to improve our life together.”

“Yes, I know what you mean,” replied Takai. “As I’ve traveled around on the trade vessels I’ve seen some very unhappy communities. I’m sorry to say that these traders make it worse by bringing in the drink to sell to the people. It makes the fighting so much worse when they get drunk.”

Takai sat silently with Wai for a few moments, then he said thoughtfully, “But I’ve seen some places where the village people were all at peace with each other. I went to Tonga a while ago when the Christian missionaries were teaching the people about their God. The people were so changed when they believed in the Creator God and His Son, Jesus. They stopped fighting with each other. They didn’t want to buy the drink to get drunk on. When I saw that, I thought it was the

best way to stop the wars in my island. One day I'll find a teacher to go to my island to teach us about the Christian way of living. That's what I want for my people too," Wai declared. "I'm going to find out all I can about this Christian way and get someone to teach my people about it."

Wai returned to his island determined to try and follow the Christian way. All he knew about it was what he had heard from Takai.
"The Christians meet together to worship their God every seventh day, and they do no other work on that day," was the one thing Wai remembered. He called together the chiefs of Ono and told them what he knew of the Tongan Christians.

"The best thing about it is that they don't fight amongst themselves any more. The people in the villages are happier and healthier. They don't buy the liquor from the trading ships any more, so they don't get drunk. Surely this is what we need for our people."

The council of chiefs talked together about this for a time before they spoke again to Wai.
"We've had enough of war. We're tired of fighting and drunken behaviour. We want to serve a god who will look after us. We want to live the Christian way and be at peace with each other," they said. "But, tell us, Wai, how do we do it? We need a teacher."

"The Tongan Christians worship every seventh day. On that day they don't do any work," Wai replied.
"Very well, then," said the chiefs. "We'll start to worship God every seventh day."

On the agreed day they came together to worship. But no-one there knew the Christian God. Nobody knew how to worship. So Wai went to see the pagan priest who worshipped the local heathen gods.

"Would you come along to our worship meeting," he asked. "We want to worship the Christian God, Jehovah. We want you to pray to Him for us."

Here was a pagan priest with a group of people who didn't know God, but wanted to, praying to an unknown God. This is what he prayed:
"O Lord, Jehovah, these people want to worship you. I'm not speaking for myself. I want to serve other gods. But please look after them and bless them."

Could God answer such a prayer? Certainly He did, in a remarkable way. About that time there was a deep-sea canoe sailing out at sea between Tonga and Fiji. A severe storm struck the canoe and the men on board feared for their lives. Amongst those on board there was a small group of Tongan Christians.

"Help us, Lord! Save us from this storm!" they cried out to God.

They were tossed about in the raging sea for some time, until through a break in the rain, they sighted a small island.
“Let’s make for that island and find shelter till the storm passes,” suggested one of the men. They all agreed and set the canoe to skull in to land before the rising wind. They were soon pulling the canoe up on to the sand away from the heavy seas.

The people on this island offered them shelter and food until the storm had passed. They stayed on the island for a time while they repaired the damage to the canoe. They told the travelers about the people on the island of Ono, not very far away.

“Wai, their messenger, heard about Jehovah God of the Christians in Tonga. Wai wants his people to serve this God too, because He brings peace to the people. All they know is to worship Him every seventh day. But they want someone to come and tell them all about Him. They really want to know this God for themselves.”

The Tongan Christians from the canoe were very interested to hear about the people on Ono. One member of the group thought and prayed about them when he was alone that night.

“Josaia, I want you to go to Ono where Wai lives and tell those people about me. They really want to know me so I’m telling you to go to them.”

It was as though he heard an audible voice directing him, but he knew it was the voice of God. He thought of the story in the Bible about Ananias whom God sent to meet Saul, who became Paul.
“Yes, Lord,” responded Josaia, “I’ll go.” And he went across in the canoe to teach these people who were hungering to know the Christian God.
This story happened before there were any white Christian missionaries in Fiji, but it demonstrates how God works in the hearts of people who really want to know Him.

Adapted from: *Deep Sea Canoe,* Alan R. Tippett, William Carey Library, Pasadena, California

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