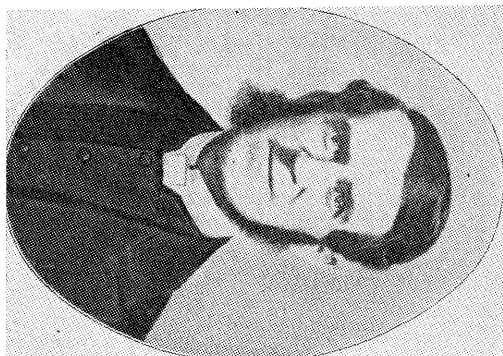


**PART THREE**  
**John Geddie and the**  
**Presbyterian Mission**

## THE PRESBYTERIAN PIONEERS

Live



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



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



## CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

**John Geddie, the Man God Called**

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

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

*His boyhood*

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

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

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

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

*His preparation*

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

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

*His marriage*

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

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

*Influence of the LMS*

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

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

*Minister and missionary candidate*

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

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

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

*From Canada to the New Hebrides*

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

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

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

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

## CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

# John Geddie and the Island God Chose

### *The island of Aneityum*

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

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

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

### *The Mission to Aneityum*

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

came to regard this circumstance as providential. When the "John Williams" anchored at Anelgauhah Harbour on 29 July 1848 all on board believed that they had come to the right place and that God had made the choice for them. This date is the birthday of the Presbyterian Mission — the first to the heathen from any of the British colonial churches of the Presbyterian order. The mild climate, the splendid harbour, the single language and the nearness of the Loyalty Islands and Sydney all proved important factors in favour of the mission to this island. Today Aneityum is rather out of the stream of New Hebrides life. In 1848 it was about to become the centre of a great new revolution in these islands.

#### *The Geddies' fellow-workers*

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

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

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

#### *Traders and whalers*

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

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

#### *The short-lived Catholic Mission*

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

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

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

#### *Geddie's feeling for the people*

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

Together the teachers and missionaries used to visit the nearby villages. They "urged them to give up their superstitions and horrid customs, and receive the truth as it is in Jesus." [Misi Gete p. 331.]

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

#### *Bishop G. A. Selwyn*

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

#### *End of the first year*

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

*End of the third year*

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

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

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

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

CHAPTER NINETEEN

## John Geddie and the Church God Built

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

*End of the second year*

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

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

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

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

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

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

#### *End of the fourth year*

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

#### *Foundations for an indigenous church*

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

#### *The first Christian congregation*

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

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

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

The presence of seven women among the first members points to



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

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

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

## CHAPTER TWENTY

# Geddie, Inglis and the Work God Honoured

### *The arrival of Rev. John Inglis*

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

#### *Education*

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

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

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

Geddie and Inglis had a high view of the potential of each convert. They believed that traditional tasks and skills would be conserved, expanded, enriched, and elevated by Christian ex-

#### *The Work God Honoured*

perience, in accordance with Bible teaching about the gifts which the Spirit of God grants to believers for the building up of Church and community. The missionaries knew that race, colour and culture make no difference to the reality of these Divine gifts and equipment. They set to work to develop these gifts through the structure of the indigenous church on Aneityum.

#### *The first deacons*

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

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

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

#### *The first case of discipline*

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

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

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

#### *The powers of the chiefs*

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

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

#### *Improved social conditions*

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

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

#### *The place of the Bible, and of preaching*

What was the chief means behind this reformation of a once

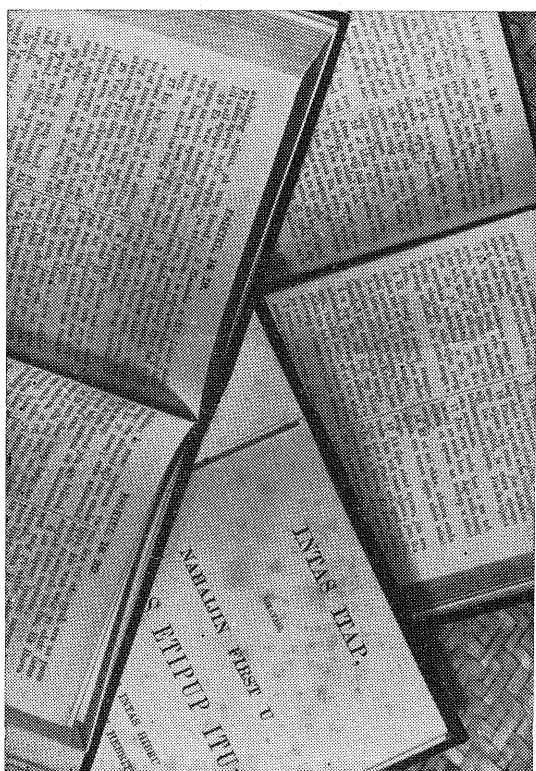
degraded island community? The answer is the Bible — translated, taught, read, preached, and practised.

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

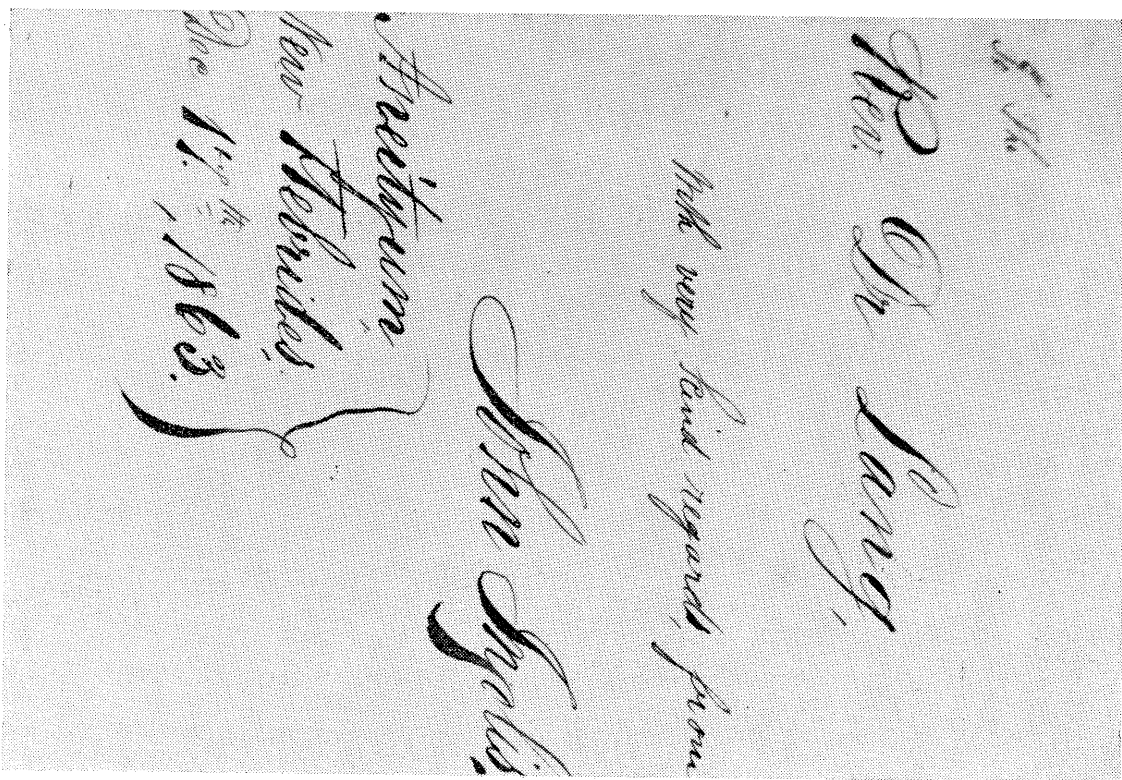
On 5 February 1854, Geddie wrote in his journal, "Meeting unusually large. To all appearances there is a growing attention to divine things. Endeavoured to preach Christ to my hearers." [Misi Gete p. 174]. There was a kindly wooing note in all his preaching which well suited his gentle, guileless and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

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

Geddie and Inglis made much of the Christian Sabbath, keeping



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



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

### *The Work God Honoured*

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

### *Healthy growth*

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

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

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

## John Geddie and the Vision God Gave

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

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

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

### *Evangelization of Aneityum*

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

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

### *The Vision God Gave*

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

### *Missionary vision of the first converts*

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

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

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

### *Tannese heathen visit Aneityum*

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

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

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

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

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

#### *The quality of the early Aneityumese teachers*

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

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

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

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

Fifty teachers were needed for the schools on Aneityum. Ingils says that there were usually between twenty and thirty Aneityumese couples absent as missionaries on other islands, an apostolic record for a small island church. The level of outreach was maintained until Dr. Ingils finally retired in 1877. [Ingils, Bible III. p. 219-231.]

## CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO

# The Church Reaches Out From Aneityum

### *The island of Futuna*

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

### *Waihit and Iosefa to Futuna*

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"Futuna is divided into seven small districts under as many chiefs. Two of these chiefs have abandoned their heathen customs, others are favourable to christianity and two are strongly opposed to the word of God . . . The party [went?] round the whole island with the teachers and were pleased with what they saw . . . Waitit the teacher says . . . that the work of God on Futuna is much less difficult than it was on Aneityum." [Misi Gete p. 2081.]

#### *Futuna men visit Aneityum*

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

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

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

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

#### *Futuna asks for a missionary*

The little mission ship "John Knox" now made it possible for the Aneityunese missionaries to keep in closer touch with the nearby islands. When Geddie made his next visit to Futuna the people demanded a missionary for their island. They promised that they would respect him, saying,

"*Sipos mitala went for kilim Misi, mitala save kilim planti taem finis!*" "If we wanted to kill Misi, we could have killed him plenty of times!"

#### *Yaufati and Talip to South Tanna*

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

On December 13 1854 Geddie wrote, "The 'Juno' arrived from Tana . . . A number of Tannese came . . . to visit this island. One of them is the son of a chief at Port Resolution. His father sent him here to learn something about the new religion, and go back and teach him. It is encouraging to us to know that the influence of the mission on Aneiteum is being felt on other islands, and that the desire to know the truth increases." [Misi Gete p. 193, 1941.]

#### *Abraham to Port Resolution*

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

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

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

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

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

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

#### *The Aneityumese made good missionary teachers*

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

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

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

#### *Aniwa — the murder of Nemeiyin*

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

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

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

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



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

*Aneityum helps Eromanga.*

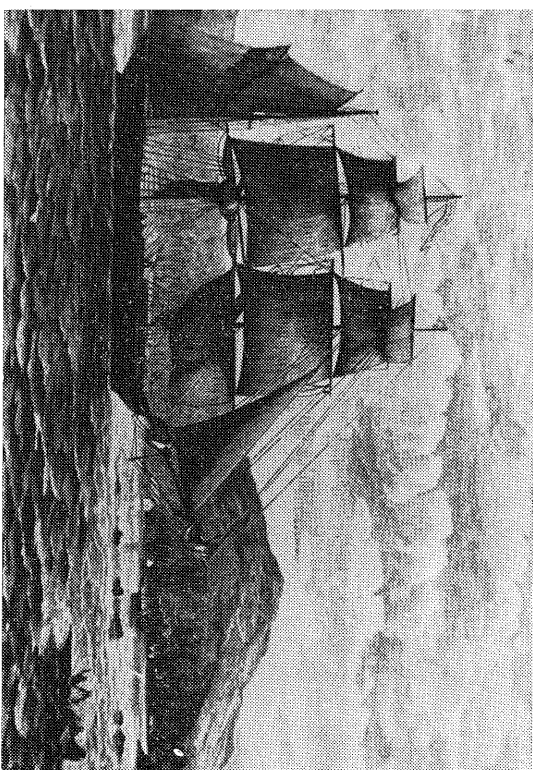
From the time of the arrival of the Presbyterian Mission schooner "John Knox" Aneityum could take a closer part in his mission to Eromanga. In January 1852 Geddie noted in his journal how he often saw Eromangans at Aneityum. He always tried to meet them and to treat them kindly. As a result he later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

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

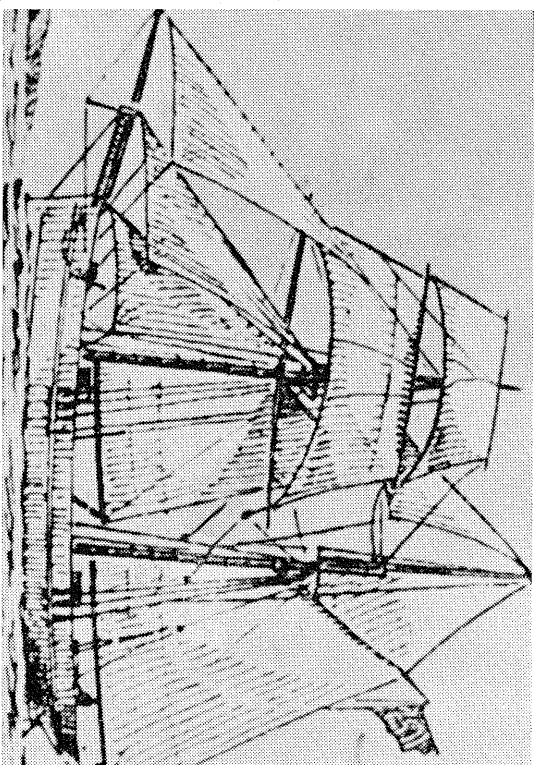
*Aneityumese teachers to South Efate*

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

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



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



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

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

#### *Conclusion*

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

#### CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE

### John Geddie's Closing Years

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

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

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

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

#### *Geddie's furlough in Canada*

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

The Geddies' visit to their home congregations in Canada opened

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

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

#### *Extension to the northern islands*

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

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

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

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

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

#### *The Aneiyumese Bible*

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

#### *Geddie's death*

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

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