

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

The Aneityum cotton company

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

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

Church offerings in cash begin

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

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

Faith, Worship, Hope and Love in the Young Church

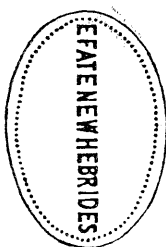
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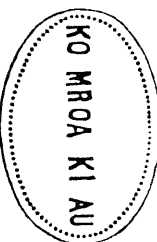
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Metal tokens used for admission to the Lord's Supper on Aneityum and Efate. No. 351 shows both sides of an Aneityum token of 1852. No. 352 shows both sides of a token brought from Pictou, Nova Scotia and used for many years on South Efate. No. 353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

CHAPTER THIRTY-THREE

The Faith of the Early Christians

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

"Can these dry bones live?"

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

"What hath God wrought!"

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

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

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

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

A statement of faith

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

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

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

Comments on the Statement of Faith of 1879

The first thing we notice is the absence of "don't's." There is no legalism; no rule is laid down on such matters as kava-drinking or plural marriage, though in practice both were serious problems for the young church.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Central importance of the Bible

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

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

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

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

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

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

The preparation of candidates for the Lord's Supper

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

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

Teaching of the Bible

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

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

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

The prayer meeting

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

The missionaries bound themselves to do the same. At the 1874 Synod they agreed to a "concert of prayer." Every Wednesday night at 7.30 each missionary family would spend time in prayer "for a special blessing on the Mission." In 1878 the Synod gave the need for more missionaries as a further reason to keep up these prayer meetings.

Candidates' classes

Why did the mission insist upon candidates attending the preparation classes for a whole year? In many places the class was held for about two hours, once a week. This centralized class meant that many of the candidates had to make long journeys from distant villages. They could do no garden work on that day because the whole time was taken up in getting to and from the class.

The purpose of the thorough training was to make sure that candidates knew the way of salvation in both their hearts and heads. They would thus be well grounded against the assaults of Satan and the pull of the old heathen way of life. A full year of classes tested the sincerity and purpose of each candidate, in the face of wet weather, times of sickness, and other problems. Half-hearted candidates found it easy to make excuses and drop out. The wheat was sifted from the tares before candidates came to Communion.

The early missionaries feared the bad effect of one back-slider.

Peter Milne learned a hard lesson over the apostasy of one of the first three men he baptized on Mataso in 1875, which troubled him for a long time. This rule helps to explain the continuing life and vitality in the Church after one hundred years, in spite of much that disappoints people and dishonours Christ.

Finally the long period of preparation was an object lesson to the heathen that Christianity was no easy road. Jesus' words were spelled out month after month, "Strive to enter in by the narrow gate!"

The narrow way

To the early Communion services the heathen came in large numbers to see a few new converts baptized and received into the church. The heathen recognized that the Lord's Supper was a *tapu* feast. The New Hebridean people still remember this solemn fact.

Every convert had to let God search his heart, life, family, relationships, and reasons for leaving the old heathen life and entering the fellowship of the Church. He did this with the open Bible as his teacher and guide.

CHAPTER THIRTY-THREE

The Worship of the Early Christians

Their places of worship

THE POLYNESIAN TEACHERS who first brought the Gospel held services wherever they could gather a few people together. Usually they had to worship in their own home. Later they built grass churches in which they tried to teach the people to understand the Gospel.

The European missionaries also made their homes the first centres of early teaching for any who would come and stay at the mission stations.

On Sabbaths the Aneityunese missionaries would walk to nearby villages and speak to little groups of people wherever they found them — in the gardens, on the bush tracks, in the *nakamales* (men's meeting-houses) and at feasts. They sought out the people who were willing to listen. Before there were any church buildings they often used the banyan's shade.

As soon as a regular group of seekers began to attend the mission station a small church was built, with their help, from local materials. At first the missionaries had to pay for the materials and the labour. Later the people did this work themselves when they saw that the worship belonged to them.

"School"

Usually the same building was used for worship and for teaching people to read. The "school" was open all the time and had plenty of use, so that soon the word "school" came to stand for the Christian church. In pidgin English "school" came to mean Christianity. Thus the people in each area were divided into two rough and ready classes, "man school" and "man bush," Christians and heathen.

The Polynesian teachers had made use of burnt coral for lime in building some of their early homes and churches, as at Erakor, Pango and Havannah Harbour on Efate.

On Aneityum Dr. Geddie used coral rock for his biggest church whose ruins can still be seen at Aneigauhat.

By 1880 we find that western-style wooden churches of frame and weatherboard began to appear. The first of these was the Martyrs' Memorial Church which was shipped down to Eromanga from Sydney on the "Dayspring" in 1879. This church was erected at Dillon's Bay in 1880. The money was raised mainly in New South Wales.

About this time galvanized iron roofs began to replace the island thatch of coconut leaves, sugar cane leaves and wild cane. The iron had many advantages because the leaf roofs soon rotted and always fared badly in hurricanes. The people liked the iron roofs because they gave a good water supply to the village which had such a building. The great merit of local building materials was that they cost nothing and could be replaced cheaply and quickly after hurricanes.

Each church-building effort became a happy social occasion, community activity in the best traditions of the people. The strong men cut the posts and hauled them from the bush to the building site, singing and chanting all the way. The women wove the matting and prepared the thatch. The old men sat in the shade preparing the lashings of bush rope and coconut fibre. No nails or bolts were used.

All joined in providing the special food for the evening community meals. When the building was ready to be opened, a dedication feast and service of worship acknowledged the goodness of the High God and sought His presence and blessing in all the worship of the sanctuary. All of the people had a share in the privilege of building the house of God.

There was plenty of room for variety in the shape and construction of these churches and in the use of island materials. Some churches were built like the old *makamales*, with great curved posts like the ribs of a whale. Some were oval, or with semi-circular ends. Bamboo lattice work and wild cane often gave a pretty appearance to the walls, and allowed for plenty of

fresh air. The pulpit was a low platform of wood or lime-cement and always stood in the centre, at one end, to command a view of all the worshippers.

With the coming of western-style churches this community spirit received a check. Money was needed to buy the European materials and pay the builders. Only a few skilled men were available to do the work. They had to be fed and paid.

When these buildings were damaged, or fell into disrepair, the people could not replace them locally. They looked to the missionary or his home church to provide the cost of replacement or repair. Thus the impulse to self-help was further checked. In 1945 I saw derelict churches in the bush on Epi which had been built in Thomas Small's time (1890-1902). The posts had rotted, and the buildings had collapsed, but the roofing iron was intact and the materials were still treated as *tapu* by the villagers.

Rusty, iron-roofed buildings began to disfigure New Hebridean villages. Little effort has been made to retain the style of the local culture and often the beauty of the local sacred buildings has been lost.

The congregation

The Polynesian teachers brought with them from Samoa and Rarotonga the custom of sitting on the floor while worshipping in church. The old New Hebridean custom was to squat, usually on a log or wooden stool.

The local practice soon replaced the Polynesian way of sitting on the floor during worship. The churches were supplied with "stools" made of logs, adzed down for comfort and placed like forms in the body of the church. The children often sat on mats on the floor in front. The elders usually sat at the side of the pulpit as it became customary for some of them to take part in the service.

Segregation

In the heathen dances men and women never mixed. Men formed one company of dancers and the women another. This segregation was observed in the earliest congregations, the men sitting on one side of the church, and the women on the other, and is still widely observed.

Mothers fed their babies without any sense of embarrassment.

The whole family went to church. When dogs or goats strayed into the building they were quickly hunted out with hisses and cuffs. The services were natural, happy, reverent and hearty. The handshake, unknown to the heathen, became the badge of the fellowship, speaking silently of peace with God and peace with one another. All shook hands with the preacher.

In heathen times the *nakamde* and idol-drums were the centre of village life. This gradually changed. The idol-drums fell into decay. A Christian church took their place. Thus the Christian village usually had a *nakamde* at one side and a Church at the other. Here was the happy union of "Church" and "State." The chief and the teachers were not rivals for the allegiance of the people, but partners. This was so from the beginning of the church on Aneityum.

The day of worship

In the central islands of the New Hebrides the number six seemed to have special meaning as a complete number. Thus in folk-stories Munnal Tavara, the prophet from the sea, told the woman to dip herself six times in the sea in order to cleanse the village of Panita, Tongoa, from its sins. Topuku burst six pigs' bladders, one after the other to cause Lopevi to erupt and destroy the land of Kuai. These folk-stories point to the special meaning of number six. The people knew only the Inner month of twenty-eight days; almost certainly some tribes observed a four-weekly division of each month.

I was startled in 1943 when an old man on Buninga, born in heathenism, told me that his people observed a sabbath in their old culture. John G. Paton speaks of meeting people in the northern islands who kept the sabbath before the coming of Christianity.

These facts may help to explain the readiness of the people to receive the Christian Sabbath as central to the Christian life. Almost all the pioneer missionaries were astonished to find the heathen willing to observe the Sabbath, though not yet willing to "take the Book." By observing the Sabbath the heathen showed a reverence for the High God, but by taking the Book they believed they would have to break with their old heathenism. In the earliest years of the church in the New Hebrides the sacred day and the sacred Book went hand-in-hand among the Christians.

Happy Sabbaths

It is common today to hear people speaking ignorantly of the Christian Sabbath of those early days of the first churches in the New Hebrides. Here is what the second missionary, Dr. John Inglis of Aneityum, wrote about the Sabbath there soon after 1852:

"We offered them the Sabbath as a day of rest, a day also with abundance of food, a day not of amusement and frivolity, but a day of joy and gladness in the worship of God. We took nothing away, we deprived them of no enjoyment. . . . We trusted for success to 'the expulsive power of a new affection.'" [See Inglis, Bible Illustr. 103, 102].

In olden times the people had only one proper meal a day, usually after dark when they returned from their gardens. The Christians were encouraged to cook their Sabbath food on Saturday night. Sunday was the best day of the week: no routine journey to the food gardens, no bringing home of firewood, no tedious cooking in the ground-ovens, but plenty to eat!

Today we find islanders out on the reefs or in the bush on Saturday looking for extra good things, such as fish, coconut crabs, and flying foxes for Sunday's dinner. Though the Melanesian day ends with the sunset, as the Jewish day did, the church has fitted into clock-time and now counts Sabbaths from midnight to midnight.

The services of worship on the Lord's Day

In volume two of "John G. Paton, Missionary to the New Hebrides" (from page 226) we read Dr. Paton's account of a typical Sabbath day on Aniwa in the 1870's, about eight years after the church was established on that island. It was a very full and busy day for both preachers and people, but happy; indeed the happiest of the week.

Paton's book describes the village sunrise prayer meeting of about an hour, when the missionary preached, while elders or members read the Bible and prayed. This was followed by the communicants' class at ten in the morning, at the same time as a members' prayer meeting.

At noon all attended a graded all-age Sabbath school led by Mr. Paton and his wife.

In the afternoon teams visited outlying villages but returned by sunset for worship under the banyan tree at home — a foretaste

of today's "testimony meetings." Hymns and prayers were offered informally in family style, under the leadership of an elder or teacher.

The day closed with family worship in the mission house.

Concerning this kind of Sabbath Paton wrote: "Our hearts were in it, and the people made it a weekly festival."

Sharing the worship

This early worship was free from bare formality and one-man ministry. Early morning prayer meetings and evening testimony meetings were open for any who wished to take part.

New Hebridean Christians have always been ready to take part in public worship that Europeans. All the Christian men could pray in public, most did so, as they felt led, or were asked. Women seldom spoke, but led in prayer and were foremost in the singing; at the close of prayer or a Scripture reading the whole congregation united in a hearty Amen! — not whispered but emphatic.

Preaching bands

On most islands preachers' bands began among the first converts. Eager Christians went out to heathen villages on the Lord's Day to carry the Good News to all who would hear. As these outlying villages responded to the Gospel some of the preachers settled among them as teachers, as on Erromanga.

In the absence of village pastors preachers were frequently sent to Christian villages also. Preachers were rostered for a different village each Sunday; a few messages would last the preacher for a long time. The work of the preacher, like that of the teacher, was good preparation for the eldership. The preachers and elders received no payment.

In chapter twenty we have given Inglis' first-hand view of the kind of preaching which marked early worship in the islands; the missionaries trusted God to do the work, through systematic, thorough and carefully-prepared preaching of the Word. No public call for decision was made; such appeals were hardly in use in the Presbyterian Churches anywhere in the world at that time.

All preaching was in a language of the people; the first missionaries became masters of the island languages and knew

local customs better than those who followed. The early preachers used illustrations from real life, they spoke with parental love and firmness and they revered the Book that spoke with divine authority.

Inglis' sermons lasted for twenty or twenty-five minutes; the main service for about an hour and a quarter.

God's hammer to break the rock in pieces

Dr. John Inglis in his second book, "Bible Illustrations from the New Hebrides," tells how surprised his people were to see him squaring stones with a stonemason's hammer. With these stones he built the chimneys in his house at Aname. Inglis used this incident to speak to the people of Aneityum.

"When the missionaries came, they brought the hammer, the Word of God . . . and they struck the stone with the hammer; they applied the Word of God to your hearts. They translated the Word of God into your language, they read it to you; they taught you to read it, you read it yourselves; you committed portions of it to memory, you believed it, you obeyed it, it broke your stony heart, it brought your heart into a new shape, you gave up your heathenism, you accepted Christ as your Saviour, and took God's Law as the rule of your lives." [p. 79-80].

The Aneityumese Christians remembered Dr. Inglis' illustration. Often, after that, he heard the Christians in prayer use some such words as these: "Oh Lord, Thy Word is like a hammer, but our hearts are like stone. Oh take Thy hammer, and with it break our stony hearts. Take Thy good and holy Word, and with it make our sinful hearts what you wish them to become . . ."

Baptism

We have shown that the first converts were carefully prepared for the step of Christian baptism. Geddie was almost four years on Aneityum before he baptized the first converts, Paton was almost three years on Aniwa, Michelsen five years on Tongoa, Watt twelve years on South Tanna, Milne ten years on Nguna before he baptized any Ngunesse converts.

Most of the first baptismal services comprised adult believers and their children. The truth of the believing family, within the covenant of grace, shines out from the first founding of Christ's Church in the islands.

The mode of baptism followed that of the Reformed Churches

and was by sprinkling. The pioneer missionaries clearly felt the mode of sprinkling to be scriptural both in form and meaning. Later in the New Hebrides history the baptism of infants began to present problems of its own. To "take the water" began to have almost magical meaning in the eyes of some of the nominal Christians.

The Lord's Supper

Geddie often refers to "the sealing ordinances." Baptism, as the ordinance which opened the way to the Lord's Table, took place only once. Therefore each time the Lord's Supper was administered members were called upon to re-examine themselves.

On Aneityum and Efate metal tokens were issued by the Session to admit members to the Lord's Table, thus following the Presbyterian practice of the Session's guarding the Lord's Table from abuse. Admission to the Lord's Supper was thus a form of church discipline.

Discipline in the church

Suspension of an erring brother or sister from the Lord's Table became the normal way in which the Church showed the sanctity of the sacrament and the seriousness of a professing Christian's falling into open sin. This practice led to members staying away from Communion when they felt unworthy, in fact members often disciplined themselves. It also led to a blurred understanding of God's grace, and of the church's duty to restore the penitent sinner to fellowship on confession of his sin. Legalism began to overshadow the discipline of the Lord's Table.

Experience later showed that only faithful preaching and teaching of the Scriptures could deal with both the sins of members and hardening ideas of church discipline.

Frequency of Communion

Communion was usually observed only once or twice a year. At Erakor the Polynesian teachers had introduced a monthly Communion. Mr. Morrison and his elders in 1864 changed to a quarterly Communion. On Aneityum Mr. Geddie and Mr. Inglis agreed to hold Communion twice a year in their respective districts, but members were free to go to Communion in both districts, and so partake four times in the year, if they wished.

When we went to the islands in 1941 we found that the Lord's Supper was held only once a year in most parts of the central islands. Often there were practical reasons for infrequent Communion. Some islands were hard to reach; launching was risky; hot-season weather was unsettled; districts were large and scattered; furloughs intervened; there were few pastors.

The solemnity of infrequent Communion was sometimes offset by a tendency to turn the event into a kind of social festival when the women had to have new dresses and everyone needed a coin for the collection. In some districts this was the only cash offering of the year, apart from the village levies for the teachers' salaries.

A trader, married to a part-New Hebridean wife, tried in 1941 to convince me that the New Hebrides people believed their Communion offering was needed to "buy" the sacramental blessings. I was worried at the time by his remark but am sure he was mistaken.

Bread and wine

The early Christians used bread and grape-wine at the Lord's Supper. These elements do not belong to the local culture. In 1875 Dr. Inglis asked the Synod to allow the use of coconut water, instead of grape-wine, where missionaries preferred to use it. The Synod, by six votes to five, decided not to change its practice. Down the years all kinds of substitutes have been used in place of bread and grape-wine, where neither could be used. Cooked yams and coconut water have been widely used, but have never become the rule.

Early Communion services

Here is a description of Communion, taken from Paton's account of the first Communion service on Aniwa, on 24 October 1869.

Mr. Paton, after carefully examining the twenty members of his candidates' class, decided to admit only twelve of them to baptism. They were baptized in the presence of the whole population, mostly heathen, but including many earnest seekers. Two of their children were also baptized. "Solemn prayer was then offered and, in the Name of the Holy Trinity, the Church of Christ on Aniwa formally constituted. I addressed them on

the words of the Holy Institution — I Corinthians 11.23 — and then, after the prayer of Thanksgiving and Consecration, administered the Lord's Supper. . . . At the moment when I put the bread and wine into those dark hands, once stained with the blood of cannibalism, now stretched out to receive and partake the emblems and seals of the Redeemer's love, I had a foretaste of the joy of Glory." [John G. Paton Autobiog. II p. 222, 223].

Christian marriage

The Christian ordinances of marriage and burial showed the heathen the difference that Christ makes in all areas of daily life, though the full story would need a book on the social impact of the Gospel on the people of the New Hebrides.

Marriage had always been taken seriously in the island culture, because its contractual basis involved rights to land and property and to social relationships and family privileges. Christian marriage elevated all of these cultural ties and benefits to a new dignity and placed husband and wife together as fellow-heirs of the grace of life. The Christian home thus became a happy, wholesome illustration of the fact that "If any man is in Christ he is a new creation."

Many heathen men had more than one wife when they accepted the Christian faith. Careful provision was made for the support of the wives who were put away. Inglis points out that the great shortage of marriageable women on Aneityum meant that the plural wives were immediately sought as wives by unmarried men. Dr. Inglis' chapter on "Courtship and Marriage on Aneityum" in his valuable book "Bible Illustrations from the New Hebrides" will amplify this brief paragraph. [p. 162-175].

Christian burial

The heathen despised the body, when dead, and seldom gave it much respect, unless it was the body of a chief or of one greatly respected or loved. Cannibalism, the desecration of the dead, and the lack of any doctrine of a resurrection for the body all made the Bible teaching of reverence for the dead new and startling.

The first Christians followed the Bible practice of the decent burial of the dead, accompanied with worship, prayer and praise. The whole company of believers gathered as one family at the

Worship of the Early Christians

open grave. The body, wrapped in mats, was laid decently in a shallow grave. Wailing gave way in some measure to songs of praise and prayers of thanksgiving for the gift of eternal life in Jesus.

Christian burial grounds sprang up beside many mission stations. Examples may be seen today at Taloa, Ngunu and on Fila Island. Where an island like Tongoa turned rapidly to Christianity the old burial grounds in the bush continued to be used. As a result many of the old customs have lived on. The frequency of death and the steady depopulation of the islands made the people familiar with the smell of the open soil, but for these early Christians death had lost its sting.

Singing in the early churches

The old social life was full of song. The people paddled their canoes to the rhythm of song and hauled out logs to the chant of music. The head of the singers was a person of importance in tribal life. There were elaborate forms of poetry, and great varieties of accompaniment and of musical instruments. The songs were important in passing on the history of the people from one generation to the next. Much of the song was religious and was used for the great festivals of the year and the great events of the life of the tribe.

The Rev. T. Watt Leggett, Mrs. Agnes Watt's biographer, wrote of the Tannese people, whose games, legends and culture Mrs. Watt knew well: "The Tannese are a musical people, and their desire for new hymns was almost insatiable. Even in heathenism the spirits were invoked annually for fresh music for the season's dances. On no island was the service of song more developed than on Tanna, and the spirited manner in which they sang was the admiration of all who heard them." [Agnes C. P. Watt, Rev. T. Watt Leggett p. 43].

By 1896 the South Tanna hymnal contained ninety-five hymns, psalms and chants. The congregations were in the habit of chanting the Lord's Prayer and the Ten Commandments at the Sabbath service. The chants appear to come from the LMS through the Polynesian teachers, as do a few of the tunes which may still be heard.

The metrical Psalms

The Presbyterian missionaries taught the people to sing their own translations of the metrical Psalms. To this day nothing moves a congregation in the islands more than the opening of worship with Psalm 100 to the tune "Old Hundredth" — rolled out with wave-like rhythm and conviction. Psalms 1, 23, 40, 103, 121 and 145 were and are commonly found in local languages and hymn books and have become an important part of the people's sung praises.

Early hymns

At an early date the first missionaries translated simple hymns into language which all could feel and understand. Seven months after reaching Nguna, Peter Milne wrote his first hymn, a translation of "One is kind above all others." Mrs. Milne wrote it out for the teachers to use and to teach to the people.

In 1873 Milne notes "A blind young man from Moso was present at the service. He had heard our translation of the hymn, 'When mothers of Salem their children brought to Jesus' and could sing part of it." [Peter Milne of Nguna p.171].

In 1877 Milne translated the negro "spiritual" "There are angels hovering round," which was made popular by an American negro choir, the Jubilee Singers, at about that time.

"Sankey"

The Moody and Sankey Campaigns (1870-1895) launched hundreds of new hymns on the Christian church. They met a social and spiritual need and found instant acceptance in the New Hebrides church. After 1877 we find Sankey's books providing the greater part of the hymns for island translations. Next came the widespread use of the English editions of Sankey's hymns for testimony meetings and choir services.

Teaching of the tonic sol-fa notation at the Teachers' Training Institution, Tangaia, after 1900 led to the whole New Hebrides Church becoming eager learners of Sankey's hymns and tunes in "doh-doh" notation as tonic sol-fa came to be called. This brought some weaknesses, but they were trifling alongside the revolutionary importance of this lively addition to the people's praise, which gave to worship a joyous sense of reality and bound the churches closer together.

*Worship of the Early Christians**"Sankey" in translation*

The arrival of "Sankey" gave a new direction to the translation of hymns, which now passed into the hands of New Hebrideans, who could *feel* the meaning of many of Sankey's hymns and readily translate the ideas into their languages. On many stations over the years the people came to their missionaries with translated hymns from "Sankey." The missionaries could not keep up with the task of checking, copying and printing these early attempts at enlarging the translated hymnals.

The largest of the New Hebrides language hymn books, "*Tusi Nalegana*" of Nguna-Tonga shows what the collection owes to "Sankey;" many were beautifully rendered by such people as Jack Tavimaso and Stephen Kalorisi.

In 1888 a Tannese named Kaiasi, of Kwamera, translated "Jesus is Mine" into his language. Mrs. Watt of Tanna called this "the first instance we know of a native in this group translating a hymn." [Agnes C. P. Watt p. 287].

I wonder if she was right?

Musical accompaniment

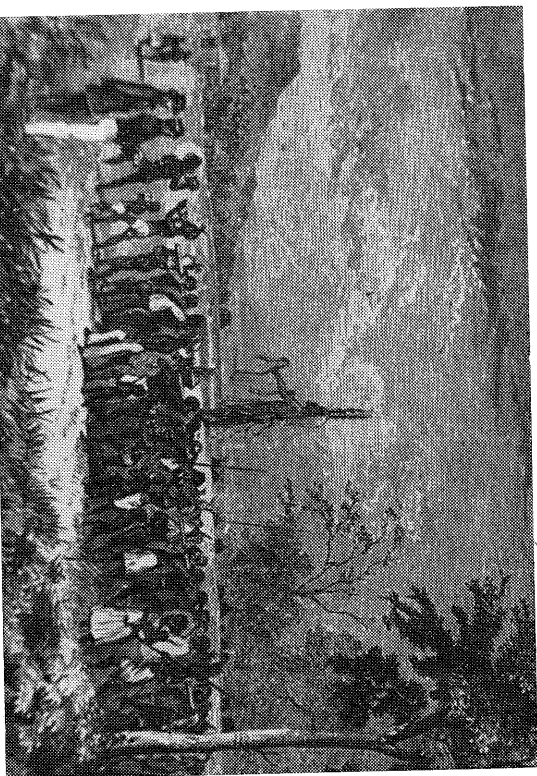
New Hebridean churches seem to have preferred the familiar music of the human voice to the imported help of organs and pianos. Each hymn was begun by a "precentor," who took the liberty of re-pitching the note if he found the pitch too high or too low. The congregation swung obediently in behind him. Occasionally an impatient rival voice would strike up on a new note, or with a faster time.

The first Mrs. Paton, who died on Tanna in 1859, had her piano with her at Port Resolution. The second Mrs. Paton of Aniwa, Mrs. Watt of Tanna, and Mrs. Milne of Nguna had music in their souls. They played the organ and sometimes helped the services of praise in church.

John G. Paton and Peter Milne lacked this gift of music, but Oscar Michelsen was a master of music and of good translation. He was also a favourite on the fiddle among New Hebrideans and missionaries alike.

Singing helped the shy woman and the heathen man to draw near enough to the "worship" to listen to the truth concerning Jesus and was an important part of the work of evangelization in the first generation. It has continued to build up the churches.

The Scottish Revised Church Hymnary became the semi-official hymn book of the Presbyterian Church of the New Hebrides. Its majestic music and unfamiliar English had a foreign sound and seemed to fail to meet the needs of an Island Church in Melanesia. This fact partly explains the popularity of such recent Bislama hymn books as "Ol Sing Blong Nyu Laef" and the ever-popular Bible-based choruses.



Community work on a new Church at Aneityum. Carrying in a huge log, to traditional chanting, under the direction of the chief astride the log; probably 1852.

CHAPTER THIRTY-FOUR

The Hope of the Early Christians

After death what?

The island culture spoke about a shadowy life for the spirit of man after death. But there was no knowledge of resurrection life for the body.

Mrs. Watt says of the ideas of the people on South Tanna about 1870: "When they die, they say their bodies moulder in the dust, but their spirits go to another world called Ipai, which simply means 'very far off.' There they live as on earth, dig and plant, give and are given in marriage. After remaining there for an indefinite time they transmigrate into owls and other animals, and afterwards into sacred stones." [Agnes C. P. Watt p. 110].

The after-life beliefs on all the islands were sad and depressing. The coastal tribes and those on the smaller islands could show the rocky capes and cliffs where the spirits of the dead leaped into the sea, before they began their long and hard journey to the underworld.

The ancestors feared the sacred men who could injure them and kill them by witchcraft. Sickness, accident, hurricane, and death were believed to be caused by enemies using clever sacred men. All the people lived in daily fear of others and none felt safe.

Fear of the spirits of the dead

Worse than any fear of the living was fear of the *matemates*, the Efatese name for the spirits of the dead. Often grown men were afraid to go outside their huts at night. Strange sounds terrified them. A widow would be afraid of the sound of her dead husband returning to the hut at night as a *matemate*. Children were brought up from childhood on folk stories of the spirits. They feared the banyan, the bamboo grove, the reef, the rocks and the burying places. Their lives were schooled in terror and they lived all their days under the shadow of death.

When the Lord Jesus Christ entered the lives of the early Christians these fears lost their powers. Psalm 23 began to be the song of their hearts. They still faced sickness, enemies, evil spirits and death. But Jesus, dwelling in their hearts, took away the terror of their old fears. Jesus was stronger than the *natemates*, and the demons.

Waihit of Aneityum

Waihit was a heathen chief who lived quite close to the Geddies at Aneityum. He began to show an interest in the worship about 1850. Heathen opposition grew stronger. Several Christians died. The heathen said that these deaths were caused by the *natmasses* who were angry with the worship. Then Waihit's only child died. He was a little boy whom Waihit loved dearly. The heathen came and taunted the bereaved father.

Waihit was not yet very strong for the worship. He had not yet been baptized. He went to Mr. Geddie and asked if he could tell him anything out of the Bible that would strengthen his heart and bring him comfort. Geddie quoted the words of David after his own son died, "I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me." (2 Samuel 12:23).

This text met Waihit's need. He broke off his mourning and left the mission house. The idea that he would meet his little boy in heaven soothed his sorrow. When Geddie went to Waihit's house later in the day he found him quietly telling the heathen men all he knew about heaven.

When any heathen tried to shake his faith Waihit always repeated the words, "I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me." None of those heathen knew that hope. The hope of heaven met Waihit's need in that dark hour. Two years later in 1852 he was among the first to be baptized.

Hope of heaven

This inward change of heart led to an outward change of appearance. The wild savage look faded. The frowning face learned to smile. Surly distrust and rudeness gave way to gentle trust and courtesy. God's presence was more real than the face of the sun. God's pardon was like the falling of the rain that washed the volcanic ash from the forest leaves. Heaven was more real than the ground they walked upon.

This faith, hope and love of the early Christians in the New Hebrides grew best in times of trouble and opposition. They gave a clear witness to Jesus when they were in danger, alone, or dying. The widow grew brave, the young man gained strength to stand, the old man had the courage to ask for Christian burial. The Holy Spirit wrote the promises of the Bible on the hearts of the first converts in a way that helped them through their difficulties. The early Christians were severely tempted and tried, but firmly stood their ground.

The people saw this living hope in the first evangelists who came among them, the Polynesian teachers and their wives, many of whom died or were killed in the New Hebrides. Here is a typical story.

Tauri of Rarotonga, 1854

When the LMS ship "John Williams" called at Efaté in October 1854 the missionaries found only one of their teachers still alive. He was Setefano. The chief of Erakor, Pomare, came on board with Setefano. Setefano was overcome with sobbing and could hardly speak. His companion Vaaru of Rarotonga had died of fever.

Setefano handed to the missionaries on the ship a letter. It was from his fellow-teacher Tauri of Rarotonga and had been written in February 1854. Tauri told in the letter how he and his wife had made a good start in learning the Erakor language and in their meetings among the heathen. In the midst of these encouragements his young wife died. Tauri wrote, "Death has separated us; but it was *well with her* in death. Alas, for the heathen, they were just beginning to understand, and to rejoice in her instruction."

A month later Tauri's only child died. He wrote, "This is a severe blow — my heart is full of sorrow; Rautoa my son is dead. I am weeping — but I lean my troubles upon Jesus."

Tauri's thoughts for his people were upmost.

"Our greatest anxiety is for those who have come to us for instruction; they are constantly tried and tempted to turn aside."

A few months later Tauri took ill. There was no one to care for him and he died. [On Tauri see William Gill, *Gems from the Coral Islands* p. 92, 93].

Tauri was one of the noble army of Samoans, Rarotongans and

Loyalty Islanders who died in hope. They could have stayed at home, and lived in health and comfort. They sowed, toiled, and prayed in hope, and in hope they closed their eyes in death.

A heathen chief on Tanna, 1870

The heathen could see this new sustaining hope of the Christians. In 1870 Mrs. Watt at Kwamera, Tanna, went to see a heathen high chief who was dying in a bush village. The people said that when he died three women were to be strangled — his old mother and his two wives. Mrs. Watt went to try to stop this strangling. Mrs. Watt spoke to the dying man. Here is her account of what followed:

“We spoke of our sinful hearts by nature, and of Jesus the Saviour, of the perishing nature of all earthly things, and of that bright home on high for all who trust in Jesus. As we spoke he lifted up his eyes to heaven, and when we came to that last sentence, ‘For all who trust in Jesus’ he looked earnestly at me and said, with great feeling, ‘Jesus!’”

“Poor man, he was unable to speak more; he grasped my hand as I sat on the ground beside him, and I prayed that the Lord would have mercy on him, even at the eleventh hour. A week afterwards he died. On hearing of his death we hastened to the funeral.”

At the burial Mrs. Watt learned that that the old chief had his heathen people that they were to bury him as a Christian; they were to put no muskets, or kava, or gods into his grave; but simply to bury him in a garment; and above all, to take no lives. Every point of his dying directions was full of meaning. [Agnes C. P. Watt p. 139, 140].

John Worarua on Tongoa

Up till recent times on Tongoa, when a man found a slab of basalt rock on the beach below the cliffs, he would take it home. “That is for my grave,” he would tell his family.

Many of the early Christians knew the time when they would go home to God. They gathered their people around them. Then deliberately and in quiet peace they dismissed their spirit and went Home.

As I write these words my grateful thoughts go back to the

hope which upheld John Worarua of Selepanga on Tongoa. He died in 1942. “Let there be no crying, no wailing,” he entreated his people.

To this day the wailing prevails at death, even among the Christians. I do not fully know why.

thirty men who died in the islands, together with eighteen wives and some children.

The records are incomplete. I have estimated that more than one hundred men, women and children, Polynesian evangelists, died to bring the love of God to the New Hebrides.

The love of the first Christians

The language of love among the people who became Christians gradually became the common language of the islands. Visitors to the New Hebrides sometimes find amusement in the way in which everyone wants to shake their hands. These visitors do not realise that they are saying to them "We love you, you belong to the people who brought us the Good News; we welcome you to our islands."

John Geddie found on Anietyum that the people had no form of greeting. While he was in Samoa he heard the Samoan word *alofa*, meaning love or pity, used as the Christian greeting. He introduced this form of greeting among the first Christians on Anietyum.

"Kaiheung raieung!"

"My love to you!"

From the word *alofa* has come the common word now used in the central islands for a hand-shake.

"Talovai!"

The idea of such a greeting quickly spread.

When the Milnes landed at Nguna in 1870 Mrs. Milne noticed that the women kept saying to her,

"A rurum iko!"; now written, a *roromi ko*.

It was some time before she found the meaning.

"I love you!"

Though these were heathen women, they could read love in the face and actions of Mary Milne. They loved her in response with an ever-deepening love [Peter Milne of Nguna p. 97].

When Mrs. Miller and I landed at Nguna in 1941 as guests of the Rev. C. K. and Mrs. Crump, we could feel that love flowing strongly towards us. It seemed just as deep and strong when we said our last farewell there in November 1973.

The symbol of love

There are many species of fruit-eating doves in the islands

CHAPTER THIRTY-FIVE

The Love of the Early Christians

The love of the Polynesian evangelists for us

IT IS NOT easy to gather the names of all the Polynesian evangelists who came from the London Missionary Society, after 1839. Most of them were first generation converts to Christianity. They knew what heathenism had been like on their Polynesian islands. This made them good missionaries while the people of the New Hebrides were still in darkness.

Because of malaria in the New Hebrides the Polynesian teachers were subject to much fever and related diseases. Their wives were ready to face these risks and the additional dangers for women among the savage islanders. Some were left as widows; many lost children by death. Few of those who came returned to their homes again. They laid down their lives for us.

The LMS had a rule never to place Polynesian teachers on an island unless the local chiefs made a promise to assist the teachers and protect their lives. The chiefs sometimes changed their minds and left the teachers to die. When sickness came to an island, or a severe hurricane, the *tapu* men blamed the Christian teachers and demanded that they be killed or chased out of the island. When the teachers were not able to leave for lack of shipping they were in danger of death from violence, neglect or treachery. Sometimes they were isolated from the people and left to die of sickness and starvation; sometimes they were murdered and their bodies desecrated or eaten.

These powerful Polynesian men were strongly built and tough fighters in their old heathen wars; but as Christian teachers they refused to take up weapons to defend themselves. They believed that Christ's example was their guide and rule.

I have collected the names of about seventy of these men, and of some of the wives. I have also recorded the names of over

and there are many proverbs about them. Jesus spoke of His people being "harmless as doves." The people learned what that meant. John Geddie's journal has this entry for 12 March 1854.

"At Aname today . . . the Lord's Supper . . . We met for the first time in the new church . . . It is pleasing to see so many persons formerly hostile to each other, now meeting as friends and christian brethren . . . A dove had found its way into the church . . . It is the emblem of peace and love, and I thought that it had almost a right to be there. The natives who were now met as brethren in Christ were in their former state hateful and hating one another. And I thought also of the Spirit which descended in the form of a dove, and felt a humble hope that the same Spirit was present with us." [Misi Gete p. 179].

The love shown by the Christians was something new and unknown to the heathen in their old ways. The problem of old grievances and old debts led to the practice of the heathen community making a great feast as the last act of their old life as they were about to take the worship. The feast brought together all their old heathen friends and enemies; all outstanding troubles were settled in accordance with the old customs.

Thus the people entered the Christian community free from any obligations to the past and chose to live under a new law of love. The law of "pay-back" no longer ruled their lives.

This spirit of reconciling love had been at work among the warring chiefs of Aneiyum. On 19 September 1852 Inglis and Geddie witnessed a miracle of reconciliation in the church at Anelgaunahat. Geddie recorded this in his journal:

"Mr. Inglis brought with him yesterday an old warrior named Yata (Yata). He has not been at this side of the island for many years. In the house of God he met Ninatiwan an old fighting man like himself. The last time they met was on the field of battle. I wondered how they would act now, and was delighted to see them embrace each other when the congregation was dismissed. I could not help turning Mr. Inglis' attention to the sight and saying, 'See what the gospel has wrought.'" [Misi Gete p. 142].

The leaven of love was at work among the first Christians even before they were baptized. On 6 January 1851 Mr. Geddie wrote in his journal:

"A skirmish took place today between two parties of natives near the mission premises. It originated in a case of adultery. None of the Christian natives took part in the affair. They endeavoured to

act the part of peace makers. As the fight was likely to be renewed they used their best efforts to reconcile the contending parties. They went without my knowledge and besought their countrymen to give up fighting, and dwell together in peace. There were four natives wounded in the fight, but I hope they will all recover. Their bodies were pierced in several places with spears and I have dressed their wounds for them. [Misi Gete p. 80].

The Christians not only dressed the wounds of the heathen; they cared for them in their sicknesses. On 27 July 1852 Geddie wrote:

"An epidemic prevails at present . . . The heathen are ashamed to come for medicine, but many of them apply for it through their friends. The christian natives have been unremitting in their attentions to the heathen in sickness and this has had a softening influence on them. It has been in our power, during the prevalence of disease to return good for evil, which seems to awaken feelings in favour of a religion which appears so lovely in those who profess it." [Misi Gete p. 136].

Even more remarkable was the desire of the heathen that the Christians should come and pray with them in their sicknesses. The same journal entry adds:

"I have learned from the natives that they have great faith in the efficacy of prayer in sickness. They mention many cases of remarkable cures in answer to prayer. Even some of the heathen are so convinced of its value that they request their christian friends to pray for them." [Misi Gete p. 136].

On 1 November 1852 Geddie mentions another similar case, this time of a chief with a record of evil and opposition:

"The sick chief who was thought to be dying is still alive. I prepared medicine for him at Aname and sent it by the natives. He has been much better ever since he took it. The kindness shown to him by the christian natives in his sickness has softened him. He has been told by them of the disease of his soul as well as his body and he is now desirous to know more about divine things. Some of the natives go every afternoon and pray with him." [Misi Gete p. 145].

The story could go on, from island to island, as the Good News changed the hearts of the people. They showed the flower of love in their lives, homes, dealings with others, and toward their missionaries. None of us who have had the privilege of serving the Church in the New Hebrides will ever know a deeper, more

enduring and more transparent love than we have been shown by brothers and sisters in Christ in the New Hebrides church.

They showed it in their dealings with the heathen, and in their changed attitudes to husbands and wives, aged people, children, and strangers. Even the chiefs found a new dignity when their authority was seen to proceed from God, and His Word.

The greatest display of this love in action was the outreach of the little bands of the first Christians on Aneityum to their heathen friends. Nowhere in the New Hebrides, probably nowhere in the South Pacific, possibly nowhere in the world has so small a Church sent out so many workers, with the love of Christ as their grand compulsion.

They went to Futuna, to Tanna in a constant stream, to Aniwa, to Eromanga, to Efate — and later to the northern islands. Many came home; many perished; many chose to remain and die among their converts on other islands.

I estimate that two hundred Aneityumese missionaries left the little island between 1852 and 1879. Almost all were married, and we have counted wives in the estimated number of two hundred. These were men and women of influence, the best the church on Aneityum could provide. They left all. The love of Christ contained them. That "expulsive power of a new affection" to which Dr. Inglis refers, was the love of Christ. These missionaries were sent by the Author of that love, so that their mission was spontaneous, sustained, and successful.

Side by side with this mission the church on Aneityum was awake to the mission of hospitality. Boat-loads and canoe-loads of heathen came to Aneityum from Tanna and Futuna, refugees from trading ships, and returned labourers dumped on Aneityum; all found the open arms of the young Church ready to receive, feed, and care for them. The same story could be told of nearly every island as it was evangelized.

The love of Christ made human life precious. Strangling of widows ceased and destruction of infant children almost ceased. Inglis could name only one or two cases of separation among the hundreds of couples married by him during twenty-five years on Aneityum.

Further north the schooner "Chance" came to grief on a reef on the south side of Tonga. Mataputi, the chief of Meriu, rescued the recruiters and the crew. His paramount chief, Manaurā, from

Mangarisu, wanted Mataputi to hand over these men to him. Mataputi knew that all would be killed and eaten. Mataputi was an earnest seeker and on the side of the worship. He saved these men and Oscar Michelsen the missionary was able to get them away to Sydney by another trading ship.

A year or two later Michelsen heard from Epi that the Napuka tribe on the hills of the South East Epi were being slowly eaten up by their stronger enemies. The first Tongan Christians went across and rescued the Napuka people and welcomed them to Tonga. When South Epi took the worship these refugees went back to a new life. The fear of violent death had gone.

In addition to all the other labour freely given the custom arose on many islands of giving time for the care of the gardens of teachers, pastors, and widows. Love knew no bounds, kept no accounts, suffered and was kind, did not behave itself unseemly, and bore all things.

And when love's last sacrifice was asked, it was gladly made.

"During the night, Korkor, an Aneityumese man who had been with Mr. Murray on Ambrin, and who had been taken on shore (at Eromanga) to die, passed away to his eternal rest. He gave testimony to his faith in Jesus and his hope of eternal life. . . . He did good service in the Master's cause, though he was 'only an amour bearer.' His body now rests close by the graves of the martyred Gordons and the sainted Macair. 'Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints.'" [Mrs. Watt, letter of 1887 in Agnes C. P. Watt p. 280].

Korkor's unknown grave may well represent to us the graves of the unnamed men and women who laid down their lives for their friends.

The love of the early missionaries for the people

When John Geddie was appointed the first missionary of the Nova Scotian Church he was immediately criticised. Just before he left Canada in 1846 he wrote to his friend the Rev. John Keir:

"The various trials that have been thrown in my path have led me to reflect much on my motives in going to the heathen to preach Jesus to them. . . . My desire to go far hence to the Gentiles is stronger now than ever it was. I long for the time when God in mercy will honour me to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ among the heathen."

These early missionaries were clear about why they came to

us. They came to preach Christ and the benefits which always flow from saving faith — peace with God and man; health of soul and society; respect for self and others. Their plan was broad because their foundation was strong.

Their love gave them the will to learn languages, translate the Scriptures, and banish dislike for books. The people were able to look at Jesus in the Holy Scriptures and in the lives of Polynesian and European missionaries and their wives.

Their love for us made them cure diseases, care for orphans, and stand ready to rescue the people from slavery and death.

Roll of Missionaries 1839-1880

(other than Polynesians and loyal Islanders)

London Missionary Society:

- | | | |
|---|------------------------|------------|
| 1. Rev. John Williams | Murdered, Eromanga | 20.11.1839 |
| 2. Mr. James Harris
(visiting Christian) | Murdered, Eromanga | 20.11.1839 |
| 3. Rev. George Turner and
Mrs. Turner | Port Resolution, Tanna | 1842-3 |
| 4. Rev. Henry Nisbet and
Mrs. Nisbet | Port Resolution, Tanna | 1842-3 |
| 5. Rev. Thomas Powell and
Mrs. Powell | Aneityum | 1848-9 |
| 6. Rev. Samuel Ella and
Mrs. Ella | Aneityum (temporary) | 1864 |

Presbyterian Mission:— from Canada

- | | | |
|--|---|---------|
| 1. Rev. John Geddie, D.D., and
Mrs. Geddie | Aneityum | 1848-72 |
| 2. Mr. Isaac Archibald,
catechist, and Mrs. Archibald | Aneityum | 1848-49 |
| 3. Rev. G. N. Gordon and
Mrs. Gordon (England) | Both murdered at
Dillon's Bay
Eromanga, 20.5.1861 | 1857-61 |
| 4. Rev. J. W. Matheson and
Mrs. Matheson | S. Tanna.
Mrs. Matheson died at
Aneityum. Mr. Matheson
at Mare, Loyalty Is. 1862. | 1858-62 |
| 5. Rev. S. F. Johnston and
Mrs. Johnston | Port Resolution, Tanna
Mr. Johnston died at
Port Resolution on
21.1.1861.
Mrs. Johnston married
Rev. J. Copeland in 1863 | 1859-61 |
| 6. Captain William Fraser and
Mrs. Fraser. | Of the Mission Ship
"Dayspring" | 1864-71 |
| 7. Rev. Donald Morrison and
Mrs. Morrison | Erakor, Efate
Mr. Morrison died
in N. Zealand on
23.10.1869. | 1864-69 |

8. Rev. James D. Gordon
(single) Eromanga and N. W. Santo. Murdered at Potnuma, Eromanga, 7.3.1872. 1864-72
9. Rev. William McCullaugh and Mrs. McCullaugh Aneityum 1864-66
10. Rev. Jas. McNair and Mrs. McNair (Scotland) Dillon's Bay, Eromanga 1866-70
Mr. McNair died at Eromanga, 15.7.1870.
Mrs. McNair later married Rev. George Turner of LMS, Samoa.
11. Rev. John Goodwill and Mrs. Goodwill S. W. Santo 1870-1874
12. Rev. J. D. Murray and Mrs. Murray Aneityum 1872-1876
13. Rev. J. W. Mackenzie, D.D., and Mrs. Mackenzie Erakor-Fila 1872-1912
14. Rev. H. A. Robertson, D.D., and Mrs. Robertson Eromanga 1872-1914
15. Rev. Joseph Annand, M.A., D.D., and Mrs Annand Fila, Aneityum, and Tangoa 1873-1913

Presbyterian Mission:— from Scotland

1. Rev. John Inglis, D.D., and Mrs. Inglis Aname, Aneityum 1852-1879
2. Rev. J. G. Paton, D.D., and Mrs. Paton (Mrs. Paton and infant son died on Tanna, 1859). Aniwa 1858-1862
1866-1881
3. Rev. J. Copeland Tanna, Aneityum Futuna 1858-1881
4. Rev. J. Niven and Mrs Niven (immediately resigned) Pango, Efaté 1865
5. Rev. Jas. Cosh, M.A., D.D., and Mrs. Cosh Port Resolution, Tanna 1866-1872
6. Rev. Thos. Neilson and Mrs. Neilson Aneityum 1866-1882
7. Mr. (Rev.) Jas. H. Lawrie and Mrs. Lawrie, received as elder and evangelist — later ordained. 1879-1892

Mr. Copeland married, in 1863, the widow of S. F. Johnston. She died on Futuna 20.1.1876.

Presbyterian Mission:— from Australia

1. Rev. Daniel Macdonald DD Havannah 1872-1907
and Mrs. Macdonald Harbour
2. Mr. Peter Holt (layman) Burumba, 1880-1881
and Mrs. Holt Epi

Note: The Rev. J. G. Paton, after his second marriage in 1865, was received as a missionary of the Presbyterian Church of Victoria.

The Rev. Jas. D. Gordon was for a short time a missionary of the Presbyterian Church of New South Wales. 1868-70.

Presbyterian Mission:— New Zealand

1. Rev. William Watt and Mrs. Watt Kwamera, Tanna 1869-1910
2. Rev. Peter Milne and Mrs. Milne Nguna 1870-1924
Mr. Milne died at Nguna in 1924
3. Mr. (Rev.) O. Michelsen (single) Tongoa 1879-1931
Mr. Michelsen was ordained and married on short furlough, 1880-1

Note: Mr. Watt was sent out by the Northern Presbyterian Church, Mr. Milne and Mr. Michelsen by the Southern Presbyterian Church (The Synod of Otago and Southland). Mr. Watt and Mr. Milne were both trained in Britain, Mr. Michelsen in New Zealand.

Summary:

Thus the New Hebrides Church received thirty-three European missionaries and their thirty wives up to the year 1880. Five of these were martyred in our islands. They were Rev. John Williams, and his friend James Harris, Rev. George Gordon and his wife Ellen, and Rev. James Gordon.

Seven more of them died in the islands or soon after leaving — four men and three wives. I have a record of thirteen missionary children who died and were buried in these islands, up to the year 1880.

Twenty-three European lives were laid down in the islands up

to 1880, while Donald Morrison was buried at Onehunga, New Zealand and J. W. Matheson at Mare in the Loyalty Islands.

Service:

Two of the New Zealand missionaries served for more than fifty years. Three of the Canadians served for more than forty years. The journals, letters, reports and books of these early missionaries all tell the same honest story. That story is written on the grave stone of one of them, at Port Resolution, Tanna.

"In rabi nakur Ipare" — "She loved the people of Tanna." She had often said, "I live for Tanna, and if need be, will die for it," Mrs. Agnes Watt, who died on Tanna in 1894. [Agnes C. P. Watt p. 46, 40].

Epilogue

"Remember your leaders,
Those who spoke to you the Word of God;
Consider the outcome of their life,
And imitate their faith."

Hebrews 13.7

WE REMEMBER

Like the sound of many waters,
The thunder of the waves upon the reef,
The voices from another world —
We hear them still, and
We remember.

John Williams and the Polynesians,
Samoans and Rarotongans
Tall and tanned and weaponless,
For service or for sacrifice;
We remember.

Geddies, Inglis, Gordons, Patons,
Copelands, Mathesons, Johnstons, Morrisons,
Women, men and little children,
To die, yet not to die;
We remember.

Nohat the chief and Nemeysin the martyr,
Aniwa's Namakai and Tanna's Jon Pata,
Mana and Yomot from red Eromanga,
Sualo, Pomare and Vakalomara,
We remember.

"And you shall remember all the way
which the Lord your God has led you." Deuteronomy 8.2

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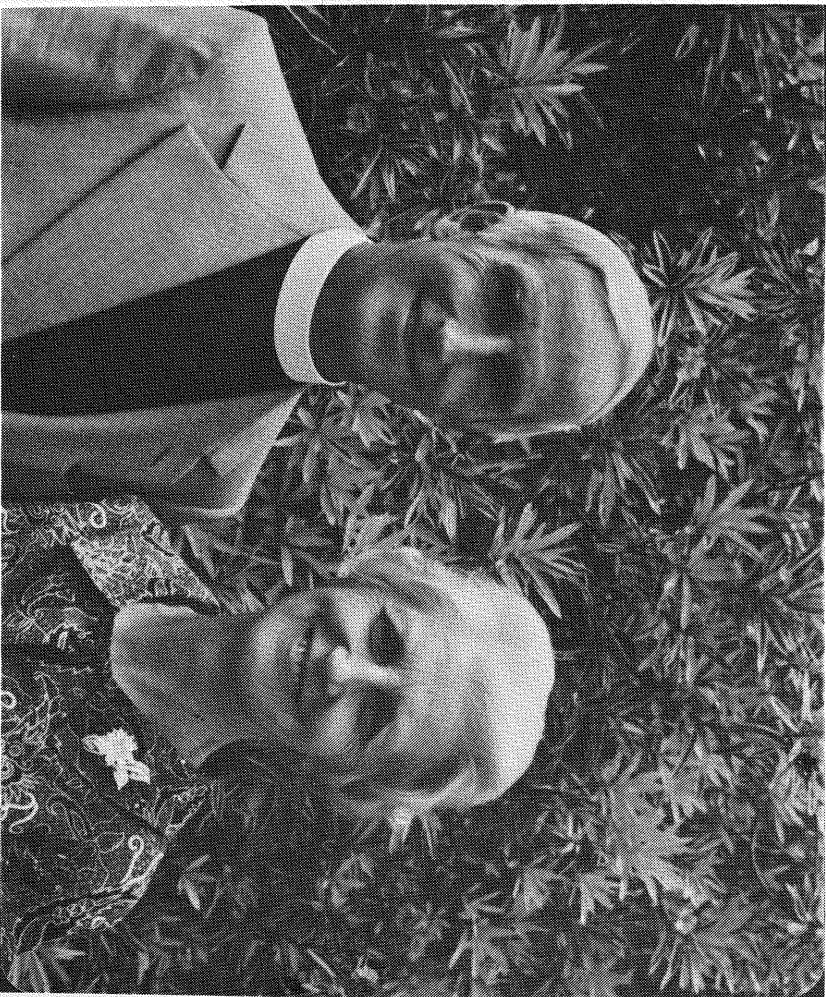
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GRAHAM MILLER and his wife Flora arrived in the New Hebrides in May 1941 as missionaries of the Presbyterian Church of New Zealand. Seven months later came the Japanese bombing of Pearl Harbour and war in the Pacific.

While on Tongoa from 1941-1947 they worked towards the emergence of the indigenous church. This led to the inauguration of the Presbyterian Church of the New Hebrides in 1948. He was chosen as the first Moderator. From 1947-1952 he was principal of the Teachers' Training Institute at Tangoa, Santo. Their four children were born in the New Hebrides. Dr. Miller has served the New Hebrides Church primarily in the ministry of the Word and incidentally as a lawyer, as a linguist, and as an enthusiast for the preservation of the culture. This is the first in a projected series of historical books written to tell 'man New Hebrides' the largely lost facts about the coming of Christianity and the planting of the Church. Dr. and Mrs. Miller were invited back by the Presbyterian Church of the New Hebrides in 1971 to assist in establishing the Presbyterian Bible College at Tangoa on the site of the former Teachers' Training Institute. He is at present minister of St. Giles' Presbyterian Church, Hurstville, New South Wales.