

# Pioneer Puritan Evangelism in the South Pacific

by Ian Murray

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*The sermon explores the history and impact of Puritan evangelism in the South Pacific, highlighting key figures and their challenges in spreading the gospel.*

**Duration:** 53:26

**Scripture:** Acts 28:1

**Topics:** "Missionary Work", "Gods Grace"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the powerful impact of the Gospel of Christ and the transformative work of God's grace. He highlights the example of John G. Peyton, a missionary who faced numerous challenges and dangers while preaching and befriending the natives on an island. Despite the opposition and hardships, Peyton remained faithful and dedicated to serving God. The sermon emphasizes the need for believers to have a high ambition and to be encouraged by the records of God's grace in the lives of His people.

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## Transcript

I want to speak this afternoon on the pioneer evangelism which took place in the new suburbies in the South Pacific between the years 1848 and 1862. And I take this as an example of the application and illustration of the theology, Reformed, Puritan, Calvinistic theology which planted the gospel in these islands in the last century. It seems to me that it was a very remarkable period of history when the New Testament faith was introduced into a situation of the most complete darkness when some of the finest Christian lives came into contact with, I suppose, some of the most brutalized and degraded human beings that have ever lived.

And for the sake of clarity I am trying to particularize to these two islands in the New Hebrides, the islands of Aniton and Cana. And in each instance the lives of men who served on these two islands. On the island of Aniton, John Debbie.

And on the island of Cana, John G. Paton. Now something by way of background for the introduction of missions to the South Pacific. You will remember that in the 18th century in the United Kingdom and also here on this side of the Atlantic two things took place simultaneously.

One was that in the secular world there was a great preference of the exploration of the earth. The extent of the population of the world. An understanding of the geography of the world.

This made great advances of course during the 18th century. And in the Pacific, in particular the voyages of Captain Cook who died in the Pacific in 1779. The voyages of Captain Cook did a great deal to open up an understanding of that part of the world.

That was one thing. Then simultaneously with that interest in the secular world there was of course the great evangelical revival and the great awakening in this country. And there was therefore a number of men and women whose hearts were burdened with a concern that these remote corners of the earth should be reached with the gospel of Christ.

It was William Carey's original hope that he might be able to preach in the Pacific. It was said of him by one of his friends that even pinpoint dockings of the oceans were precious in his sight. The Baptist Missionary Society was formed in 1792.

A committee of five men and Carey and Thomas went as I'm sure you know two years later to India. To Bengal and not to the Pacific. But in 1795 another missionary society was formed, the London Missionary Society.

And that society made as its first objective the establishing of the gospel in the South Pacific. And so in 1796 this missionary society chartered a vessel, the dock. And with thirty missionaries on board the dock set sail for the island of Tahiti.

Tahiti about half way between the continent of South America and Australia. And after a voyage of 208 days round Cape Horn the dock reached Tahiti. These thirty missionaries then were counted on different islands.

There were seventeen on Tahiti, three, four, five on other islands in the near vicinity. The result of this missionary endeavour, sad to say, was total failure. The missionaries left on Tahiti within about two years were reduced in number to seven men and one woman.

Of which two had abandoned their profession of Christianity. On the island of Kanga three of the missionaries were murdered and the rest fled. Altogether in the year 1806 the report from these missionaries was, the ones who had remained, was that there was no success and in 1809 they were all withdrawn.

And when this was discussed in London it was urged that the possibility of missionary endeavour in this part of the world should be abandoned and attention should be paid elsewhere. But there was one member of the committee who pleaded most earnestly that prayer should be continued before a final decision was made. And in 1814 two missionaries were sent back to this area.

The next year in 1814 on January the 30th something happened in London which was to change the whole course of future events. There was a road in London called Tottenham Court Road and it was well known at that date because on that road was situated the tabernacle that was built for the preaching of George Whitfield. And in 1814 of course many years after Whitfield's death the gospel was still being preached in that building and a young man by the name of John Williams was invited to a service that took place that evening.

He had not intended to be found in such a place, he was invited by somebody walking down Tottenham Court Road. He went in, he was spiritually awakened, he was in due time soundly converted and he was called inwardly constrained to the work of the gospel in the Southern Pacific. So John Williams sailed for Tahiti in the year 1817.

I think he said, I think and hope that I have no other desire in my soul than to be the means of winning souls to Christ. And he remained there for the next 18 years, not exactly in Tahiti because he was continually on the move. He discovered new islands, he moved westwards from Tahiti towards, in the direction of New Guinea.

He was reprimanded by the London committee for moving about too much, to which he sent a memorable reply. He said, I cannot content myself within the narrow limits of a single reef. And the preaching of John Williams was greatly owned and used by God.

There are no figures in existence that I know of, but it is quite evident that scores and probably hundreds of people in this part of the world were then converted. And he laid deep foundations for churches, he took a strong stand against quick professions of faith. And in particular he was outstanding in training natives, the Moens in particular, for the work of the gospel themselves.

After 18 years he came back to England in 1834, published a book called Missionary Enterprises. And then in 1838 he returned to Samoa with the hope and prayer that he might be able to carry the gospel further westwards to the islands of the new Hebrides. He then sailed from Samoa, leaving his wife in Samoa, he sailed for the new Hebrides in the winter of 1839.

And in the third week of November they were off the coast of the new Hebrides. He says in his last letter, I have just heard from Captain Morgan that we are 60 miles off the new Hebrides. So that we shall be there early tomorrow morning.

This evening we are to have a special prayer meeting. Oh how much depends upon the efforts of tomorrow. Will the savages receive us or not? The approaching week is to me the most important of my life.

Well in fact John Williams was on the very verge of his martyrdom. He landed on the island of Eremanga with a friend called Harris. The natives at first seemed friendly, but after they had gone a little way up the beach they were suddenly set upon.

Both were killed before they could return to the boat, the rowing boat that had brought them from the vessel. They were died and their bodies taken by these cannibals of the island of Eremanga. When the vessel returned to Samoa, John Williams' wife met the party from the boat and she said, Is all well? And a friend answered in a quiet tone, Yes, all is well.

And on the island of Samoa there is a monument to the memory of John Williams and it reads, Sacred to the memory of the Reverend John Williams, father of the Samoan and other missions. Aged 43 years and 5 months, he was killed by the cruel natives of Eremanga on the 20th of November 1849 while endeavouring to plant the gospel of peace on its shores. The death of John Williams had a two-fold effect.

One was that as news of it carried to different parts of the world, there was a great upsurge of prayer and of intercession. And secondly, on the island of Samoa and these other islands which John Williams had been used to evangelize, there was an upsurge of deep Christian compassion by the Christians on these

islands. So that men and women volunteered themselves to go to the new hebrides.

And in the next 15 years about 100 Samoan Christians went to these islands. As far as I know their story has not been recorded. There are just fragments of it.

But it is known of these 100 native Christians that over 50 died in these 50 years. Some died from disease. They were visiting islands that had infections that were quite new to them and to which they had no resistance.

Others were killed and murdered. On the island of Lalita where there were two missionaries landed, one married, they were killed by the natives after 19 days and their child was drowned. On the island of Cochina, two men landed and after one year they were still holding their ground and apparently making some contacts and friendships with the natives.

One of their wives, the wife of one of them joined them and his daughter, but within a short time after all four were murdered. On the little island of Nali the son of one of the chiefs from Samoa had settled. He said when he went to this island, my father has agreed to this.

He said to me when I left Rarotonga, I and my fathers before me have done much service for Satan. Go my son, I give you up, go and may you be a good warrior of Jesus Christ. This Christian man died of malaria, leaving his wife alone.

One of the native chiefs said that her life could be preserved if she would become one of his wives. She refused and in attempting to swim the channel of water between this island and the next, this Christian woman was drowned. Well these men and women were spiritual giants and the blood that they shed was certainly the seed of the church in the New Hebrides.

In 1848 the first missionary returned. The first missionary after John Williams death and his name was John Beddy. A Presbyterian from Canada who came to the New Hebrides with his wife.

If you look at an atlas, you will see that the islands of the Southern Pacific are like the stars of the Milky Way, they are endless. And of course many of them aren't even marked in our atlases. The New Hebrides is quite a considerable group and in the southern part of that group there are these three main islands.

To the north Aramanga, where Williams died. In the middle the island of Pana with a population of about 15,000. And then the southern most island is the island of the Onetim.

40 miles in circumference with a population then of 4,000 people. Beautiful islands, mountainous, well vegetated. Average temperature throughout the year of about 76 degrees.

Inhabited by people who spoke different languages on every island. And people who were utterly without the light of the gospel of Christ. Indeed the only way to describe them is to say as the missionaries often said that the depths of Satan as depicted in the first chapter of the epistle of Romans stood open and unveiled on these islands.

The people were filled with enmity one to another. No man went around without being armed, hateful and hating one another. On these islands there were different tribes, they were constantly in a state of warfare.

Human life was of no consequence. They were all cannibals. And some of the things which one reads give some conception of the appalling need of these poor people.

It was said that a human being was valued at about the same price as a large pig. Abortion was commonly practiced. Women were commonly strangled when their husbands died.

Nobody was buried unless he was a chief. People were simply thrown into the sea. They worshipped spirits.

Their deities, says one of the missionaries, their deities were like themselves. Selfish and malignant. They breathed no spirit of benevolence.

And the rewards and punishment for the future state were connected more with ritual observance than with moral character. Their religion contained no principle that could lead to a holy life. They certainly thought their gods were like themselves.

And that they approved of their sins. It would have been morally impossible on an item for any man to have conceived of such a character morally and religiously as that of the man Christ Jesus. To have done so would have been a miracle as great as that of his resurrection.

John Geddy then landed in 1748 and the first text of scripture that he wrote in his diary was the verse from Ezekiel Can these dry bones live? I should say in case I forget later on that the diary of John Geddy was published a year or two ago in Australia called Missy Geddy, the native name of John Geddy. It's been edited by R.S. Miller and it was published by the Presbyterian Church of Tasmania in 1975. It's a very moving account and it's the first publication of this man's diary.

Well, he put with him to a meeting some of these native Samoan Christians. I think about 12 of them. And before they spread out to different parts of the island they held a communion service together.

John Geddy preached in the Samoan language on the text If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ let him be anathema or anatha. And then these different Christians, natives from Samoa went to their different stations on the island. The whole season, says Geddy, the communion season is one of the deepest interests to me and I hope to others also.

Oh, when will the benighted natives of this island unite with us in this ordinance of love? Well, the first thing was to establish some kind of contact and friendship with these natives. The chief was a man called Merot and although he gave them permission to land he promised them no encouragement whatsoever as far as religion was concerned. And so through 1848 and through 1849 there were no tokens of real encouragement.

There were many objections. I should have said perhaps that those first missionaries that went to Tahiti they had laboured under the great mistake of assuming that the natives in this part of the world would be poor innocent creatures almost waiting for the gospel. And of course they found no such thing.

They found strong resistance and demonic power and that is what Geddy found on a Newton. They were full of objections. If these things were true, said somebody how is it that we never heard of them before? One of the first encouragements was in the year 1850 when a man called Warwick came to John Geddy and asked that his hair might be cut.

Now that may not mean a great deal to us but if I had taken the time to describe the appearance of these people you would understand. The men were entirely naked, utterly repulsive, painted. They wore their hair at great length and spent inordinate time in twisting it and curling it.

It was part of their, I suppose you would say their whole outlook. And without John Geddy saying anything about hair this man Warwick who had listened to Geddy speaking had come under conviction and had reached the point where he wanted to sever himself. He said, come these dark customs.

Missy he said, you have told us that all who join the family of Jesus must give up their dark customs. Now I know it is a dark custom to wear my hair as it is will you cut it off? Well Geddy was reluctant to do so and spoke to him at more length but at length this man did make a stand and it was a beginning. A little after that difficulties increased.

One difficulty was that one of the Samoan Christians who had come died. And one of the men on the island who was showing interest his wife had an accident, she fell out of a tree and she was killed. The natives used these two deaths as proof that this new religion was bad.

This chief, Mayot, met John Geddy on the road one day and this is what he said. He said to me, the new religion is a lie. He was much excited and out of temper.

I told him that the new religion was true and every other system of religion false. He asked me then, if it was true how had when were the Samoan Christian died and this woman died also? I said that the religion did not save people from death but taught them to be happy after death. He charged me and the Samoan teachers with being the cause of sickness and death among them and said that they had none of these things until we came on their island.

I asked him where their forefathers were. I asked him where their forefathers were. At any event he said none died until their heads were covered with grey hair.

They announced this Mayot in 1850. A little after this there was the conversion of a man to pale. Before I tell you of that can I just add a note on this man Mayot whose hair was cut off.

This same year the son of Mayot, a young infant died. And Mayot came to Geddy much distressed about the death of his son. He wished to know if I could tell him anything out of the Bible that would comfort him in his distress.

I told him many things as Geddy which I thought suited to his case and among others I mentioned the experience of David. When he lost a beloved child he said I shall go to him but he shall not return to me. This passage arrested his attention and he requested me to repeat it until he could say it himself.

The idea of a happy meeting with his dear child in heaven seemed to moderate his grief. A little later Geddy says I called at his house and I found him sitting quite composed amongst his heathen friends and telling them of the consolations which the gospel affords. If anyone ventured to say anything to shake his faith he would repeat the words I shall go to him but he shall not return to me.

And this was a sufficient answer to them. That passage says Geddy, that passage shed a new light on the prospects which Christianity holds out beyond the grave which had never occurred to them before. Well the congregation of Capello he was related to the chief and had been one of the most hostile of the people in the vicinity.

Indeed he was so hostile that on one occasion he hid himself in the garden of Geddy's house at night intending to club Geddy to death when he came out. Though Geddy did come out he walked past the very bush where this man was hidden with his club. The cannibals raised his club to hit Geddy and he said

afterwards that he felt a strange sensation which hindered him from moving.

Capello watched Geddy and his wife. He said afterwards that he believed that they were liars and that he along with others had stolen our property and molested us in various ways. But he said later, he watched our conduct and when he found that our lives agreed with our teaching he began to think that our religion was true.

And John Geddy adds to that Missionaries above all should be living epistles of Christ. A godly life often wins sinners when other arguments fail to impress them. This was in 1851.

Later on in 1851 as Geddy and his wife and I didn't mention that they had two infant daughters as they were sleeping one night the house was set on fire by the natives. They managed to escape. The house was almost a ruin and the chief Mallot was called.

Well I told you how opposed he was. On one occasion Mallot was about to go to war with some other parties on another part of the island and Geddy had told him not to do it. And Mallot had pointed to his heart he said I know that my heart is bad and he said I know that if I die I will burn in a great fire but I don't care and he went to his battle.

Well when the house was fired Mallot was called. And this old cannibal chief who was nearly 60 years of age he was deeply touched to see the misery of the missionaries and the near escape of these little children. And for the next two months Mallot himself slept with the missionaries every night and that was the beginning of his conversion.

A man who had spent his life in utter wretchedness in his old age came to embrace and then to have drawn the gospel of Christ. And in the month of May 1852 the first church was formed in the New Hebrides made up of 14 natives. By the end of the year the number had grown to 24.

John Geddy said that so great was the change in the community not simply amongst those who had come under the power of the gospel but others who had come under the influence of the truth he said that the locks that they had previously used they were able to disuse on their home by the end of 1852. I wonder if I can put my hand on this notice of a communion service that took place at the end of that year. I think I've lost it and I won't search for it.

But it's to the effect that when they these natives, 24 of them by the end of 1852 sat down at the Lord's table those who had fought each other and hated each other Geddy said what a marvellous thing it was to see them sitting together at the Lord's table. 12 years later the numbers of members of the church had grown to about 176 and a strong church was established on this island of Anetum. Now I want to leave John Geddy and move about 40 miles north to this second island of Tanner.

Now the name of John G. Payton I think is better known than John Geddy. John G. Payton was 34 years of age when he went to Tanner with his wife in 1858. They used the island of Anetum as a springboard and following the usual practice they took with them Christians from Anetum to the island of Tanner.

Now in the case of Tanner there was an invitation from the natives to come. One of the canoes from Tanner had been blown a long way off its course a few years earlier and had landed on Anetum. In terror of their lives these Tannid natives had thought they would be attacked by the Anetumese.

Instead they were met with hospitality they were welcomed, they were given food and when they asked the meaning of what was happening they were taken around the island and they were told that the gospel of Christ had made so many of them new creatures. Well these Tannibals from Tanner had seen nothing like it and they said it must be a good religion which can make people so happy. And they had asked that someone would come to Tanner and so Paton came in 1858 landing on the 5th of November with I think three other European missionaries who went to the other side of the island and these Anetumese Christians.

Now I wanted to bring in Paton on Tanner because here we have a very striking contrast. He labored preaching, praying, befriending the natives doing the same thing as John Geddy did but after four to five years he was forced to flee the island barely escaping with his life. It's a contrast then to Anetum and I think it helps to give us the total picture.

As soon as John G. Paton landed he said my first impressions drove me I must confess to the verge of utter dismay on beholding these natives in their pain and nakedness and misery my own heart was as full of horror as as full of horror as a pity. Was it possible to teach them right and wrong, to Christianize them or even to civilize them? Well he said that was a passing temptation but the first few days on Tanner were indeed very difficult. The second night they were there they wanted some water to boil some tea they sent a boy to fetch the water he came back and said there was no water to be had because there had been a cannibal feast a few hours earlier the water was completely polluted with the blood of the victims the people who had been slain and eaten and this was the first few days on Tanner.

John G. Paton says that talking to Dr. Ingalls who was with him Dr. Ingalls said the walls of Jerusalem were built in troubled times and why not the mission house on Tanner? Well Paton continued to labor as best he could sometimes natives simply observed them at family worship sometimes they came in and listened sometimes people came at night and knocked on the door and Paton would bring them in and when they came in they would look round and make sure the shutters were tight and then they could make sure nobody could look in then they would speak to Paton a little about spiritual things one man said I would become a Christian he said but my friends would laugh at me and Paton was struck how universal are the temptations of the human heart well in 1859 Paton suffered his hardest blow his wife bore a little son Peter Robert and not long after her confinement and the birth of the child she took fever and she died and a week after her death the little boy also died the last words of Mrs.

Paton as she died were these not lost she said not lost only gone before to be forever with the Lord John G.

Paton says our short united life had been cloudless and happy I felt her loss beyond all conception or description in that dark land it was very difficult to be resigned left alone and in sorrowful circumstances but feeling immovably assured that my God and Father was too wise and loving to err in anything that he does or commits and if you've read the life of Paton you'll remember I'm sure that very moving passage where he describes how he dug the grave for his wife and little son and I built it round he said with coral blocks and covered the top with beautiful white coral broken small as gravel and that spot became my sacred and much frequented shrine during the following months and years when I laboured for the salvation of these savage islanders and he says when so ever Tanner turns

to the Lord and is one for Christ men in after days will find the memory of that spot still green where with ceaseless prayers and tears I claimed that land for God in which I had buried my dead with faith and hope

and he adds but for Jesus and the fellowship he granted me there I must have gone mad and died beside that lonely grave but Paton's difficulties increased the chiefs were altogether implacably hostile one of them said to Paton one day and this was a man who had been across to Australia and who had visited Sydney he spoke English he said to Paton Missy our fathers loved and worshipped whom you call the devil the evil spirit and we are determined to do the same for we love the conduct of our fathers and then speaking of what had happened in previous years he said we murdered the

Anitomes teachers and burned down their houses and after these acts Tanner was good and we live like our fathers now our people are determined to kill you and if you do not leave this island for you are changing our customs and destroying our worship and we hate the worship of Jehovah well later that week Paton was followed by one of these men with a gun and describes how narrowly he escaped from death the first martyrdom was of a man called Namuri a Christian from Anitom he came over with Paton and he settled in a village little way from Paton tried to speak and help with the people and one day he came to Paton and Paton could see from injuries on his head that he had been badly wounded he had been cut by a killing stone small sharp stone that they could cling with great accuracy and

this had struck him and severely wounded him Paton nursed this man for a week or more and then the man begged to go back to his village and this is what he said to Paton this he said when I see them thirsting for my blood I just see myself when the missionary first came to my island I desire to murder him as they now desire to kill me had he stayed away from such danger I would have remained a heathen but he came and continued coming to teach us till by the grace of God I was changed to what I am now now the same God that changed me that changed me to this this can change them to love and serve him I cannot stay away from them and he nearly went back to his village within a matter of days he was murdered before he died he said to Paton or rather he was praying that Paton was trying to

nurse him Paton said his pain and suffering were great but he bore them quietly and as he died he kept saying for the sake of Jesus he was constantly praying for his persecutors Lord Jesus forgive them for they know not what they do take not away thy servants from Cana take not away thy worship from this dark island O God bring all the Canese to love and follow Jesus and so Namuri died and Paton says to him Jesus was all in all there were no bands in his death he passed hummus in the assured hope of entering into the glory of his Lord humble though he may appear in the world's esteem I knew that a great man had fallen there in the service of Christ and that he would take rank in the glorious army of the martyrs there shortly after this the persecution increased so greatly that Paton sent

back all the Anitomes teachers to their own island I call them teachers that's really what they were called they were all sent back but one old man refused to go again I urge you to look at the passages in Paton's life the old man's name was Abraham and he stood by Paton to thicken things one day Paton was overcome with illness he tried to climb a hill on the island to get into the cooler air stream he collapsed half way up and it was Abraham who found him lifted him took him to the top of the hill and Abraham literally lived with Paton they had family prayer together every day that noble old soul Abraham stood by me says Paton as an angel of God he went at my side wherever I had to go he helped me willingly to the last inch of strength it was perfectly manifest that he was doing all

this not for mere human love but for the sake of Jesus that man had been a cannibal in his heathen days but by the grace of God there he stood verily a new creature in Christ Jesus any trust however sacred or valuable could be absolutely reposed in him then Paton adds when I have read the shallow objections of irreligious scribblers and talkers hinting that there is no reality in conversion and that mission effort is a

waste oh how my heart has yearned to bring them for one week to Cana with the natural man all around in the person of cannibal and heathen and then the one spiritual man in the person of the converted Abraham nursing them feeding them saving them for the love of Jesus well Paton continued with Abraham on Cana until 1862 then matters came to a final crisis Paton's own house

was burned to ashes one night he spent a night up a tree then at last he is compelled to flee across the island to another missionary's home Abraham at his side when they arrive there they find that these other missionaries are in similar difficulties within a few nights the church beside the mission house was set on fire the wind and blowing the flames down upon the house in which they were shut John G.

Paton went outside spoke to the natives that were surrounding them warned them that the great God Jehovah would punish them for their sins if they did not resist their persecution and as he was face to face with these cannibals he spoke of how a sudden tornado of wind and rain blew in from the sea blowing in the opposite direction to the flames and within minutes the flames were put out and these poor cannibals cried it is Jehovah's reign well the next day a ship unexpectedly appeared and Paton and those who still survived were taken off the island well these things end by way of narrative just a few words of comment and application as we close I need not underline to you in the first place what a glorious example we have here of the power of the gospel of Christ as we were thinking last evening of the invincible power of the grace of God this is the certain record which illuminates such text of scripture here were men and women truly transformed and yet you see the sovereignty of that grace hundreds converted on a meeting just a little handful on ten the same message the same faith different results it reminds us my friends that we are called not in the first instance to be successful but we are called to be faithful faith can do great things subdue kingdoms quench the violence of fire stop the moths of lions but also Hebrews 11 tells us faith can suffer great things others were tortured not accepting deliverance that they might receive a better resurrection let us remember that God calls us to be faithful and then in these missionaries I haven't had time to go into their church connections they were mostly Presbyterians they were almost all Presbyterians they were to a man and to a woman Calvinists they were those who preached the whole counsel of God there was no superficial evangelicalism in the New Hebrides they preached the law of God they preached the attributes of God they preached that God punishes sin but above all else as these records show they preached the glorious privileges and happiness which comes to those who embrace the gospel the grace of God in all its fullness they set forth there is a great deal in their records which I have not time to read to you which show how they went about their evangelism how careful they were against anything superficial R.S.

Miller writing or rather this is Graham Miller writing he says no method of public call to decision was used public appeals were hardly in use in the Presbyterian churches anywhere in the world at that time he says that the purpose of their care in preparing those who showed interest and they took about a year in preparing them before they allowed any to come to communion the purpose of this 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 he says strive to enter in at the straight gate I say if you read these records you'll see true examples of Puritan biblical evangelism and then I think we should notice what a consciousness of God these missionaries had and how they needed it Jesus said fear not them that kill the body and after that have no more that they can do but I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear and they did fear God and it was because they feared God that they were able to stand in the midst of such appalling hostility and cruelty and savagery and the fear of God kept them from the fear of men it seems to me that that also is something of great importance and then something could be said on the spirit of

joyfulness that these Christians possessed not simply the white missionaries but these men like Abraham and Ymir there was a Samoan hymn that was very popular with them all and it began our home is in heaven our home is not here and it was so often the deaths of these men and women too that were used by God to open the eyes of the savages to make them realize that there was an eternity and that men could enter it with hope and joy and then just a word on the books that they printed in these half cannibal islands one of the first things they did was to produce literature and of the first books need I tell you the shorter catechisms John G.

Paton says how he taught it constantly and then of Puritan books the first of course John Bunyan's Children's Progress printed on a metum in a somewhat abbreviated form but they brought these things very soon in the early years to the natives but they didn't make it easy even there the Bible took some 15 years the New Testament in preparation the natives paid for every page by saving up their arrow root and the arrow root was saved in Australia and from money that was raised the Bible was produced and my very last point is this I want to read you again some words from John Brady here he is on the island of Onetum February the 26th and he's just finished reading a biography it's the biography of Edward Payson the New England Congregational Minister he says what a valuable piece of Christian biography it records the history of one of the excellent ones of the earth some people dislike to read the experience of Christians but my feelings are the reverse I always rise from such reading humbled and resolved to aim at higher degrees of grace what God has done for others he can do for me how different have been my labours in the Saviour's cause from those of the excellent Payson what zeal what devotedness what love for the souls of men did he manifest what a great work might have been done here by a Payson or a Machaine I know it is God alone who can save souls but his blessing is usually given to the labours of faithful and devoted servants my point is we need a high ambition we need to read the records of God's grace in his people so that we too will feel humbled and so that we will realise what we may be by God's grace let us then from this record of the work of the Holy Spirit take courage and let us be faithful in serving God in our day and generation shall we pray O Lord our gracious God we give thanks to thee for thine abundant grace given to thy church in all generations we know that thou alone dost keep thy people we thank thee that thou dost build thy church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it we pray thee O Lord that we may be faithful to thee that thou wouldst give to each one of us gathered here this afternoon that spirit which thou didst give to our fathers that we may love thee that we may serve thee that we may be obedient to thy holy word and Lord grant that in this day the gospel may go forth again to every land and nation that those that sit in darkness may see a great light hear our cry and receive our thanks for Jesus' sake Amen

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