Tiraka—A Papuan Christian Worker
THE KWATO MISSION OF PAPUA


Conducted since 1920 by the Incorporated Kwato Extension Association

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The Kwato Mission is an evangelical and interdenominational mission, founded and conducted on New Testament principles, for the purpose of winning the people of Eastern Papua to Christ, and to train them for lives of effective Christian service. The work is supported by the voluntary gifts of God’s people and the workers earnestly desire your sympathy, prayers and financial fellowship as God may lead and enable you.

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News and Notes

By Delavan L. Pierson

It is some time since a copy of The Tidings or a Fellowship Letter has been sent out to friends in America. We will not go into all the reasons but this omission has not been due to any lack of important happenings on the field. The work has gone on at Kwato, in the Bay stations, and in the newly-opened Dorevaidi District, with many signs of God’s blessing in transformed lives. We earnestly desire the continued prayer-fellowship of every one of our partners in service.

* * *

The new workers on the field have been well and very busy. The trained nurse, Mildred Bath, has been studying the language and people and is assisting in the hospital work—including the welcoming into the world of little Elspeth Beavis, daughter of Arthur and Halliday; and of little Oliver, son of Robin and Margot Knight. Mrs. Arthur Swinfield, wife of the boat-builder and technician, has also returned from Australia with her new baby, Margaret. So the tribe of white babies is increasing on Kwato and now numbers eight, four boys and four girls. How many future missionaries?

The health of the missionaries has generally been good—except the exception of Mrs. Charles Abel; but some have suffered from passing attacks of malaria, dysentery and other diseases generally in mild form. It has been a great blessing to have a skilled doctor and good nurses on the staff—a blessing not before experienced by missionaries at Kwato in forty-five years of service there.

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The needs—material and spiritual—of the Kwato Mission have been increasing with the growth of the staff and the extension of the work. Financially there has been a decrease in American gifts for the general work; but God has supplied every need (as He sees it) according to His gracious promise. Thanksgiving goes out for those who have counted it a privilege to share in this work by their gifts. Funds have been given for two special memorials at Kwato—one in the form of an enlarged schoolhouse, as a memorial to Anna Pierson McDougall, and one as a house for very young children (a Crèche) as a memorial to Emma Belle D. Pierson. These buildings will supply a real need at Kwato.
Several of the workers at Kwato have been taking short health furloughs in Australia. Raymond Whale went early in June, then Russell Abel followed, with one of the Papuan Christian youth—Mahuru, a Kwato boatman. (Russell Abel’s letter gives further information.) Dr. and Mrs. Berkeley Vaughan and their three children have also been in Sydney but are expected back at Kwato for Christmas. They all needed a rest and change of climate.

Raymond Whale and Kathleen Blake

A piece of good, heart-warming, cheering news is the announcement of the engagement of Raymond Whale to Kathleen Blake, of Sydney, a sister of Joan Blake, of Kwato. We rejoice in their happiness. The date of the wedding has not yet been revealed.

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Another cause for great gratitude to God is the recovery from serious illness of our beloved American Secretary, Miss Jessie H. Righter. Many prayers were answered in her behalf and she has now again taken up her usual volunteer service.

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William G. A. Millar, of Pittsburgh, a very warm friend to Charles W. Abel and one of the first members of the American Committee of the Kwato Mission, died of heart failure while on a vacation in Canada last summer. Mr. Millar was an earnest personal worker and the author of some very effective leaflets. The Kwato Mission is especially indebted to him for drawing the maps of the mission field printed in The Tidings. He was a beloved friend and a valued prayer-partner whose earthly fellowship we shall miss greatly.

The House of Prayer, a memorial to Charles W. Abel, is not yet completed, but is progressing and should be ready for use next year. The building, of stone and concrete in the Papuan style of architecture, is built entirely by native labor, supervised by Arthur Beavis and only as the money is supplied, does the work go forward.

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The new sixty-foot boat, the Kwato, built under the direction of Arthur Swinfield, has recently been launched and is already proving a great boon. It has a Diesel engine and, though much larger than any other mission boat, costs much less to operate than the gasoline launches.

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The Medical Report.—Dr. Berkeley Vaughan reports that the medical staff at Kwato now includes Phyllis Abel, Mildred Bath, and Joan Blake, besides four trained Papuan nurses, two trained Papuan orderlies, four pupil nurses and three pupil orderlies.

Last year the Kwato Hospital admitted and cared for 144 patients and 138 operations were performed. There were 60 different diseases or types of cases among the in-patients; there were only 12 deaths during the year. The out-patient treatments numbered 8,320—not a bad record for one doctor! Maternity cases cared for at Kwato were 216, in addition to those at the outstations. Native nurses took care of 72 labor cases. At the “Infant welfare nursery” 18 babies were cared for and 621 mothers attended the clinics.

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The next number of The Tidings (or a Fellowship Letter) will come direct from Kwato and is expected to tell many interesting things about the work and workers. From America, also, we plan to send out soon some important news of vital concern to the Mission and its future. In the meantime will all friends of Kwato pray earnestly for clear guidance for the Governing Committee and for the Field Council. We look to God for the supply of every need—material and spiritual—discipline, as well as converts and other encouragements, new workers, good health, equipment and daily food. The Bank of Heaven has never failed. Will God’s stewards at home continue to prove wise and faithful?
The Doctor “On Patrol”

BY BERKELEY VAUGHAN, M. D.

NINE-THIRTY P. M.! Time to start. I walk down from my house on the hill and at the end of the wharf the boat is waiting. Our Papuan captain clammers up to his wheel on the “bridge,” a bell tinkles, a rumble from our big Diesel engine, and we are off.

I turn in on the hatch cover of the hold and am soon asleep. Dawn wakes us and away in the distance, off our port bow, the north shore of Milne Bay looms up. We, two boys and I, are setting out on a medical patrol. Russell Abel is leading an evangelistic team at Divinai, which is our starting point, so for two days we work together. People have come in from all the surrounding villages; meetings take place in the church—a thatched native hut.

Most of the day we are out in the surrounding village seeing sick people and passing on a friendly word here and there. It is evening by the time the work is finished, I finish stitching up a wound on someone’s head and slip in at the end of the church service.

The building is in semi-darkness, lit by two hurricane lanterns. Through the gloom I can see a mist of brown faces peering intently at the speaker. It is a testimony meeting and one after another, in rapid succession, men and women come forward to say a few words. Unfortunately other visitors are present in the shape of swarms of flying ants which fly round the lamps and drop down the back of one’s neck! Presently a village dog wanders in; gentle volleys of pebbles from the floor mark his passage down the middle of the church. Suddenly he comes flying back again evidently impelled by something forceful. A woman rises from the congregation and gives him a resounding slap on his head; squeals and barks; amid much confusion the dog darts out of the doorway!

The meeting continues and though I personally understand little (for most speakers use the tavara language of which I know nothing) yet the faces of speaker and audience show that the message is a vital one.
The meeting closes and from the congregation two women come towards each other and fervently kiss; an un-Papuan proceeding but Russell Abel explains—"The elder woman has just confessed that many years ago she attempted to murder her daughter (the younger woman); so that the kiss is a reconciliation!"

Two days are soon gone and we must 'awa. In Divinai a fire has been started in many hearts and now many months later we are seeing a transformation worked out in all that district. However, off we go again on our patrol, along jungle tracks, through rivers, in canoes up crocodile infested creeks, over felled-tree bridges with the inevitable little cluster of native huts at the end.

The village usually knows of our coming long before we get there and so we are greeted on all sides. Then to business. A man comes forward and says, "I want you to spear (inject) me!" He has yaws. "All right my friend you wait on one side." Now comes a mother with a chubby naked baby. "What's wrong with him?" "Oh, nothing; I just want you to feel him!" I obligingly lay my hands on him and pronounce him very good; off she goes all smiles.

Big and small we see all the sick folk. Some will have to keep in touch with our nearest native nurse, a very ill one may have to go with us to Kwato. As sunset draws on we make for the village where we are spending the night. A meal appears—yams, native food of various kinds, perhaps a chicken as well. Very good it tastes as we all sit round on mats; my legs are in the way and I wish I could unscrew them and put them away!

The news of the outside world is passed on and in exchange we hear the local gossip. Round the lamp the talk comes round to the things that matter. I may have some lesson or experience that God has given me to pass on; others chime in with a very informal little testimony, or apology perhaps, and we feel that we are linked closer together in a fellowship where color is no barrier. A chorus or two, a good-night prayer, and we scatter to a night's sleep.

So it goes on until I dare not stay away from the Kwato Hospital any longer; so the patrol has to finish. There are the daily round, the common task: operations, lectures to the Papuan nurses and orderlies, notes to be written up; telephones to be mended; electric light work to be checked; with it all there is the sense of working together in a team whose leader is God.

Here, far away from the noise and fever of a war crazed world, we are seeing something of what happens when God has control of individuals, homes and whole communities. We see what it means to have our eyes lifted from the mud beneath and opened to a vision of a changed world where His will is done on earth as it is in Heaven.

No longer "lights out" but "reveille."

Difficulties at Duram

A WEEK or two ago Cecil Abel went to Duram with the intention of taking a trip inland. A team of recent converts went from one tribe to another, but before they had time to say anything the whole tribe was up in arms and the heathen declared that they wanted nothing of the "New Way," as they call it. They pointed to one of their own men who had been converted some time before and said, "There's one of them!" They set on him and killed him.

Everyone says, "That man died for Christ's sake. He has Life." Two of our boys who were on the coast at Duram, as soon as they heard of this report, went straight to the place to see what they could do. That showed pluck! They found that the murderers had already been caught and taken to the Government Magistrate. This is the first Papuan Christian to be martyred, so far as we know. We are praying much for this situation which you can see is a very difficult one.

A few days ago a radio message came from Cecil Abel asking us to send one of the launches and a hospital boy to bring back two men who had been speared. A spear was still in the body of one of the men. We know no more details and can only hope that this had nothing to do with the "New Way." It is marvelous that there is now a small transmitting radio set able to send messages from one of the plantations, some ten or twelve miles from Duram. When I was there, there was no means of communicating with anyone unless a boat called and sometimes you might wait a month for one to come.
The Bungalow System at Kwato

By Mary Abel,

WE HAVE started a plan which is bringing us more and more to the bungalow system, with our school children and boys in training. That is to divide the boys and girls and put them into as many homes as possible. Until now only a few Papuan married couples were really able to take responsibility for any boys or girls living with them. In addition to those at outstations, we now feel that there are six or seven married couples living on Kwato who are willing to take five boys each (those who have left school) in one room adjoining their homes. They really will give them home life and be to them like real fathers and mothers. Wherever possible we have put relatives together so that these children, or nephews or whatever they are, may take real responsibility in the home and become a part of it. We began this on August first and we have yet to work it out fully. Doris Purcell will take the younger children at Isuhina, with about 40 of the junior school children. Marjorie Smeeton will have about 15 of the middle junior school with her at Edidai Numa; she will also help Doris with the teaching and supervising of the junior school until Doris really gets the hang of things herself.

Russell Abel will teach the senior school boys. Phyllis Abel ought not to have any teaching to do at present because she will have the nursing to supervise, while Dr. Vaughan is away, and also the supervising of everything else at the hospital with the help of Mildred Bath. Margot and Robin Knight will be living in the house opposite the compound on the hill, with eight of the older school boys in their home. Margot is trained in domestic science and will teach and supervise the girls in cooking, laundry work, and other household duties. The only girls on the hill will be those who are older and more responsible, who need this kind of training. Many have come to us from outstations and are doing very well. That only leaves 19 senior school girls unprovided for.

I am going out to the Bay to look after the schools in the villages, and will probably make my headquarters at Bisimaka. I would
like to take with me the oldest nine of the senior girls and try to give them solid training for their final six or twelve months of school. I had thought to use the Wagawaga village school for training them, and if I have a good Tanuaga with them, I will be able to leave them there, or take two or three with me as I visit other schools. At the same time I can give them higher education than they have had before. They need to learn to be much more responsible, and can only do this by having responsibility. There is a store at Bisimaka and, with the storekeeper’s help, one or two could assist sometimes with the weighing and measuring and keeping accounts, and could put into practice some of the things they have had so far only in theory. Now is the time to study these girls individually and see what each one is cut out for, as they will be our teachers or nurses or whatever they want to be in the future. Possibly I may also have the eight next younger girls with them, but I would rather concentrate on the nine, as the others still have two or more years at school.

From Doris Purcell

ANY things have happened since a year ago when I sailed from New York for Kwato. There have been sad events and joyous things. In the strength of our Saviour they can all become blessings to us.

I am happy to be really “getting my toes into the work.” I am now at Isuhina (the hospital building) with 52 children and several Papuan helpers. I like it very much! We have four classes down here and the children are working in the flower gardens and bringing fresh stones for the walks. Some of the larger girls are learning to care for bedrooms, to mend clothes, and serve at table. Joan Blake has a room here and has breakfast and dinner with me. She spends the day up the hill with the babies of whom she has charge.

When one of our friends, from Samaria was operated on in Sydney recently, Dr. Vaughan assisted in the operation. It was a very serious operation and they sent us a radio saying it was to be on Thursday morning at 8 o’clock. That morning at 8 o’clock all of us on Kwato stopped where we were and prayed. I could feel the power of the whole island in prayer. The children and their native teachers prayed in their school-rooms and were lovely in their prayers. One prayed something like this: “Lord Jesus, bless the doctor’s knife”; another said, “Lord Jesus, bless the doctor’s brain,” another “Bless his hands,” etc.

We had a radio next day saying that the operation was a success. We received a lovely letter from the patient, telling all about it; she said that she would not take anything for the experience of being brought so near to Christ as she was during this time.

With Muhuru in Sydney

I NEVER expected to be writing to you from here (Sydney)! I expect you will have heard how everyone felt at Kwato that I should come South. At a few hours’ notice I packed up and came, bringing Muhuru, a Christian Papuan, with me. I find the sharp, cold weather in Sydney has proved wonderfully bracing.

Muhuru has had some very responsible positions in the Mission, in the freighting and latterly buying “green meat” of the cocoanut. His real line, however, is as captain of boats. I felt that the short trip accompanying me would be of distinct educational value for him and would fit him better for further responsibility. Since arriving here a friend has found the very thing I wanted for him—a chance with the Admiralty to get nautical instruction in navigation. There is a small island in Sydney Harbor, caller Schnapper Island, which is run exactly as a Man o’ War. The man in charge is willing to help us by taking Muhuru. This is the very thing I visualized for him but did not think such opportunities existed!

One Sunday afternoon Muhuru went for a walk in the park and listened to the “tub-bangers” holding forth. Soon he came across an open air service and joined in the choruses. The man who was speaking was struck by his radiant grin and asked if he was a Christian. Muhuru said he was. Then the leader asked him to come up and give his testimony, which he did without the slightest hesitation, in English! One chap said afterwards that what he said was better than all the rest put together.

I am broadcasting for ten minutes tomorrow on one of the national hook-ups. The theme will be building a new nation on the principles of Christ, and this will be explained through news of the work at Kwato. It will reach a wide audience and will have some interesting results. RUSSELL ABEL.
WE CELEBRATED my father’s birthday on the 28th of September, by a real Kwato reunion. Many of the leaders and their wives came in, and old boys and girls who were with Father almost from the beginning. They began to arrive on Friday night. We spent Saturday having a cricket match—old boys versus young. On Sunday we had a dedication service and over 40 babies were christened, including Elspeth Beavis, Oliver Knight and Margaret Swinfield. Also the first Dorevaidi baby was dedicated when Sibodu, one of the five chiefs brought his 14-month son and in his own strange gutteral tongue promised to bring him up to love and serve God. It was most moving. Altogether it was a lovely, joyous service. The hall was packed and beautifully decorated and the teeming rain outside had no effect on the sunshine inside.

In the afternoon we had women’s and men’s meetings and asked God to show us where our failings had been in the past and where the vision for the future called for a more costly and complete giving of ourselves than ever before. For many of us there was a clearer understanding of the Cross and what it meant in our daily lives. We saw that if God was going to do anything with us and through us there had to be absolutely no barriers, no shut doors in our lives, and that even one such could block God and limit His power. Some mentioned shut doors in the form of pride, unwillingness to let God convict of things they didn’t want to let go, unwillingness to be really unselfish in the home; to live instead of preach in intimate and difficult situations. Many said that they had caught the vision of God’s plan for Papua but had shirked the cost and preferred the easy life of a nominal Christian to the revolutionary life of a completely God-controlled one. Some great surrenders were made that weekend, the impact of which we are feeling already.
On Monday night Cecil Abel gave a brief summary of Father's life and the story of this work, especially for the boys and girls. Behind him was a huge map of Papua which Mary and Robin had worked over most efficiently. The main stations and the new villages inland were marked by small electric light bulbs which came on as Cecil brought them into his story. It was thrilling. Into his story he wove some of the great names of great Papuans who, with Father, laid down their lives for their country and with him laid those sure foundations on which it is our privilege to build. Among them were those who had joined the team on the Other Side. We felt clearly that they are still with us as we believe Father is, seeing more clearly and helping us to see more clearly too.

That meeting helped our young people to realize their heritage and they feel that those who have gone before have handed on the torch of life for us to pick up and carry forward.

A large proportion of them are rough lads from their villages and have come here for training. We sadly lack competent carpenters and I hope to sift out the better of these boys for future jobs.

Our new water tank is coming on nicely. The walls are finished and stand four feet or more above the ground and extend six feet below it. This will give us three months' water supply in time of drought, in place of three weeks' supply, so you will see what a boon it is going to be.

The other house, for the kindergarten children and the Smeetons, we have framed together in the shops and it awaits assembly on the site.

The furniture shop has been very busy making doors and windows for all these houses; many of the windows in the Swinfields' house will be casements presented to Mr. Abel some years ago when he was in the United States.

The mill is still working continuously. It serves all our departments and is supplying our present needs.

I have about 75 to 80 boys working on these jobs so you can see that I am kept busy. It is best for me not to undertake more now so I am not attempting to start work on the church again till the tank is finished which will be in about one month.

There is some promising material among these boys. I feel encouraged at seeing one and another beginning to take responsibility in their jobs or doing spiritual work. Undoubtedly manual work forms a fine training for Papuans.

We are constantly receiving gifts. Every-time one of the launches returns from the Bay, the captain hands in little packets of money that have been given him by various people. Sometimes these are earmarked, for the new school, for the Memorial Church, etc. Just now we have about $300 in hand, unearmarked, just made up of little gifts, shillings and sixpences. We are praying about finding out what God wants us to do with the money, and many of our Papuan staff feel that we should give some of it to help needy work in other lands, as we used to years ago. It was such a blessing to us before and we felt ourselves a link in God's work all around the world, instead of an isolated unit.
IN THE last three years the outstanding achievement of the Mission has been the bringing of the Gospel message to the people of the Dorevaidi District. It is wonderful to see former fighters and head-hunters now living together in fellowship through their common obedience to, and acceptance of the Gospel. They are former wild mountain people called the Dorevaidi—with other unnamed tribes living round about them—who live in the mountainous districts behind Abau. Abau is the Government station for the district, and is situated on a small island off the mainland about half-way between Samarai and Port Moresby. Formerly these people lived in small village communities, bitterly opposed to each other and to the people who live along the coast, who always were in mortal fear of them. They were constantly at variance, raiding another village at an opportune moment when half the population were away elsewhere, perhaps engaged on a like raid. They would wreck some of the houses, shout insults at the few old people and women left in the village and probably spoil some of the gardens, pinching the produce, etc. Then there were individual murders of some from another village, or of some hapless plantation hand on one of the coconut plantations near the coast. This vicious state of affairs was kept up largely because no woman would think of marrying a man until he had proved himself. He could only win the distinguishing mark or feather by killing someone and having it verified by the villagers. He would usually manage this by taking home a souvenir—a scalp or perhaps a finger or two—which later would be dried to wear in the hair. Every man who wanted to prove himself and who eventually wanted to marry, had to do this—whether he felt particularly homicidal or not.

Our invasion of this district was well prepared by prayer many months before the first expedition set out. The Holy Spirit began to work in the hearts of some of these people. A number began to feel fed-up with their kind of life and wanted something better. Many, who had been in gaol, had seen a better standard of life in the more civilized parts. They vaguely knew that the "missionary" was the one who would help them. They hoped one day a missionary, accompanied by a Papuan teacher, would come and teach their children better ways. The name of Kwato is held in great respect throughout the whole of Papua. So when our team arrived, they were rather thrilled and there was already something to work on. "Pidgin-Motu" was used to good account then and soon many resolved to turn from their old ways to the living God, give their lives to Him and begin to live the New Way. None of these people could read; so after they had surrendered we told them to listen to God every day and do what He told them. They had a simple and obedient faith and this worked wonders. "When man listens, God speaks; when man obeys God works." As a result, the whole district has now been evangelized. It has brought them vision too, for they realized it was no longer good for them to live in isolated communities, inaccessible in the mountains and far away from the coast. So they have come down nearer the coast (to Amao) and have built a new, big village there.

They are also building a new road from the coast. This will help communications a
great deal and is warmly encouraged by the Government. The distinctive tribes will not be swamped in this new village, as each village represented will keep together and live in a certain section. The new settlement will have a playing field and large school room, where teachers from Kwato are already teaching these people to read and write, and learn a smattering of English. This new village is being built with the help of some of our skilled carpenters from Kwato.

Three years ago, none of us at Kwato could have visualized such a change as has taken place. It is really wonderful and “far above all that we could ask or think.”

God certainly does answer prayer and you can see that His work in this country is full of encouragements. But there is still much land to be possessed. Whole tribes have not been touched—some in very inaccessible places in the interior and up in the mountains. Nor are the people along the coast anything like adequately evangelized. So there is much scope for your prayers—that we may press on and do our part, and that new laborers may be thrust forth. Truly the Papuan field is white already for harvest.

KWATO DISTRICT

Showing Outstations of the Mission

KWATO MISSION TIDINGS