

INTRODUCTION

No one who has lived and worked at Teop is unaware of the influence of David (Devita) Voeta. While I was Minister there, I heard a great deal about his work. Later I was to learn that the Solomon Island District Synod of 1938 had planned to publish a book which would have included the story of his life. Because of the war the book was never completed, but the Rev. A.A. Bensley and the Rev. J.R. Metcalfe both made notes which were to have been part of the story. I have drawn heavily on these, and also on written material given to me by a number of Solomon Islanders, notably the late Thomas Kakapuana and Mr. George Hili. Without these people and others who talked to me about David at various times, this story could not have been written.

It was written down in the year of the Teop Circuit's Jubilee (1972). It is published in the hope that the children and grandchildren of those who knew David personally will learn the story and value this part of their heritage. With so much of the past being swept away it is good for young people to value, not only their heritage of culture, but their heritage of the people who made the culture, lived within it, and did great things in their time.

G.G. Carter

The Story of a Pioneer Missionary.

"I am an orphan, my father died when I was small. I was not alone; there was mother and four of us. My eldest brother was away on a ship and he did not come back again. We had no house because I was only a child and not able to work. We made a house of bush leaves for the four of us, and went from place to place in the bush....Mother used to cry and so did the three of us. One man wanted to kill us, but his wife persuaded him not to do so. When I was a bigger boy I made a little house. It was twelve feet long and my mother lived in it. The people called it the 'bird's nest' and made fun of us."

In this way begins the diary of one of the most extraordinary Christians of the early Solomons Islands Church. His name was David Voeta. Young Voeta was born into an unhappy family. There had been a lot of sickness and many deaths in his family, and people, not knowing how else to explain these troubles, had said that the family were under a curse. His mother had injured her right arm, and as a result it was permanently twisted. She was not able to work as well in the garden as other women did, and this, together with the death of her husband, David's father, made life very difficult for the whole family. The eldest son left home, but the three youngest, David, a girl named Ijubakia, and a boy named Ligubangara, remained with the mother.

Because they were thought to be under a curse, and because people depended for their food on their skill in gardening and fishing, the family got little help from the people of Kundu, on the island of Ranongga. Life was hard, but David quickly learnt to accept responsibility for his younger brother and sister and to help his mother. He was only about 12 years of age when he built the 'bird's nest'. Life was easier now, though food was still a major problem. Almost three years passed, and each year things became a little better. Then disaster struck again. While David was away for several days on a hunting expedition, his mother died suddenly. The older brother, John Salusu, was home from sea at that time and he took the two younger children away to the place where he was living.

David arrived back from the trip to find his mother dead and the children gone. He was almost overwhelmed with grief. He was taken into the home of his aunt and uncle, but he continued to haunt the old house, now falling to ruins, and to weep at the place where he had, for such a short time, been happy.

Early in 1916, the east coast of Ranongga Island was full of stories about the missionary who was coming. He settled at Nggeuru, David's father's home village, and young Voeta was among the first to visit him. The missionary was Pita Zitambulu, and Voeta was immediately attracted to the man and his message. He later wrote in his diary, "the child that no one loved, went to school." It is quite clear that the message of the love of God preached and demonstrated won over the loveless one, and released in

him a capacity to love which not even death could end. "My heart had been warmed" he wrote later, and out of the warm heart, the scholar became also a witness, delighting to tell others about the love of Christ, especially to those "who had no love for me before." But he had also found a thirst for learning that the little village school could not satisfy. Before long the minister came from Bilua, Vella Lavella, and nothing would do but David must return with him to the school there. Pita did not wish him to go, but friendship could not keep back the man on whom God had already placed his hand.

The years of schooling sped quickly by, and David, serious and insatiably curious, was always asking questions. There were never any complaints about David; nothing ever seemed to upset him, yet he was not very good at his studies. More, he had an unsightly skin disease which afflicted him to the end of his days. Though he eagerly tried every medicine that could be suggested, nothing availed, and he scarcely ever knew an unbroken night's sleep. In later years his faith was tested by those who wanted to know why his God did not heal him. To them he replied that he rejoiced in the sleepless nights when he could praise God, and in the opening his disease gave him to speak to all who were diseased, about the Great Healer.

Disease might trouble him, and learning might be difficult, but this deeply Christian young man grew in grace day by day. Before long there were plenty of people to urge the minister to send him out as a missionary pastor. Conscious of his own weakness, David resisted for a long time, but in the end he agreed. On the 28th December 1925 he was married to Salome, the daughter of the very man, who years before had tried to kill David, his mother and the family. The young couple were sent the next day to the village of Povana on the west coast of their home island. In the year that followed David and Salome lived happily together, both deeply devoted to Jesus Christ and to the service of the people. David became loved for his constant kindness and willingness to help, but also noted for his 'queerness' because he could not conform to ancient customs. It was at this time that David began to have those special experiences of God which are granted to few people. Once on a journey to Kundu he heard a voice saying, "David, look after my lambs", and again, "David, look after my sheep!" This special consciousness of God's presence gave him added authority in his dealings with his people, but it did not make him proud, nor did he talk much about it.

Once again, tragedy struck. Salome died in childbirth on the 7th February 1927 at the village of Sambala where she had gone to have her baby. David was deeply grieved. He felt he could not return to his work alone, and for a time he could only mourn. But even in his sorrow there was a growing sense of God's calling to special service. Salome's last words to him had been, "O, David Voeta, you know there are two paths, and at the joining of the two paths stands the Word of God, very well, go and preach, that is all I have to say. Amen Jesus." As he thought about these words he knew he must prepare himself for the next step. Back to Bilua to school for a few months and

then across to the head-station at Roviana, where he entered college under the Rev. Frank Hayman in September of the same year. He was only a part-time student, being also employed as a worker, but his zeal for learning came back with renewed force.

Synod of 1929 met in November. The gathering heard with growing concern of the way in which the new work in Bougainville, begun only a few years before, was foundering for lack of staff. The matter was put to the young men in the college and volunteers were asked for to go to heathen Bougainville. This was God's call. This was the moment for which David had been preparing, and he responded with a group of others, eager to go and tell of the love of God which they knew so well. Within weeks the volunteers were on their way to their chosen task.

Teop Island and the north-east corner of Bougainville, must be one of the loveliest places in the world. To this place had come in July 1922, the first Methodist missionaries, a Fijian couple, Eroni Kotosoma and his wife, Loata. They had been joined in 1924 by the Rev. Hubert Brown of New Zealand, and together these folk had done much to lay the foundations for Christian work in the area. But all through they had been hampered by lack of helpers. Mr. Brown had had to return to his home-land in 1927, and the work had not grown. In 1929, the Rev. J.R. Metcalfe, who had been nine years on Choiseui, was appointed to Teop. He recognised that he could make no headway without help and so he was one of those who had pleaded with the Synod of 1929 to allow an appeal to be made for teachers. He returned to Teop very thrilled to have been able to recruit Shadrack Padapio and his wife Leah from Simbo, Pita Izu, also of Simbo, Eroni Lipa of Vella Lavella and his wife Loa, a Roviana woman, Ben Lamupio and his wife Doris, Andru Angga and David Voeta, all of Ranongga. Mr. Metcalfe had some acquaintance with most of these folk and rightly felt satisfied with them, for they were as fine a band of missionaries as the church anywhere has produced. But in the beginning he rated David Voeta as the least impressive of them. How mistaken he was!

The new missionaries were welcomed on Christmas eve, and the people from nearby villages were very interested in them. Here at last was their chance to secure the much coveted "missionary" for themselves. Why did they seek a missionary? Their motives were many, and few of them at that stage understood the meaning of the message the missionary had to give them. They were to learn that in the days ahead, not so much in the spoken word, but in the lives and characters of those whom they now chose to be "their" missionaries. David was asked for by a village called Beremepasuna in the Vaeri area, inland from Teop Island. He went there on the 1st January 1930 and chat day began, in an exercise book, the diary which he was to keep for the next few years.

The new missionary was told he could live in the boy's house where the lads wearing the Upe hat lived, a little apart from the rest of the village. It was very dirty indeed and the lads knew nothing of the art of weaving coconut fronds into mats, nor were woven

panadanus mats known to them. David began by making himself a mat to sleep on from a coconut frond and trying to clean both the house and its surroundings. With the aid of two local lads, Korotoniori and Kakapuana who had been at school at Teop Island he extended his efforts, next day, to the path to the river and began collecting materials for a teacher's house. He began to take daily prayers (Lotu) in this village and nearby Soagu, but local interest was very uncertain. At Soagu, everyone went out during the prayer, and at Beremepasuna, no-one came after the first day or two. But David laboured on, building a house in the style of his home-land which was quite different to that used locally, with its floor off the ground and its woven ridge capping. He also laboured among the people perfect-ing his knowledge of pidgin and learning the Teop language, seeking when-ever he could to help the villagers. Such efforts were not always appreciated. They liked him to make them a sleeping mat from a coconut frond, but objected to his efforts to make the village surroundings more hygienic. Food was hard to get, for the folk had yet to learn hospitality. He records: "February 25th. I was hungry so I cooked a banana... February 26th. I scraped coconut for them as they said they were making soup for us, but when it was cooked, they did not give me any."

But as time passed, this gentle, yet determined man won the grudging respect of the people, and began to build up a following among the snail boys and young men. No-one had ever been concerned for them as he was, no-one had such wonderful ideas. Within the year he was able to record, "December 23rd. The tultui (government interpreter) was angry with me, so I pretended I would leave, but all the people loved me."

It must not be thought that David limited his activities to the village in which he lived, or even the neighbourhood. He was constantly going to the aid of his fellow workers in other villages and travelling far and fast. These journeys did not find favour with the minister in charge, for often they seemed to him to be just occasions for arid discussions with rival groups, yet they had their importance. David and the others were learning more and more about the people as a whole, both those who were under their influence and those who were not, and at the same time becoming better known. Both these things helped them in their understanding of the local people, and helped the local people's willingness to listen. Indeed it was this individuality and initiative which helped to make the missionary team so effective. At its head was that quick-tempered, but lovable and experienced Yorkshireman, John R. Metcaife, and Ivy, his wife, who radiated calm and concern; two Fijians, Eroni Kotosoma and John Mark Uliumbau, each there separately for several years and together for a short but fruitful time. Eroni was good-natured but impulsive, strong and vigorous. John Mark was a fine linguist and translator and excellent teacher. In addition to the original band from the British Solomons, others were to come over the next few years, notably Elijah Poloso from Choiseui. By no means least was the growing number of local young men

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who were committing themselves to the Christian cause and coming forward as leaders. The first three to be baptised, James Aririo, Thomas Kakapuana and Silas Kaetavara were the leaders in a notable band who were to carry the church through depression, war, peace, good times and bad with faith and tenacity. It is not surprising therefore that the patient preparation of Eroni and Hubert Brown was now being crowned by a vigorous and lively expansion. The thrust and drive for this came largely from John Metcaife and from David Voeta.

David had become increasingly concerned for the area round Mt. Balb some thirty miles south east of Teop. Very early the Teop speaking villa of Tearaka had been visited and thought been given to the Rotokas and Ait, people inland on the slopes of this, the greatest mountain in the south Pacific, outside New Guinea proper, a dormant volcano. Their languages and customs were different, and they were much less influenced by government, commerce or church.

Ben Lampupio had been stationed at Tearaka at the beginning of 1930 and had laid a solid foundation in preparation for a move inland. Land had been secured there, called Vanvon, and so the base was ready. By mid 1932 it had become clear that this was a moment for a major movement forward, and David Voeta was chosen to replace Ben and thrust forward into this forbidding mountain fastness.

"October 18th. I left the village of Beremepasuna to which I had become attached, and went to Tearaka the place I did not want to go to but I agreed."

If the time was ready for the man, the man too was ready for the time. David had built up a standing among the youngsters, and was to be followed on many of his journeys in the next three years by teen-age lads who trusted him completely, and who in their old age would make their proudest boast, that they had been one of "David's boys". Though still argumentative and at times impulsive he had gained a good deal in knowledge and experience. His commitment to the faith had deepened and he had become even more of the mystic than before, though remaining a most practical man. He had not remarried and seems to have had no inclination to do so. His skin disease (bakua) was as bad as ever and though he endured the treatment of the 'sulphur box' which proved effective for so many others, he never got more than temporary relief.

It was on an early trip into the hinterland that an incident occurred that was to leave its mark on the people and the church for a generation. He set out for a new village called Wakekakau where there had been some fighting and rumours of more. The people had a bad reputation and the village itself was ringed with bamboo palisades. The lads who were with him became increasingly fearful as they left the coast behind and climbed up into the interior. At last they came to the place where the path branched, one road leading to the unknown, much feared village and the others to known and less terrifying places. The boys reluctance to go on was obvious, and David stopped and gathered them about him on a large out-crop of rock. He talked about their fears and

told them they were going at God's call and then he prayed. As one lad said years later, "As David prayed, we knew Jesus was with us and we were no longer afraid." They went on to find that things were not as grim as they had been led to expect. David wrote in his diary,

"I went up to Wakekakau....but nothing happened so I preached and returned to Tearaka."

Thereafter, he had a regular stop at this rock and prayed there. Twenty years later, long after his death, it was still pointed out as David's praying stone.

On another occasion, with several young men who were acting as pastors in the villages where a foothold had been obtained, he went on a journey up the Red River into the Rotokas. It was a long, toilsome journey which involved crossing and recrossing the river, which like all Bougainville rivers, was swift and shallow but liable to sudden freshets. Again fear laid hold of his companions and they would have turned back. This time they were resting on a sandbank in the curve of the riverbed. David listened to their fears, and told them that they should commit the matter to God. He prayed and asked God to give them a sign by raising the level of the river and covering the sandbank where they were sitting. Prayer over he got up and called to his companions to scramble up the banks, for the water was coming. According to those who were present, there was no rain around and no rain clouds on the mountain, but within a few minutes the river was rising, and within a quarter of an hour the sandbank on which they had been sitting had been covered. They went on their journey convinced, not only that God was with them, but that David was indeed His chosen servant.

It was inevitable that David should rouse antagonism. Such a tire-less crusader, and such a vigorous personality was bound to do this. Both the Seventh Day Adventists and the Roman Catholics were also trying to extend their influence in the area. Rightly, they saw in this man the biggest obstacle to their work. They stirred up the local people, some of whom, seeing their old way of life and their own influence, perhaps, threatened, did not need much encouraging. On one occasion a group of people stirred up by such considerations, decided to kill David and his boys and they invaded the tiny Mission Station at Vanvon. Now David had built what must have been the first two-storied house in Bougainville. Access to the upper floor was by means of a ladder which could be drawn up at night after the occupants had retired. It was to this house that the invaders came one night. They crowded into the lower room and noisily proclaimed their intention of doing away with this interfering busybody. Upstairs a group of very frightened young men listened with mounting apprehension. David himself quietly told them to pray. As they gathered close to him he prayed for protection and deliverance, and that the eyes of their enemies might be blinded. After about an hour of stamping around, during which several spears were thrust up into the

roof, but none touched the occupants, the angry mob departed, having destroyed whatever they could find. The sceptic would say that they did not realise that there was a sleeping compartment upstairs, but the young men up-stairs were quite sure that God blinded the eyes of their would-be assailants.

These were depression years, and the money available was rapidly dwindling. After making all possible economies, it became clear to the Chairman, the Rev. J.F. Goldie that cuts in staff were inevitable. The doctor must go, as must other overseas staff, and within the islands church there would have to be cuts in staff. Mr. Metcalfe gathered the teachers around him at the Quarterly Meeting on March 30th 1934, and told them that they would have to withdraw from some of the recently opened villages. David recorded this in his diary, saying: "Went to Quarterly Meeting at Teop. They wanted to give up Kaotakoru but I objected....." But for the full story, we must turn to the account given by Mr. Metcaife.

"I called together my leading teachers, amongst whom of course was Devita, and put the matter clearly to them as the Chairman had put it to me. I pointed out that we must withdraw from the four most recently acquired stations since only by so doing could we save the money required within the next six months. They were all deeply impressed and concerned and were very quiet. Then Eroni, the Fijian, said:

"Minister, do not come to a decision quickly. Let us talk the matter over amongst ourselves and we will come and talk it over again with you."

The next day was Good Friday. After the Service, James Aririo and the other local born teachers and assistant teachers trooped on to the study verandah. Most of these were not yet baptised, and two at least were boys who had received most of their training and inspiration through Devita at Beremepasuna. They commence at four pounds per annum, and James was receiving the sum of six pounds, being the oldest and married.

"Well," I said, "what is it? This is something new for Teop."

James is as a rule the most hesitant of persons, and has often amused us by the attitudes he strikes when talking. But now there was no hesitation. "We do not like this talk of withdrawing teachers," he said.

"Well," said I, "how are you going to carry on? This is the sum the Chairman has given me for you teachers. He will not let me lower your wages. What can I do?"

"That is not difficult," came the reply. "We are not teaching for the money. We have talked the matter over and we will all work for one pound each for the next six months." The Teop folk are said to be Jews of the District and this was one of them speaking.

"But," I said, "some of you have no money in hand, it will mean that you will have one pound only for the full six months."

"That does not matter," was the reply. "We are all of one mind."

And he spoke the truth for every one of them agreed.

At the Quarterly Teachers' Meeting at which all the teachers and assistant teachers were present, the matter was again mentioned and I suggested that Kuatokoru be left without a teacher, but since the teachers were all prepared to share the expense the other stations could be maintained with a levy of 7/- all round. This aroused a storm of dissent from all quarters.

"Well," I said, "what do you want?"

S. Padapio then said, "We are not going to consent to any withdrawals. What is more we want you to appoint a teacher to Karapisita."

"But," I said, "How are you going to meet the additional expenditure?"

I had never intended to ask them for more than was absolutely necessary, and I considered these two places could wait awhile.

"Make the levy 10/-" came the reply.

"Yes," I said, "That would do it."

Then Devita must have a word in his quiet, determined way.

"I am not prepared to vote for withdrawal from Kuatokoru. I want to go there and see what I can do, and I will pay a teacher two pounds to take my place at Tearaka."

Just like Devita. We did not let him do it, but I am sure he would have carried out his offer if we had allowed him to."

Great credit must be given to all these committed Christians, Fijian and Solomon Island, overseas and local missionaries, but even in such company David Voeta stood out. Mr. Metcalfe wrote:

"The secret of his success undoubtedly lay in his unselfishness. He was a true shepherd of the sheep. Whilst at Tearaka the Government Medical Assistant patrolling the District sent word to the people of Rotokas to come to Tearaka on the coast for inspection. This would mean a full days journey each way. On the day appointed they arrived with enough food for the trip, but the Government Medical Assistant did not arrive for another two days. The people were without food amongst strangers, for they are not on friendly terms with the coastal people, and assistance was not forthcoming. Devita saw their plight and made the five miles trip to a nearby plantation by canoe,

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purchased a bag of rice with his own money and handed to the hungry folk. It is not surprising that we have eight villages in that area now.

My last contact with him was at Vanvon as we were returning from the 1935 Synod at Buka. He had built a church on the property and we had a service and than a talk with himself and his assistants about the work in the Tearaka District, and he was very happy as he told us of the progress made."

The pressure of the world depression grew greater. Mr. Metcalfe was removed from Teop to go back to Choiseui. After a break the Rev. A.H. Voyce came to Teop to stay for a year, and then in 1936 the Rev. Donald C. Alley was appointed. Like David Voeta, Don Alley was noted for his deep concern for people and spent himself tirelessly on their behalf. Like David, he too was to lay down his life for the people to whom God had sent him in service.

David's work in the Rotokas and Aita areas was beginning to meet increasing opposition. Competition between the churches has written some sad pages on the world's history, and Bougainville is no exception. Looking back we regret it but cannot gloss over the matter. Thus there was constant tension in this new area and local leaders, like the shrewd politicians they were, played one mission off against another for some apparent or real temporary advantage. David records, on one occasion:

"We went further inland to the village (that had asked us) and found they did not want us, they had received a Roman Catholic teacher."

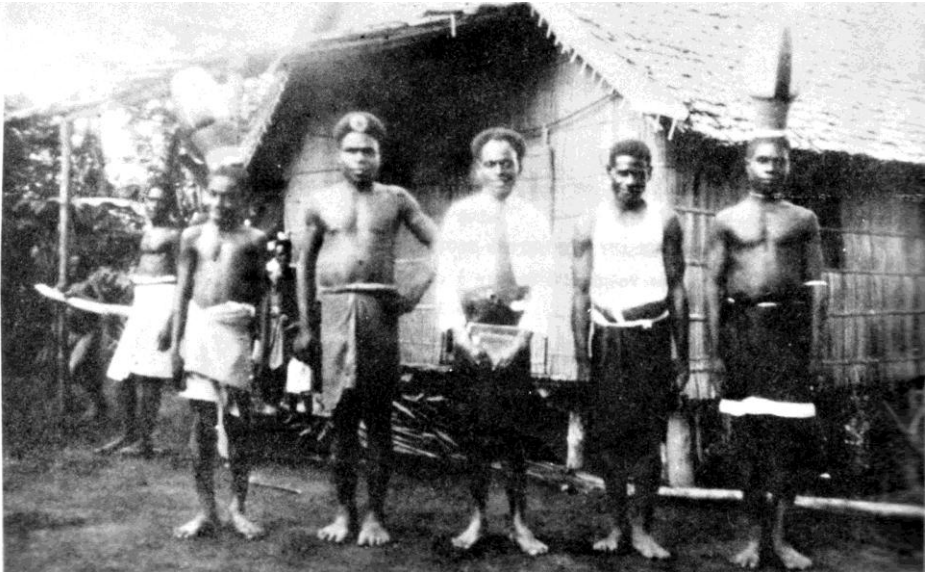
Another vexatious problem was that of taxes. All adult males had to pay head tax of 10/- a year. Who was an adult was not easy to determine in the absence of any records of birth, or any local system of recording age. School boys (usually teenagers) were later exempt from taxation, but at first it seemed as if the schools would have to close, unless teachers paid the boys taxes themselves...as many of them did. Tension remained, however, and teachers were often accused of admitting boys to school to help them evade tax. It was this situation which gave another good excuse for trouble makers to make charges against David Voeta. Mak Li was a Chinese trader at Tearaka, who resented the advent of the missionaries, probably because their presence put some brake on his exploitation of the local people. It was inevitable that he and David should clash, and clash they did.

By mid-1935 David was being accused of many things before the 'kiap' (Government officer).

"May 29th. It was the day for holding the court and I was brought before it. They said a lot of things about me, but I did not answer. They were angry because I had got many villages.

May 30th. We left and they arrested me...the tultui was angry because (he said) I had told the people not to pay tax but to come to school. But he lied."

He was taken to Kieta and kept in jail for a week awaiting trial, and then he was released and sent home without any charge being made against him. It appears that the District Officer realised that no real crime had been established. Perhaps it was thought that David would have been frightened off - but if any thought this they clearly underestimated their man. Once out of jail, David was quickly back in action.



David and some of his Rotokas boys.
They are wearing the "upe" or initiation hats, typical of the area.

In February 1936, David was again in jail. This time he was charged with disturbing the peace. He was subject to some maltreatment, and on one occasion was struck while lifting a full bag of sand. He was severely bruised and at least one rib broken. He had a spell in hospital, where he was visited by the District Officer, and shortly after released. From this time on he seems to have been a sick man most of the time. Mr. Cropp who was visiting from Buka, forbade him to travel up into the mountain villages, but nothing would hold back this zealous man, as long as he could move at all. He was deeply concerned for Ruruvu village where he had won acceptance and begun to make converts. His health slowly improved and in September he had a brief time of well-being, in which he and three others climbed almost to the top of Mt. Baibi (10,000 ft) on whose slopes the villages of the Rotokas are perched. They were driven back from the top by clouds of sulphurous smoke. But it was typical of the man that he should make the effort in spite of his illness.



Pioneers All

**(Standing) Lazurus Kaleveke, Eroni Lipa, Beni Lamupio, Aduru Aqa, David Voeta
(Sitting) Setaraki Padapio, Dorisa Hina (Beni's wife), Pita Izu**

It was now time to go to Teop for Quarterly Meeting. The idea had been growing in David's mind that they should push on beyond Ruruvu to the south and endeavour to link up with the work of the Siwai area which was spreading north through Nagavisi. This plan was discussed at the meeting and the new minister, Don Alley, was also moved to enthusiasm for the project. When it came to a question as to who would go, no-one had any doubts that only David could lead the party. So Quarterly Meeting over, the minister prepared to leave for Synod and the patrol under David prepared to leave for a journey into the interior. The Synod party were away six weeks as was not unusual, and when they returned it was to sad news. Don Alley wrote this:

"At last, near midnight, the "Saga" slowly rounded the lantern held by the mission boys on the reef at the entrance to the anchorage.

We called to them, "Are all well?" "Yes" came the answer as they thought of our own folk, "but David has died." That was indeed bad news for, besides one of our best workers, we had lost a personal friend and Christian brother. Soon we learned the sad, brave story of his passing.

Back in the mountains at the village of Ruruvu David prepared for the patrol. Then he was taken ill with fever and chest trouble. He must have felt very ill or he would never have given in. Somehow they managed to help him out to the coast, a day and a half's hard walking normally. Twenty five miles by canoe and a very sick man was placed in the hospital at Teop. There for two weeks they fought for his life. His friends tramped

sixty miles for medicines, for funds and stocks were low, and when he rallied splendidly great was the joy of all. During this anxious time David's thoughts were constantly on his work and his Lotu. He must get better, he kept emphasizing, and then go back to his District; they must let him walk about so that he would become strong again. Could Marama (Mrs. Alley) send a teacher at once to a certain village? Or he would ask them to sing and mission boys would gather round and he would choose his favourite hymns, or they would pray together. The improvement did not last for long, other complications set in. Yet the night before the end he insisted on being helped to the teacher's house nearby as a step towards his recovery. They let him have his way until Marama was able to take him in hand in the morning. Soon after this he sank lower and in the presence of many friends he passed quietly away. People from nearer villages where he had previously laboured came to mourn unrestrainedly, and under the burning tropical sun they laid him to rest. Surely his epitaph should be, "Well done thou good and faithful servant."

Another of his fellow workers, Micah of Marovo, spoke of him thus:

1. David earned his money, yet he gave it away to the local people.
2. David helped the villages, leaders and people in every way - house building, in gardening, and in the important events of village life.
3. He was generous to all people, and gave to those from far and near whether they were Catholics, Seventh Day Adventists or Methodist.
4. He was never lazy or afraid, and he was never conquered until his last illness."

Micah goes on to tell that, just before he died David asked the mission boys to sing his favourite hymn, "While the days are going by" (Sankey No. 325) in the Teop language.

Nao bata, nao bata. Go forward, go forward,
Nao bata, nao bata. Go forward, go forward,
Tea kiu te Jisu, To (do) the work of Jesus
Tea mamihu boni. Every day.

The "child that no-one loved" had been caught up by the love of Christ, and with the words of his dying wife in his ears, "go and preach", he had gone on to do just that with zeal and with a deep love for people that only death could silence. Like that of Don Alley, who six years later was to follow his colleague through the gates of death, the life of David Voeta stands as a constant challenge to the people of Teop and to Christians everywhere...

Nao bata, nao bata,
Nao bata, nao bata,
Tea kiu te Jisu,
Tea mamihu boni.