

Letter from Mr. Sidman to the Com. Secy Board of Foreign Missions

London, September 11, 1849.

Rev. & James Waddell,
Piton N.S.

Rev'd & dear Sir:

I received in due course your esteemed letter of the 1st ult., enclosing a Bill of Exchange for £50 to meet any orders of your Missionaries in the New Hebrides on account of incidental expenses.

From the statement of a^c, which at your desire we send herewith, you will perceive what advances have been made by our Treasurer to cover the orders transmitted by Mess^{rs} Goddie & Archibald; and from these you may be able to form some estimate as to the provision to be made for the future.

It is, however, by no means easy to ascertain, with any precision, what may be the necessary expenditure of a newly planted Mission in the South Sea during the first years of its existence. In consequence of the great distance of the Islands from any European Market, and the obstacles to frequent communication, our Missionaries have usually found it expedient to lay in supplies sufficient to last for two or three years;

and

and, consequently, we have been compelled to pay the Salaries in advance - a practice objectionable in itself, but for which there was plainly no alternative. Under such circumstances, in estimating the probable average cost of maintaining a Mission in the South Seas, regard must be had to the fact, that a large and disproportionate outlay is indispensable at the commencement.

The Expense of a Mission depends very materially upon the social condition of the people. For several years after our Mission was established on Tahiti, the inhabitants, who were then nearly in the same state as the New Hebrideans at the present time, were accustomed to give their gratuitous labour in erecting Chapels and the Dwelling Houses of the Missionaries. Now, in consequence of their great intercourse with Europeans, the regular cultivation of the land, the growth of commercial enterprise, and the general use of money, the value of labour and of all the necessaries of life has more than doubled, and the Salaries of the Missionaries have undergone a corresponding increase. Samoa is in a transition state, considerably in advance of the New Hebrides, but its commerce with Europeans being still comparatively restricted, the Missionaries have not yet, in regard to the means of subsistence, been affected to the same extent as their Brethren at Tahiti. Each married Missionary, however, at Samoa receives a Salary of £100 per Ann.^m, which we should consider

consider to be a sufficient allowance for the New
Hebrides. In regard to the purchase of boats, building
Expences &c we have no general rule applicable to
such cases; but we have not infrequently made grants
to meet them upon sufficient proof that the Missionary
was unable from the assistance of the people to pro-
vide himself with these necessaries.

You will be quite at liberty to avail
yourself of the services of our valued friend & Agent
Dr. Ross in Sydney; and we are persuaded he will
be happy to do anything in his power to advance the
interests of your infant Mission. indeed he has
already executed some commissions for Messrs. Geddie
& Archibald. It is however proper to remark that
it is only in cases of emergency that our Missionaries
resort to the Sydney Market for supplies, most articles
purchased there being dearer and of inferior qua-
lity to those sent from England.

In reply to your enquiry as to the pro-
bable time of the Missionary Ship's return to this
Country, I can only say that according to previous
arrangement, she will be due in October of next
year, and may be expected to proceed on her next
voyage within three or six months from the time
of her arrival; but we shall no doubt be enabled,
on a future occasion, to give you some definite infor-
-mation in time for you to act upon it.

You are probably aware that Messrs. Geddes & Archibald were accompanied to their field of labor at Annetum, one of the New Hebrides group, by several of our Missionaries, and that one of their number, Mr. Powell, was appointed to remain with them. From Mr. P.'s report we are led to hope that, with the divine blessing upon their zealous and persevering efforts, our dear friends will eventually succeed in their important & arduous undertaking.

Rev. James Waddell
Bellisnew River John
Pictou
Nova Scotia

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of Victoria
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Repeating the assurance of our sincere desire to afford you and them every assistance in our power,

I remain, Rev. & dear Sir,

Yours very faithfully

Wm. Bidwell

Foreign Secretary
London
Mission Society