

**Lucian Tapiedi**  
29th January 2012

**Hebrews Ch.11 v 35b** - "Others, refusing to accept freedom, died under torture in order to be raised to a better life."

There is an area of the World that I was not taught very much about at School, except for 2 Nations of the British Empire(that dates my Age), and the fact of the remoteness of the rest of habitable land! That is the South Pacific and where it borders with the Indian Ocean; it may have been because the dreadful events of the 2nd World War were still very much in the minds of our Teachers, all of whom were Ex service people. For whatever reason I do not know very much about it. That also includes my Christian knowledge, because at Sunday School all Missionary education was of Africa, S.America, or to the Jewish Nation! Except for 2 visits on S/School Anniversaries of a little old lady who was dressed in Chinese clothes with tightly bandaged feet. This was of course Gladys Aylward of the 'Inn of the 6th Happiness' fame, and one of her mission roles was to try to eradicate the custom of binding female children's feet to stunt their growth, large feet being the signs of peasants! So! because of this my interest was raised when I heard of 10 statues of 20th Century Martyrs that were placed above the West Entrance of Westminster Abbey! One of these 10 is a man called Lucian Tapiedi from Papua New Guinea, a Christian that to me is representative of 1000,s of Martyrs from that area of the World. He is only one of 333 Christians from all denominations killed during the occupation of New guinea between 1942 & 1943.

Lucian was born in 1921, in a village called Taupota, the son of a sorcerer who died while his sons were still young. Lucian was taught at a Mission School until he entered St. Aidan's Teaching College at Divara, where he was noted as a diligent and cheerful student, fond of physical recreation & music. In 1941 he became part of the staff at Sangara as a teacher & evangelist. When the Japanese invaded on the 21st July 1942, near the Mission Station at Gona, where the Missionaries were killed. Meanwhile another group of Missionaries, some from Sangara were trying to evade capture, and Lucian was determined not to abandon them, and he cared for them as they tried to avoid the Japanese Army, they were joined by other Missionaries until the party consisted of 10 people! They eventually came to a village of the Orokaiva Tribe called Kurumbo, where the Missionaries were escorted to the Japanese, except Lucian who was killed with an axe by a man called Hivijapa and the Japanese beheaded the rest on Buna Beach, 8 of these were Anglican Clergy, teachers & medical staff, Revd Henry Holland, Revd Vivian Redlich, Sister Margery Brenchly, Mr. John Diffill, Miss Lilla Lashmar. Lucian was only 21years old when he was martyred and had only served barely 2 years as an evangelist; and as a carer for the others in distress only 1 month! He was martyred early in August 1941.

As happened with the torturers of Bishop Wilson, who became Christians through his faith, so Hivijapa also became a Christian, changing his name to Lucian, later to build a Church dedication to Lucian at Embi. Lucian's remains were disinterred and reburied at Sangara. His was a very short life, as experienced by so many Christian Martyrs; but his was a life dedicated to others and above all to Jesus. A life that very likely to have been comparatively safe if he had stayed where he was, or gone back to his village,without acknowledging his background, but as all Martyrs have done he WOULD not disown Jesus as his Saviour, he was a firm follower to the end!

I admire the steadfast faith of all the Martyrs, and can only pray that my faith in some small way can be as firm and sure as theirs! I am also conscious that Martyrdom IS still happening today, Next to Lucian above the door of the Abbey is a statue of Wang Zhiming, a Chinese Pastor who was executed in front of 10,00 people for refusing to denounce our Lord Jesus Christ. It is "these others, refusing to accept freedom, that died under torture in order to be raised to a better life." What gave these ordinary people the strength and fortitude to suffer torture, death for their faith. I can only leave you with the words of William How, in one of the verses of his Hymn!  
Thou was their rock, their refuge and their might, Thou Lord the vision ever in their sight; Thou in the darkness drear, their one true light!