

Rev. John Williams was a preacher at Cote Baptist Chapel about 3 miles from Bampton. On April 11, 1838, John and Mary Williams set sail from London, bound for the other side of the world. The wharves, docks, and bridges were lined with people who came to see them off. Mortality was so high in the South Pacific that they made the difficult decision to leave their six-year-old son in England. As the ship pulled away, a kind relative lifted Samuel high into the air so his parents could see him in the crowd. The eyes of the little boy streamed with tears, but he was old enough to know that his Mommy and Daddy were going back to his dark-skinned friends to give them the Gospel. That morning, his loving father had written a note in Samuel's journal, giving him a warm goodbye and a fatherly exhortation to live for Christ if perchance they never met again in this life.

Only one year later, soon after he had arrived back in the South Pacific, John Williams set his sights upon the New Hebrides islands. It was known that the inhabitants of these islands were among the fiercest cannibals in the Pacific. Leaving his wife at the mission station on Upolu, Williams sailed toward the New Hebrides.

In the morning of November 20, 1839, John Williams prepared to land on the island of Erromango. Sadly he was brutally beaten with a war club, and his corpse was dragged into the dense vegetation to be cooked and eaten. The grief-stricken native workers, the faithful fellow-laborers of John Williams, watched the entire ordeal from the boat. They were the ones who had to tell Mrs. Williams the sad news. She took it with grace and Christian fortitude. Her eldest son, John, continued his father's work in Samoa. Samuel, the little boy left in England, also became a messenger of the Prince of Peace. He carried the middle name, Tamatoa, the name of the Island King who first welcomed his father to Raiatea.

*John Williams, The Martyr Missionary of Polynesia* by James Ellis