

Here the survivors found Catholic Missionaries who had been working with the Wallis people since 1837. In 1852 another hurricane swept over Fakaofu, and the head of the Catholic Mission in Samoa, hearing of the catastrophe, sent a ship from Samoa to Wallis Island to load coconuts for the starving Tokelau people.

In 1861 the Catholic Mission was instrumental in returning to Tokelau a party of 16 men and women who in 1852 had gone to Wallis Island, where they had been converted to Christianity. The people, however, refused to accept Christianity, and the Missionaries in the circumstances were not prepared to allow the converts to land in Tokelau. On their declaring an intention to take these people back to Wallis, the Tokelau Islanders relented and granted the Missionaries permission to land and preach Christianity.

A priest from Samoa again visited Fakaofu in 1863, but found that paganism still reigned there. In 1868 two Catholic Samoan catechists were left at Fakaofu and Nukunono.

In 1858 the famous ship "John Williams" had visited Fakaofu with the Rev. Murray, but the people refused to accept his offer to leave with them two Christian Rarotongans to explain Christianity. The Missionaries did, however, succeed in leaving there two Tokelau Islanders who had learned Christianity in Samoa. The two Rarotongans were taken to Atafu, where the teaching was immediately successful, and the next year a Samoan teacher from Atafu set out in a canoe to carry Christianity to the other Islands. Nukunono had in the meantime been converted to Catholicism. Mission ships again visited the Group in 1865 and 1868.

The position at the present day is that on Atafu all the inhabitants belong to the London Missionary Society, and on Nukunono all are adherents of the Roman Catholic Mission. On Fakaofu the greater number belong to the London Missionary Society. At the date of the census taken in September, 1945, there were 97 Catholics on this atoll. Both Missions—the Roman Catholic and the London Missionary Society—have their headquarters in Samoa, from which the work in the Tokelau Islands is administered. The London Missionary Society's ship "John Williams" has now resumed annual visits to Atafu and Fakaofu, but since December, 1946, there have been two Catholic priests, one European and one Samoan, in residence at Nukunono. It is also the intention of this Mission to settle a number of sisters in Nukunono in the near future to establish a convent school. Buildings have been erected and are almost ready for occupation, and it is possible that the Mission in Nukunono may be fully established before the end of 1948.

The Catholic Mission has trained Tokelau Catechists to work with their own people, and the London Missionary Society from time to time sends Samoan Pastors for tours of duty in Fakaofu and Atafu.

The education work of the Missions is discussed in a later stage of this report.

The London Missionary Society church building in Atafu is a substantial cement building, and the church in Nukunono is of an even more elaborate character. The London Missionary Society Church in Fakaofu is also substantial, but a small wooden structure suffices at present for the needs of the Catholics on that atoll.

6. ADMINISTRATION

There are no local European officials, nor is it considered that any are necessary. If a resident District Officer were appointed he would not be able to fill in his time with administrative duties, and could only properly supervise the island in which he resided. The Group is administered through the Department of Samoan Affairs in Samoa, and is visited once a year by the High Commissioner. Units of the Royal New Zealand Navy also make annual visits.