

The Anglican Church in Polynesia

"Polynesians don't eat, they FEAST!", says an Australian airline pamphlet about Fiji. Its writer has obviously **not** worked alongside mission staff of the Anglican Diocese of Polynesia, such as Sister Betty Slader, a nurse evangelist who sees the most heartrending poverty every day among landless Indians in squatter settlements around Suva, Fiji's bargain-stocked, tourist-oriented capital. Nor has he shared the experience of another Anglican missionary who ministers among Indian cane cutters and labourers within a few miles of Nadi International Airport. As this missionary sits on the mud floor of a thatched hut comforting a widow whose husband died, possibly through poverty and malnutrition, conversation is drowned by jet engines roaring overhead. Another plane load of tourists is arriving to enjoy the South Pacific's newest paradise. Through such demanding ministries, the diocese fulfils a vital role in the Pacific scene, even though it has but 12,000 members in its 11 million square mile area. The main work is in Fiji, among the Indians, and landless Melanesians who are the underprivileged descendants of Solomon Islanders "blackbirded" to Fiji last century. Eastern religions and American sects are active opponents of the Church. Outside Fiji, the main Anglican work is in Tonga. Here, the Anglican congregations, though small, are spiritually strong and active. The assistant bishop of the diocese is a Tongan, the Rt. Rev. Fine Halapua. A resident priest in Western Samoa also visits American Samoa. Occasional pastoral visits are made to the Cook, Gilbert and Ellice Islands and other remote groups.



Worship at St. Christopher's Home, Naulu, Fiji.

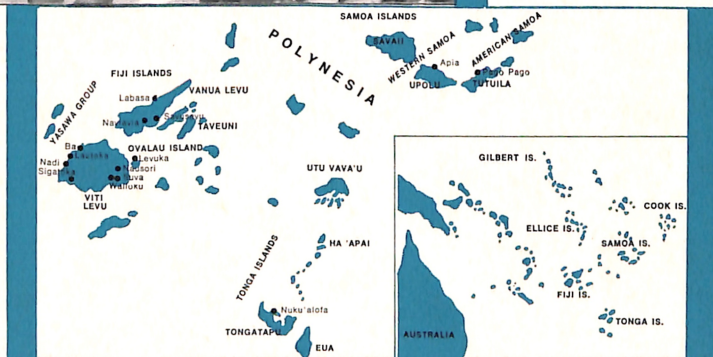
The Anglican Diocese of Polynesia

Area: 11,250,000 square miles.
Population: 750,000. **Christians:** 440,000. **Anglicans:** 12,000.
Bishop: Rt. Rev. John T. Holland.
Assistant Bishop: Rt. Rev. Fine Halapua. **Schools:** 1 high school, 6 primary schools (Fiji); 1 high school (Tonga). **Indigenous Clergy:** 22 (Indians, Tongans, Samoans, Melanesians, comprising 80% of parish clergy and 65% of all active clergy).



Suva's glittering stores are crammed with new TV sets—but these are for tourists only. There is no television in Fiji.

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