

Niuean Worship

Fakalofa lahi atu kia mutolu oti (Greetings to you all).

Niue is an upraised coral atoll with an area of 100 square miles. It was believed through oral tradition that Niue was first populated by waves of migrants from Tonga, Samoa and Pukapuka one of the Islands in the Northern Group of the Cook Islands.

Captain James Cook first landed on Niue in 1774. He named the Island Savage Island because of the reception he received from the people upon his arrival; they were very hostile and did not permit him to land.

It was not until the 26th of October 1946 that the gospel was welcomed. Peniamina and Fakafitifonua both Niueans and missionaries by the name of William Gill and H Nisbet accompanied by Rarotongan and Samoan missionaries successfully landed at Uluvehi in Mutalau.

Peniamina paved the way for the Samoan missionary by the name of Paulo to continue the work he had started. Paulo arrived in Niue in October 1849.

With the introduction of Christianity, thirteen proper village settlements were established, which later became the strongholds for further evangelisation work. The Niuean Church was originally under the London Missionary Society for approximately 125 years. It became a fully independent Church known as the Ekalesia Niue in 1972. The Ekalesia Niue is congregational in its structure and ethos.

The Gospel Day.

Every last Monday in October is commemorated as the "Gospel Day", the day when the good news reached Niue Island. It is also a national holiday. The whole nation gathers in the main Church in Alofi (town) and celebrate the day. Each of the thirteen churches sings a hymn. There will be a few sermons preached. Several leaders are chosen to lead prayers. It is a day where offerings are made by each Church for the support of the Ministers work on the Island. The Prime Minister as the Government representative normally preaches on this day plus other senior ministers who hold leadership position in the Church. The story about Peniamina, how he entered Niue, is re-told every year through the hymns, messages and words of encouragement. There is feasting at the end with singing and dancing.

Easter Services – Good Friday and Easter Sunday

These services run on similar format. The minister conducts the service and the Bible Readings, prayers and sermon is distributed to the lay people. A service would normally run for 2 hours. Even the young people are encouraged to take part in the service. There is a custom when one takes part in the service, the participant is expected to donate some money as an act of thanksgiving to God for the opportunity to take part in the service. Sometimes the young people are encouraged to re-enact the crucifixion and resurrection stories.

Sunday School Rally

The Sunday School rally is a national worship event. Thirteen Sunday Schools will come together during the Easter Saturday. The President of the Church will lead the service and the thirteen Sunday Schools participate in the service.

Local/National -Monthly Youth Services

Young people travel to a different congregation each month to worship together. The young people organize their own services. There will be lots of prayers, sermonettes and songs and hymns. They follow a fairly traditional order of service.

May God bless you all. Monuina mai he Atua. Amene.

Rev. Liva Tukutama.

6th June 2002