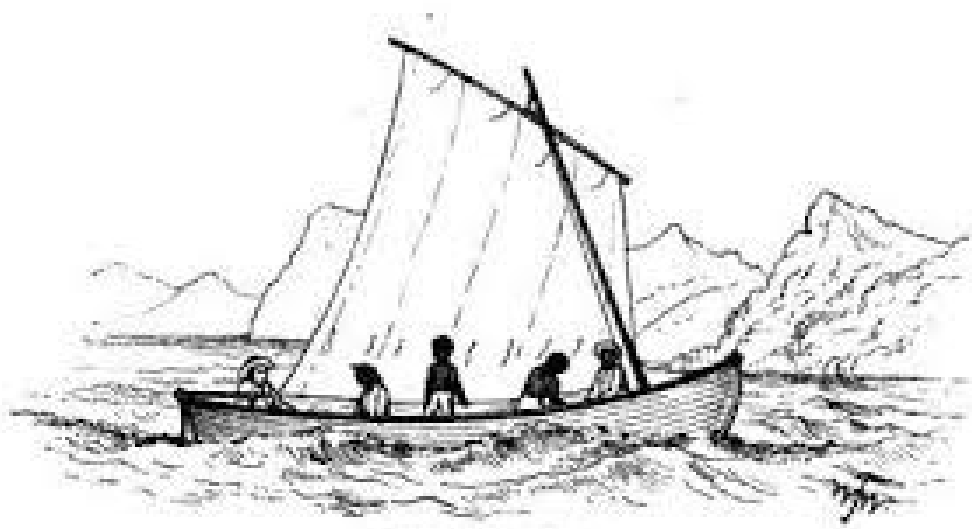


The Gospel goes west



The Tongans, Fijians and Samoans were all great sailors. They built huge canoes to enable them to travel on the open ocean, between island groups. Before the coming of Christian missionaries to the islands there were established trading routes between Tonga, Fiji and Samoa. They had developed settlements on certain islands on the way; where there were trees growing that provided suitable timber for building their canoes and making other artifacts.

After the great spiritual awakening in Tonga in the mid 1830s the newly converted Christians, went on their trading journeys with the new message. “Believe on the great Creator God and Jesus His Son.” Their very lives were sufficient witness to the people on the other islands that the Christian message was truly life-changing. The Tongans told how their life in the community had changed. The love of God through Jesus had brought peace and forgiveness to people’s hearts. There was peace between former enemies; villagers were living in harmony together instead of fighting.

This sounded like a much better way to live, and there were many who came to believe on Jesus through the witness of these Christian traders. Many Fijians in the out-lying islands to the east received the Gospel message first through these Tongan and Samoan traders.