

**President David O. McKay visit to Tahiti January 1955**



Visits of general authorities to Tahiti were rare in the first 100 years of the mission. Apostle David O. McKay visited Tahiti for two days in 1921 but missed mission president Kennard. In 1939 Rufus K. Hardy of the seventy toured the mission for 6 weeks. In 1948 Apostle Matthias Cowley made the first of several visits to the islands. He dedicated the Fariipiti chapel and mission home in January 1950. On January 18, 1955, 81 year old President of the Church, David O. McKay and his wife Emma Ray McKay arrived by plane in Papeete, Tahiti. Mission President Larson Caldwell stated that " this was one of the most important days in the life of this mission and in the lives of all of us here."

"President and sister Caldwell, the missionaries, and a small group of Church members met the distinguished visitors at the wharf, where a short reception was held, President McKay was interviewed by the press and after having passed through customs, the visitors were taken directly to the mission home. There the saints crowned the prophet and his companions with shell necklaces and adjourned to the chapel for a short welcome program, with President Caldwell translating the prophet's remarks. That night the members prepared and served dinner to President McKay, his party and all the missionaries, and presented a program of local song and dance. Although all of the city and government officials were invited to the evening festivities, President Caldwell was disappointed that very few of them attended. Although President McKay's visit was short in length, its influence was to be felt for years to come."

"The next day, after meeting with the missionaries and the board of directors of the Tahitian Navigation Society, which oversaw the Paraita, President McKay had a brief but pleasant meeting with Governor Jean-Francois Toby. That evening, President and sister McKay spoke at an edifying meeting for the members, and on the following morning, 20 January 1955, President McKay and his companions left Tahiti by air. His visit did much to increase the faith of the members and renew the missionary spirit of the mission." ( page 134 Seasons of Faith and Courage by Ellsworth and Perrin)

The remarks of President McKay to the missionaries and the members are reported at the end of the picture section. The key change in focus that President McKay discussed with President Caldwell was to start proselyting in the French language. Two of the next missionaries to arrive were designated to work in the French Language. Thomas R. Stone and Max Watt started teaching and writing articles for Te Heheuraa Api in French. The first French Sunday school was organized in June 1956.



**Arrival of Franklin J. Murdock, David O. and Emma Ray McKay, Lucille Caldwell**

**Jan 18, 1955**



**Arrival at Fariipiti chapel Jan 18, 1955**



**David O. McKay speaks as President Larson Caldwell translates**







**Emma Ray McKay David O. McKay and Franklin Murdock greet members**





**President McKay approved of aparima but said Tahitian dancing should not be allowed.**





**Members presented gifts to the visitors**







**David O. and Emma Ray McKay by the Fariipiti chapel**





**David O. McKay poses with the Tahitian Missionaries by the Fariipiti Chapel Jan 19, 1955**

L to R Ken Orton, Lynn Bissell, President Larson and Lucille Caldwell with Hina, David O. and Emma Ray McKay, Franklin Murdock, Robert Steed, Ray Rich Joseph Childers, Ira Tree



**Tahitian Missionaries with David O McKay- Jan 1955**

**L-R: Ken Orton, Lynn Bissell, President Larson Caldwell, Lucille Caldwell with Hina  
President David O McKay, Emma Ray McKay, Franklin Murdock, Robert Steed, Ray Rich,  
Joseph Childers, Ira Tree.**









**President Larson Caldwell with David O. McKay**





**Members give flower and shell leis to the visitors**



## President McKay's Speech to Elders

Papeete, Tahiti

January 19, 1955

Emerson said, "What you are thunders so loudly in my ears I cannot hear what you say." Of what you are is expressed when you are kneeling down in secret prayer. What you are asking God to help you. If you are tempted to caress a girl, when you kneel down in secret prayer you wouldn't ask God to arrange for a secret rendezvous. But you would ask Him to protect you and give you power that I may not injure her, or injure myself, or my parents, or my Church. You pray in that secret moment for wisdom to preach the truth of the gospel of Jesus Christ and teach no lies.

There is a saying that we should pray constantly. People have wondered about that. We can't pray constantly, so people say. The Atheists ridicule it; spend your time praying, praying, you have got to make your living! Yes, but while you are making that living, while you are making your studies in school, while you are preparing your lessons in the mission field you can say as we say always, "Father, help me in this."

"Prayer is the Soul's Sincere Desire." "Oh, Father, help me, I've got to appear before the public tonight, help me." Haven't you boys prayed when you had your examinations in school? I did. I failed, sometimes, but I knew it was because I had failed myself not because God hadn't answered me. In other words, a sincere man can go to the Father and ask Him to help him in what he is doing and to bless what he is doing. That's real prayer.

Sincerity is the mother of all good virtues. It is the mother of honesty; it's the mother of accuracy in speech; it is the mother of justice in judging one another, and so on. And so I say, look within every once in a while and see whether your heart is sincere and judge of that sincerity as if you were going to our Heavenly Father. There was never a great man who was not sincere. There are many virtues we should pray for; there are many things we cannot do, but there is one thing we can always do and that is we can pray to God to keep our hearts sincere.

The second virtue I am going to name for you, now in the field and always, is SELF-CONTROL. I have mentioned that second group of evils. Anger becomes a noble sort. Jealousy, smearing, fault-finding, and the second temptation that Satan gave to Jesus — pride; haughtiness; yielding to indulgence in appetite; smoking a cigarette when nobody sees us; drinking wine and intoxicating liquors, violating the rule and the law of chastity, if nobody sees us. And all those things you find operate eternally in character building and soul building; the law; the virtue of self-mastery. You might want to yield to your appetite; control it. Passion might rule you; temptation might come in your way; but if you are master of self, you're not going to fall.

In 1922, three and four (1922-23-24) we had five hundred missionaries in the European mission. One out of every hundred failed. 1 %. Five Elders were excommunicated and sent home. One in his plea said, "Well, I went into the bookstore just at closing time to talk to a girl, and there was the story." I said



that wasn't when you fell, it was in the secret hours of your secret thoughts before you went to that book store. You had thought about it; you had entertained that thought, and you had weakened yourself even before the surroundings. If you had not thought of it and prepared yourself for it, you would have been strong enough to say NO, no matter whether the door was locked or whatever she did.

"It's easy enough to be virtuous  
When nothing tempts you astray,  
When without or within no voice of sin  
Is luring your soul away.  
But it's only a negative virtue  
Until it's tried by fire,  
And the soul that's worth the honor of birth  
Is the soul that resists desire.

By the cynic, the sad and the fallen,  
Who have no strength for the strife,  
The world's highways are cumbered today,  
They make up the item of life.  
But the virtue that conquers passion,  
The sadness that hides in a smile;  
It's these that are worth the honor of birth  
And we find them but once in a while."

So wrote Ella Winter Wilcox.

We find them always among the stalwart missionaries and the stalwart members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. You be masters not only of your feelings, but of your appetites and your passions, and you'll go home as heroes, true heroes.

The third, STUDIOUSNESS. What a school you're in! This is a school better than your university; I've been in both. Here is an opportunity in youth to fill your mind with passages, as mentioned by Brother Murdock, with poems written to include the thoughts of the greatest men. When you get old you can't remember them so well. You can't pick up a new passage of scripture in two or three minutes, have it, and make it your own; but in youth you can. This little girl would have the (Hina Caldwell) Tahitian language if she stayed here another year. She would be teaching it and she would keep it. Why here you have an opportunity.

I heard right down here in one of these missions since we have come on this trip about one of our young men who is idling away his time who claims he is sick. But he can play basketball; participate in all the outward sports. But he can't study. He can't get out and meet people. So he's idling away his time. Oh, what if he were in school! If I were his teacher I know what he would get. He would go home and he would say as a student did to his father: "I just lack one of having a hundred, Father. I have two naughts." That's about all he would get. But what I'm saying is, memorize the scriptures, even in Tahitian. Memorize them and when you stand up and try to quote them in English, you might fall back into Tahitian. All right, but it's there and before long you will be using it all your life.



Have with you as a companion some of the very best books. Memorize the passage of scripture. You will be standing up someday and preaching on the necessity of works and there will come to you what you memorized in the mission field. "Not everyone that sayeth unto me... Lord, Lord, shall entereth into the kingdom of Heaven, but he that doeth the will of the Father which is in Heaven." Why it just fits into what you are going to say.

And in that comparison of the winds and the waves: "He that built his house upon the rock, the winds descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat upon that house but it fell not," and so on. Here I'll say you're in a school. Two and a half years of college work, more useful to you than ever. So studiousness is the third.

And the fourth is SERVICE.... a love of SERVICE. "These deeds shall thy Immortal be, fear not, thou did'st them unto me. "You will hear that voice of the Savior, not only while you are in the mission field but always through life.

Now you will notice that I have started each of those four with an "S", you that you can always remember. SINCERITY (with that secret and constant prayer) SELF-MASTERY, STUDIOUSNESS, and SERVICE.

God bless you, my dear fellow workers, that you may contribute to the development of a noble soul, true nobility. Sincerity, honesty... the foundation of it.

The father of our country, George Washington, said: "I hope I may always have virtue and firmness enough to maintain what I consider to be the noblest of all titles, the character of an honest man." Some critics have ridiculed the story of the cherry tree, said it has no connection, but I always like to quote that; they can't ridicule that statement written by George Washington in his message to his fellow countrymen.

So I'll say, God bless you in building up nobility of character and preparing yourself for service to your fellow men through the greatest and most divine organization in all the world. That's my testimony, for God himself, through his beloved son, Jesus Christ, established this church and Jesus Christ is its head. I know it and Joseph Smith responded to that inspiration and guidance and that same inspiration and that guidance is leading his church today.

May this testimony be yours as it is mine, I pray in the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.



PRESIDENT DAVID O. McKAY

January 19, 1955

Papeete, Tahiti

"I need thee every hour, Stay thou near by;  
Temptations lose their power when thou art nigh..."

Thank you for singing one of my favorite hymns. This has been a busy day, one of my busy days since we left Suva. It has been a glorious day, meeting new friends, filling appointments, considering important matters pertaining to the Tahitian Mission and now we are nearing the end of our visit with Tahiti.

As I look back over this busy day I find I have one regret. Sometime about noon, President Caldwell said that there are two people in the hospital who are sick and they would like us to see them, and I heard that there were others who would like to have blessings, and my heart responds to those invitations but the hours have been too few. And after this meeting we will be too exhausted physically to respond to go to the hospital or to bless these people, so I wish to authorize these missionaries who hold the Holy Priesthood to respond to these people and give these blessings. But I am going to tell you as I told some good Saints in Samoa, that when I get home and meet with the members of the Twelve Apostles in the temple on the first Thursday on my arrival home, we are going to offer a special prayer for the Saints in Tahiti, Samoa, New Zealand, Tonga and Australia and I am sure the Lord will hear our prayer and bless you who seek him in faith.

Now as I realize I must say good-bye to you I truly feel like the young man who was saying good-night to his sweetheart, "parting is such sorrow, I would say good-night until it would be tomorrow." But before so doing I should like to give you a message which is in my heart. I wish I could tell it to you in your own language, but I am sure President Caldwell will be blessed to give it to you in your language as I give it to him in ours.

Over 1800 years ago a ruler of the Jews came to Jesus by night. Jesus had been around preaching and blessing and Nicodemus had heard him preaching and had seen some of the miracles which had been performed by Jesus. Nicodemus was a Pharisee and the Pharisees believed in life after death. I like to think that Nicodemus had been impressed by the teachings of Jesus and that he had a testimony that Jesus was divine. Indeed, when Jesus granted an audience to Nicodemus, this is what he said, "Master, we know that thou art a teacher come from God; for no man can do these miracles that thou does, except God be with him."

And Jesus said to him, "except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." And Nicodemus wondered how could he, being old, be born again, and then Jesus answered again; "Except a man be born of the water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."

Nicodemus, though a ruler of the Jews, still wondered, couldn't understand being born of the spirit, and Jesus said: "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is everyone that is born of the Spirit."



As these little children were born into the world coming from the presence of the Father, coming into the world from the mother, so we who are grown adults as well as little children can come into the church, born anew. I should like to say something about being born again, changing our natural life to lives of harmony with the life of Christ. That is why the gospel is being preached to all the world today; to change man's lives, to make women more beautiful than ever, and children who are born in purity to grow into man and womanhood to changed lives. That is why Jesus came into the world, to change man's lives.

If men are dishonest, if men are cruel, if men are drunkards, if men cannot be trusted in business, if men cannot be good fathers, the gospel should enter into their lives and change them. If women are cross, if women are sulky, if women are cruel, if women are impure in their lives, the gospel is here to change them that they may be born again and live a life of purity. I know there are people in the world who say you can't change human nature. When they say that they are saying that Jesus Christ hasn't the power to change a man's life. You and I know that he who gets a testimony of the divinity of Jesus Christ becomes a changed man.

Bev Nickols, an English writer, in one of his books on changed lives, says this: "Twelve men, twelve simple men, 1900 years ago changed the lives of the whole world who accepted Jesus Christ." They had no telephones, they had no electricity, they had no steamboats, they had no automobiles, simply their own means of walking and talking, but their influence has gone throughout the whole world, and the teachings of Jesus Christ have changed the lives of men and women.

Sister McKay and I one day visited the leper settlement. Men and women were sick physically. One man was particularly physically affected by that dread disease, leprosy, but while he was there being cured he heard the testimony that one of his afflicted brethren had been born again by being baptized of the water and this man believed that Jesus Christ had spoken again in this dispensation to Joseph Smith. He became completely spiritually born again, his body still affected but his spirit had accepted Jesus Christ as his Redeemer, and in the services which Sister McKay and I attended, that man stood up in the audience and said, "This disease has affected my hands and other parts of my body but I am glad it came to me because it was the means of hearing the blessings of the restored gospel." I couldn't keep the tears from rolling down my cheeks because of the testimony of this afflicted man. He knew because he had sensed that spiritual knowledge within that God lives, that Jesus is the Christ, and that Joseph Smith was the instrument in restoring the gospel as it was when Jesus spoke to Nicodemus.

Now some of you have been baptized in the church, you have had hands laid upon your heads for members of the church and for the gift of the Holy Ghost, but sometimes we slip back into the ways of our old life and when we do that, we lose the spirit; there is no connection between us and our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit.

I once met a young man who had done that. I was attending a conference over in Nevada and after one of the meetings I went with the President of the Stake to administer to a sick man. As we came out of the house I saw a man crossing the street towards us. The president of the Stake said, "There is the man I told



you about. Last night one of our high council men had to sit up with him because he was drunk."

He came directly towards us and I could see his bloodshot eyes, sunken cheeks, and when I extended my hand towards him I felt the tremble of one who used narcotics. As I held his hand, I said, "We have just administered to Brother Jones who is sick." I was surprised to hear him say in a drunken coarse voice, "I suppose you wouldn't administer to me," and I felt the cry of one whose soul was in misery.

I said, "come with me to the President's house and we will talk." As I sat in the chair I put my hands on his knees and I said to him, "Tell me what is the matter." And in that same harsh voice, "Why I'm full of hops." And I thought that he meant that he had such an appetite for whiskey that he couldn't overcome it. I said, "You are young yet; get away from this town, get away from your friends, come back to the ward and act like you used to act."

"Oh," he said, "it ain't whiskey." I said, "You don't mean you have taken to drugs?" "Yes," he said, "whiskey ain't got enough kick in it now."

There was a young man in his 30's, husband of a wife who trusted him, father of little children to whom he should be an example, who once tasted the joys of higher life, now back again to the animal line of indulgence. That man, after having been baptized, after having had hands laid upon his head for the gift of the Holy Ghost; that man after having served his fellow man in honor soon began to satisfy his appetite taking to tobacco, taking to whiskey and finally taking to drugs that finally reduced him to the level of a beast. I mention this to illustrate the fact that after we are baptized, after we become members of the church, we must still live lives of purity if we are going to be born again and see the kingdom of God. And so, you members of the church, and all members of the church in America, in Europe, in Africa, in the Islands of the Sea have the responsibility of living lives of purity that the world that believes that Christ cannot change men's hearts do change men's lives because they see your good deeds.

I hold in my hand here a glass of pure water. I see no impurity in it. When President Murdock handed it to me, I took a sip and it was pure, fresh from the heavens. So is the sincere convert to the gospel of Jesus Christ who is baptised and buried his old sins in the water and comes forth anew, as Christ from the grave, and his sins then are forgiven and his life is changed as he gave his heart to Christ. So, sisters, is the little baby who comes to you mothers fresh from the presence of our Father, but as you members, after having been born again to the gospel, go back again to your old ways, you pollute your bodies and you poison your spirits and deprive yourselves of the blessings that comes forth from the spirit. And that little baby as it grows up into childhood and young man into manhood uses tobacco and uses whiskey; when a young man or woman commit immoral acts, then he pollutes that body and that spirit just as this ink pollutes this pure water. That's what that young man did in Nevada when he went back to his tobacco and back to his whiskey and when whiskey had no more kick in it, to the drugs. We are told by the Savior and by Paul that our body is the temple in which the spirit dwells and we must not pollute this body with impurities as I have polluted this water with this ink. ----- I see that you have in your hymn



book a beautiful song and I am glad it is there.

"That the children may live long, and be beautiful and strong  
Tea and coffee and tobacco they despise,  
Drink no liquor, and they eat, but very little meat;  
They are seeking to be great and good and wise."

Now Nicodemus said, "Master we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him."

And Jesus explained again, and I hope Nicodemus accepted, the scriptures don't tell us, but I hope Nicodemus and the rich man accepted baptism and were born again.

As I say good-bye to you, may I just add this; that wherever we are flying to visit our Saints, whether in the air, sailing over the sea, or riding on the train across the prairies, we leave this message to you and to all who believe. Be true to the gospel of Jesus Christ; be true to yourselves by keeping your body pure and unpoluted; be true to your wives and to your husbands that you may be happy always; be true to your government, be model citizens, and above all, be true to our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ who came and gave his life and established the gospel that you and I might be happy here. That is the message of Mormonism. Let the enemies who are ignorant, who know nothing about it, say what they may. I bless you with health, with increased faith; I bless you with increased desire to serve the Lord in diligence in the future. I bless you that your branches may be prosperous in the service that you make in the church, and this I do in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.