

DEDICATION OF TAHITI FOR THE PREACHING OF THE GOSPEL

Despite the fact that the Mission had been open for 150 years, Tahiti had never been dedicated by an apostle for the preaching of the gospel. Apostle David O McKay had visited Tahiti in 1921. Rufus K Hardy of the Seventy in 1939. Matthew Cowley several times in the late 1940s and early 1950s. President David O McKay came in January 1955. Many Apostles have visited during the 1960 to 1990 time period. President Kimball came for the temple groundbreaking in 1981. As preparations were made for Elder Russell M Nelson to come for the sesquicentennial celebration in May 1994, the records were searched and it was discovered that Tahiti had not been dedicated. As part of the ceremonies, on Sunday morning May 11, 1994 a formal dedication ceremony was held. Elder Russell M Nelson and a 34 invited leaders met behind the Tahiti Temple. Russell M Nelson offered the dedicatory Prayer cited below.



Dedication culminates celebration

PAPEETE, TAHITI

Culminating the celebration of the Church's arrival here 150 years ago, Elder Russell M. Nelson offered a dedicatory prayer and blessing of French Polynesia.

Elder Nelson of the Council of the Twelve pronounced the sacred blessing early Sunday, May 8.

The dedication services were held on the west lawn behind the Papeete Tahiti Temple where Elder Nelson and 34 other members gathered on a grassy slope still wet from a refreshing night rain.

In a conference meeting a few hours later, Elder Nelson commented about the significance of the blessing:

"The First Presidency and Council of the Twelve pondered the situation in French Polynesia carefully," he said. "Two weeks ago, the First Presidency and Council of the Twelve made the decision, in conjunction with the sesquicentennial culminating today, that an apostolic prayer of dedication should be given."

He said that records of the Church were searched in vain to find a dedication prayer given previously, but "now, that has been accomplished."

Prayer of dedication, blessing culminates sesquicentennial

Continued from page 3

"What does that mean? It means the Lord will bless French Polynesia according to that prayer. The people of this territory will be blessed. The elected and governmental officials will be blessed. The natural resources will be blessed to the end that the work of the Church will increase. The elect of the Lord will find Him and prepare themselves for the temple."

He added, "The fulfillment of the blessing I leave in your hands."

In the prayer, Elder Nelson noted: "The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has a rich and remarkable history among these islands of the South Pacific ocean. Its missionaries served here even before its leaders reached Utah's valleys of the Great Salt Lake where its world headquarters were to be established. Missionaries sent by the Prophet Joseph Smith in 1843 from Nauvoo, Ill., to these islands, were the Church's first to be called to a language and culture foreign to them. Here they served for many

years while separated from families, colleagues, and modes of transportation and communication. Their initial success on Tubuai and in the Tuamotus set the pattern for other missionaries to emulate. Their achievements grew from sacrifice and service that we acknowledge with a deep sense of gratitude and awe. . . .

"Specifically included [in the dedication] are the Society Islands, the Tuamotu Islands, the Marquesas Islands, the Gambier Islands, the Austral Islands and others that comprise this territory.

"Wilt thou bless these islands with a rich portion of thy holy Spirit, that its citizens and their visitors may learn thy commandments and be obedient to them, that they may prosper in thy love. Let there be a resurgence of missionary zeal, that thine elect may be gathered prior to the second coming of thy Son, which is nigh. These islands are rich with the blood of Israel. Bless thine elect to find thee and enter the waters of baptism, remain faithful, and prepare for the ordinances and covenants of thy holy temple." — John L. Hart



A monument to commemorate the dedication was constructed across the parking lot from the temple in front of the Faataua Chapel.



**DEDICATORY PRAYER FOR FRENCH POLYNESIA
OFFERED BY ELDER RUSSELL M. NELSON
OF THE QUORUM OF THE TWELVE APOSTLES
SUNDAY 8 MAY 1994 - 7 AM
ON THE WEST LAWN
OF THE PAPEETE, TAHITI TEMPLE**

O God, the Eternal Father, Thy servants are gathered on this ground hallowed by Thy holy temple, to offer a special prayer of dedication. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has a rich and remarkable history among these islands of the South Pacific ocean. Its missionaries served here even before its leaders reached Utah's valley of the Great Salt Lake where its world headquarters were to be established. Missionaries sent by the Prophet Joseph Smith in 1843 from Nauvoo, Illinois to these islands, were the Church's first to be called to a language and culture foreign to them. Here they served for many years while separated from families, colleagues, and modes of transportation and communication. Their initial successes on Tubuai and in the Tuamotus set the pattern for other missionaries to emulate. Their achievements grew from sacrifice and service that we acknowledge with a deep sense of gratitude and awe.

One hundred and fifty years have elapsed since the restored gospel of Jesus Christ was first brought to these islands. Today there are congregations of Saints organized into wards and stakes. A thriving mission serves to bless the lives of those who yearn to know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent.

A holy temple graces this land for which we express our humble gratitude. Thankfully, we note that the Tahiti Temple was dedicated October 1983 by President Gordon B. Hinckley, aided by Apostolic authority of Elder L. Tom Perry and Elder David B. Haight.

These and other prophets and Apostles have blessed the people of these islands with their teaching of the gospel and with their testimonies of the divinity of Thy Beloved Son. Here they have proclaimed the divinity of the Book of Mormon and have declared the restoration of the keys of priesthood authority by heavenly messengers. No doubt their prayers of supplication have included words of dedication of the territory as well as physical facilities known to have been dedicated unto Thee. Historical records have been searched in vain, however, for documentation of such a dedicatory prayer. Therefore, Thy servants are gathered here to offer an official prayer of dedication.

As authorized by the Council of the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, invoking the keys of the Holy Apostleship and the power of the Melchizedek Priesthood, I now dedicate and rededicate the French Overseas Territory of French Polynesia for Thy holy purposes. Specifically included are the Society Islands, the Tuamotu Islands, the Marquesas Islands, the Gambier Islands, the Austral Islands and others that comprise this territory.

Wilt Thou bless these islands with a rich portion of Thy holy Spirit, that its citizens and their visitors may learn Thy commandments and be obedient to them, that they may prosper in Thy love. Let there be a resurgence of missionary zeal, that Thine elect may be gathered prior to the second coming of Thy Son, which is nigh. These islands are rich with the blood of Israel. Bless Thine elect to find Thee and enter the waters of baptism, remain faithful, and prepare for the ordinances and covenants of Thy holy temple. Help them to qualify for all the blessings that Thou hast promised unto Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and their seed.

Bless all of Thy priesthood and auxiliary leaders, the missionaries and presidents who direct their labors. Wilt Thou protect and preserve them in their ministries, to the end that there will be a rich harvest of souls unto Thee.

Wilt Thou bless the elected and appointed officials who will govern here, that they may be guided by Thy Spirit to conduct the affairs of government in such a way that those who live here may rejoice in the privileges afforded them. May freedom of religious expression be preserved here. May the government and the people of these beautiful islands continue to extend their warm welcome to Thy servants, and to the many visitors who may see beyond the beauties of nature and perceive the spiritual purity of those who have embraced the gospel of Thy Son.

Wilt Thou bless Thy children here to prosper as they live in harmony with Thy good gifts that come from the ocean and from animals and crops that grace the land. May Thy gifts be protected from adversity and continue to be a reserve of resources to be nurtured with gratitude and care.

Gratefully and humbly, I invoke Thy blessings upon French Polynesia and its people, offering this prayer of dedication unto Thee in the name of Thy Beloved Son, Jesus Christ, amen.