Chapter 21

Upon This Rock:
The Latter-day Saint Church in New Caledonia

Mark James

Establishing a Foothold

"Upon this rock I will build my church" (Matthew 16:18). Jesus once uttered these words to Peter. Those words might also have been spoken to Teahumanu Manoi in 1961, when he was set apart to be the first branch president of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in New Caledonia. Since those early days, Teahumanu Manoi and his wife, Teroti, have been good foundation stones, remaining rock solid in their faith. The Savior's words are doubly meaningful in New Caledonia because this South Pacific island territory of France is known as *le caillou*: "the rock."

The Church in New Caledonia has seen much growth and many changes. What began humbly as an "expatriate" religion, with several Tahitian families meeting together in the Manoi residence far from home and family, now stands proud and mature, comfortable as a New Caledonian entity, poised for great growth in the years ahead. But more of the future later—the beginnings are worth a careful retelling.

Though the Church has a long and rich history in the French-governed islands of Tahiti (Addison Pratt and his companions arrived in 1844), it was slow to establish a presence in France's other South Pacific territories: the Marquesas Islands, New Caledonia, and Wallis and Futuna. Among these territories, New Caledonia is unique. Here the French government was particularly aggressive in the early years of colonization. Much of the land was arable and mineral resources abounded, so the French relocated the native (Melanesian) Kanak people to just 7 to 8 percent of the total land.[1] With the indigenous peoples displaced, colonists were quick to occupy the land, creating huge farms and mining operations. As a result, New Caledonia, unlike France's other possessions in the South Pacific, developed a fairly robust economy early on, largely centered around the mining of nickel. This economy required a suitably modern infrastructure, including roads, utilities, and facilities surrounding the mining and refining of the nickel ore. The need for laborers brought many willing

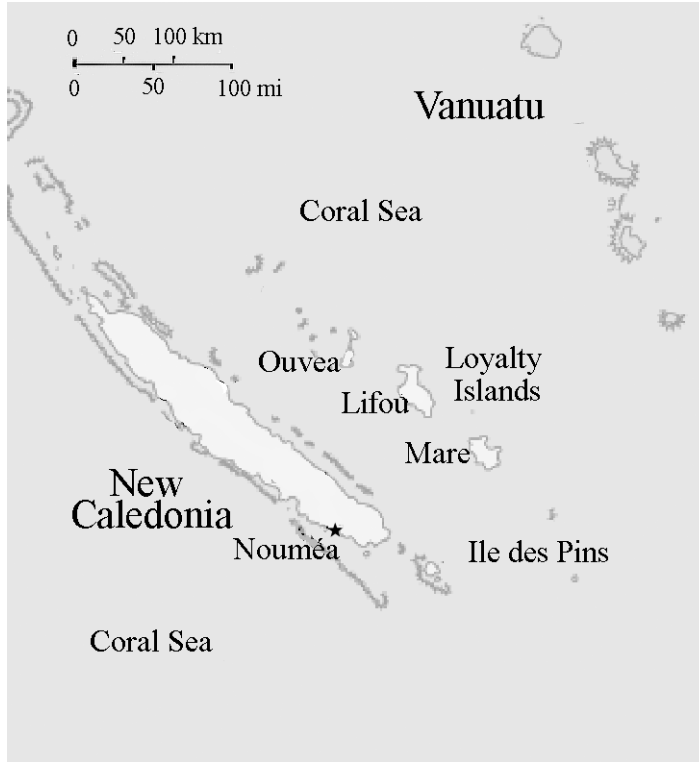
Fig. 1. Early members gathering for church at the Manoi residence in Ducos
New Caledonia District Mission Journal

men and women from the French-speaking territories of Tahiti, the New Hebrides (Vanuatu), Wallis and Futuna, as well as from several Asian Rim countries such as French-speaking Vietnam. It was against this backdrop of labor migration that the Church had its earliest beginnings. It was also within this complexity and transience that the Church found its most difficult challenges.

Beginning in the late 1950s, Brother and Sister Manoi and several other Latter-day Saint Tahitian laborers and their families moved to New Caledonia to find work. At first these families met informally, since no official branch had been established nor any Church leaders chosen. In 1961, however, the mission president in Tahiti, Kendall Young, came to Noumea (the capital city of New Caledonia), assembled the members of the Church, and called and set apart Brother Manoi as the first Noumea branch president.[2]

During much of the 1960s, the branch remained fairly insulated and, like most expatriate congregations of the Church around the world, some of its members came and went within a couple of years while others stayed to form a nucleus of long-term residents. In this later category were the Manoi, Tariu, and Tahuhuterani families. In the early years the Noumea Branch was Tahitian in every sense of the word: the people were from Tahiti, the language of the services was Tahitian, the scriptures were in Tahitian, and their mission president was in Tahiti—some three thousand miles away.

Though the Noumea Branch was an official unit of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, official recognition by the New Caledonian government was slow in coming. Without official recognition, the Church could not send missionaries or buy land on which to build a chapel. Therefore, throughout the late 1950s and 1960s the members had to settle for less-than-optimal meeting places. When the original site, the Manoi home (see fig. 1), became too



small to accommodate the growing number of Tahitian Church members in Noumea, President Manoi rented facilities elsewhere. Over time the Saints met in several different theaters and even in a Chinese restaurant, but each had limitations and drawbacks in terms of providing an environment conducive to worship.[3]

A major breakthrough came in July 1968, when, after nearly a decade of seeking official recognition, Karl M. Richards, president of the French Polynesia Mission, received a positive response from Le Haut-Commissaire de la Republique dans l'Ocean Pacifique Governor Jean Risterucci, granting both official recognition for the Church and permission for it to assign two missionaries to New Caledonia.[4] With apparent assumption of an eventual acceptance, President Richards already had his eldest son, Harold L. Richards, and daughter-in-law, Jeannine, called as missionaries in January 1968. Both spoke French (Harold learned French during his early childhood and served a mission in France; Jeannine is a native of France). They were expected to arrive in Tahiti in April and spend several months working in the French Polynesia Mission while awaiting the high commissioner's response. In the meantime, Elder Thomas S. Monson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles visited Noumea. There, atop Mont Coffyn, he dedicated New Caledonia on May 2, 1968, for the preaching of the gospel. According to mission records, Elder Monson had been previously instructed by President David O. McKay to do so if he felt so inspired.[5]

With the groundwork laid, Harold and Jeannine Richards, along with their daughter Jacqueline, arrived in Noumea on July 15, 1968. Together with President Karl Richards (who was returning from a temple trip to New Zealand), and President Manoi, Harold and Jeannine spent the first few days meeting the members, touring the environs of the capital city, and obtaining the

necessary visas. After spending their first weeks in a hotel near downtown, the Richardses found an ideal home to rent that included a studio apartment that could accommodate an additional pair of missionaries. In the ensuing weeks, they made official contacts with important people and searched for a suitable site for a chapel. They soon located a piece of beautiful land just opposite the beach in Magenta, a pleasant neighborhood a few kilometers outside the downtown area of Noumea.[6]

In harmony with the cosmopolitan milieu of their mission assignment, the Richardses' first missionary discussion was taught to a lady from Martinique. Mission records also indicate that early on they enjoyed a good relationship with the local leaders of the "Sanito," or RLDS Church (formerly the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, now Community of Christ). On one Sunday, they attended Sanito services and were accorded the privilege of giving talks. Elder Richards told the congregation they came as friends; Sister Richards bore her testimony concerning the truthfulness of the Book of Mormon. The following Sunday, two leaders from the Sanito branch attended church at the Manoi's home and "cheerfully participated in the Sunday School class." Not long thereafter, both Latter-day Saint and RLDS members and friends spent a night in fasting and prayer for a young infant at the local hospital.[7]

On the homefront, Elder Richards and President Manoi began visiting the homes of inactive members, and by August, church attendance averaged close to thirty-five. After six colorful weeks in New Caledonia, Harold and Jeannine paused to record their feelings in the mission journal: "[We] feel at home, know all the roads, know many names, and made many a friend, but let it be mentioned here that the Branch President, Teahu Manoi, is a genuine, wonderful man, a great member."[8]

A Season of Growth

In addition to several articles in local papers concerning the Richardses' arrival, the first major breakthrough for the growth of the Church in New Caledonia was the very successful "Conference Publique," which was held in the largest theater in town (the more than one-thousand-seat Rex Theater) on November 5, 1968. Fifty personal invitations to municipal leaders and hundreds of fliers, posters, and media advertisements went out all over town. The foyer of the Rex Theater was lined with displays that explained the Book of Mormon, Christ's visit to America, and major Latter-day Saint doctrines. The actual event included a showing of *Man's Search for Happiness* and a short talk on the Book of Mormon by President Karl Richards, who was in Noumea for the first-ever "South Pacific Mission Presidents' Seminar," led by Elder Howard W. Hunter. By all accounts the Conference Publique was a singular success. Nine hundred people showed up for the event—people from all walks of life and from diverse ethnic groups and religious sects. Many brochures were

Fig. 2. First residence of Harold and Jeannine Richards in Trianon. Elders Tatton and Parker moved in downstairs upon arrival several months later. *New Caledonia District Mission Journal*

taken home, as were a number of copies of the Book of Mormon. Positive remarks were heard for days around town. The conference definitely put the Church "on the map" and into the consciousness of the citizens of Noumea.[9]

On November 16, 1968, the Richardses had their first convert baptism—a thirteen-year-old boy named Etienne Sun—and attendance at Church services was nearing sixty.[10] Church auxiliaries were fully organized, and an English language class had been launched to attract investigators. Soon thereafter, the Richardses received a letter from Governor Risterucci granting permission for one additional missionary instead of the two requested. It was left to Elder Richards to explain why one missionary would not do. An unusually friendly conversation in the governor's office resulted in a promise to have the matter rectified. Shortly thereafter, Elders Lyle Parker and James Tatton arrived, much to the joy of the Richardses.[11] Now there was someone to live in the downstairs unit and someone with whom to formally share the responsibility of preaching the gospel to the many peoples of New Caledonia (see fig. 2).

In February 1969, William Roberts came from Church headquarters to visit the potential sites identified for a chapel. Roberts agreed with the Richardses that the site in Magenta near the small airport was best. An offer was made, but civil authorities did not give immediate permission for the Church to purchase the land, requesting instead tangible proof that the Church actually "deserves a chapel."[12] This announcement caused consternation both in Noumea and Papeete. In response, branch members made pledges of money up front and also initiated plans to raise funds by forming a dance troupe to perform on the tourist boats that came regularly to the territory. Moreover, both the French Polynesia Mission and the Richardses in New Caledonia set lofty baptismal goals to help demonstrate that the Church was growing in the French-speaking territories of the Pacific. By the end of the year, convert baptisms and a growing number of Latter-day Saints migrating from Tahiti to work in Noumea brought Church membership to around 130, and permission was received to purchase the land near the Magenta airport. Within a month, Church headquarters wired $68,500 for the acre-and-a-half site (sixty-four thousand square feet), and the property officially became theirs.[13]

Preparations to build the chapel provided a focal point for branch energies, and working together in such a cause brought a growing sense of identity and destiny for the New Caledonian Saints. In addition to holding dance practices and performing on the tour boats, the members regularly undertook weeding expeditions on the site. The Primary and Relief Society organizations raised additional money for clearing and construction by preparing lunches and selling them to the participants. No sacrifice was too great for these faithful Saints as they looked forward to having a proper chapel of their own.

The year 1970 brought permission to add two more missionaries to the New Caledonian contingent, bringing the total, which included Elder and Sister Richards, to six. This year also brought to an end what might be called the pioneer era of missionary work in New Caledonia. By midyear, both the Richardses and Elders Tatton and Parker had finished their missions and returned home. When Elder Parker departed (he was the last of the four to leave), the remaining missionary companionship made a bittersweet entry in the mission journal: "We had a very lonely feeling as we drove back from the airport. Something was missing from Noumea as we know it. Elder Parker, we and all the members are grateful for all you have done for us, and we wish you continued success and the Lord's choicest blessings."[14] Similar sentiments had been previously expressed by the local Saints to the Richardses and Elder Tatton as well.

The loneliness was soon chased away, however, by missionary success and branch growth. A year later, the July 1971 district newsletter (published in both French and Tahitian) announced

that membership had increased to 233.[15] In August, official permission from the government was granted to begin construction of the Magenta chapel, and labor missionaries Wiliamu Makapoi and Michel Doucet were assigned to begin construction. An important sign of institutional maturity was reached in November when the office of district president (traditionally filled by one of the proselytizing elders) was eliminated, and the branch presidency was asked to report directly to the mission president.[16] This signaled a clear separation between the full-time missionaries and the ecclesiastical arm of the Church.

On December 22, 1972, with pomp and ceremony and about 300 people in attendance, the Magenta chapel was "inaugurated."[17] Church members finally had a physical presence in New Caledonia, one of which they could be proud. They had come a long way from meeting in a restaurant and using stacked alcoholic-beverage boxes as dividers between the various Sunday School classes.

This milestone was accompanied by a growing maturity in branch organization and membership during the 1970s. The years 1972–73 witnessed the introduction of organized home teaching and a greater variety of auxiliary Church programs, including a teacher development class, a member-missionary program, and a genealogy class. The year 1974 saw the office of district president reinstituted, but with an important difference—the office was now to be filled by a local priesthood leader rather than a full-time missionary. Not surprisingly, that indefatigable pioneer Teahu Manoi was called and would serve until 1981. By 1975, a sufficient number of members resided in the Tontouta area (forty-five kilometers up the coast from Noumea and the site of the country's principal airport) to warrant separate Sunday services. The "dependent" branch that was established there with some thirty active members included such family names as Vergoz, Bernadino, Mapuhi, Temake, and Mo'o, and represented the Church's first official foray outside the capital city.[18] Before long, the Magenta chapel was enlarged, the Noumea Branch was split in two, and another branch was created in Paita. Perhaps the capstone experience for the New Caledonian Saints during the 1970s was their group trip to the New Zealand Temple in 1977.

Identity amid Diversity

Identity in New Caledonia is complex. Not all New Caledonians have the same origin. The Melanesians (Kanak), who speak dozens of different languages, constitute the native population. During the mid-1800s, French settlers began arriving—some to escape their pasts, some to get rich, some to flee political unrest, and some to serve time in the penal colony. The descendants of these early French immigrants are referred to as *les Caldoches*. Later, other populations came from French Polynesia, Wallis and Futuna, and the New Hebrides (now Vanuatu) seeking employment. People from Vietnam and elsewhere in Southeast Asia were also brought in to work the nickel mines. In short, by the mid-twentieth century, New Caledonia had become a sort of melting pot.

Although the Church started out in New Caledonia as a purely Tahitian phenomenon, the country's rich ethnic mix made encounters with diversity inevitable. Thus, it is only mildly surprising that the Richardses' first missionary discussion was with Ginette Foucade, "a colored lady from La Martinique."[19] They also recorded teaching the gospel over a period of several days to Jimmy "Moses" Stevens, leader of the Na-Griamel Movement in the New Hebrides.[20] Stevens subsequently invited them to come to the New Hebrides as he believed the Richardses were "sent by God."[21] Arrangements were made within a couple months, and in July 1969 Elder Richards and his father, mission president Karl Richards, traveled to Port Vila, where they were treated "like great chiefs" by Jimmy Stevens and his people. The two returned, however, feeling that the people were not prepared "at this time"

to accept the teachings of the gospel. Polygamy and other customs "did not fit well with the gospel," and President Richards began to understand the controversial nature of the movement and did not think it a suitable backdrop against which to do missionary work.[22]

Though expatriate Tahitian Saints had been meeting in Noumea for a decade, the city's French character meant that once missionary work was officially and openly launched, francophone contacts and converts would come to predominate. Indeed, the first missionary baptism, as mentioned earlier, was French-speaking Etienne Sun, and the first French convert, Pierre Boiteux, was baptized six months later in May 1969.[23] Within a few years the Noumea Branch membership records included, besides the many Tahitian names, such French surnames as Vaugeois, Lacourrege, Vergoz, Boisson, Mauclair, Meunier, Laigle, and Dupeyron. Further ethnic diversity within the branch was reflected in various Asian (Chinese, Vietnamese, Javanese, and Indonesian) names like Lan Sun, Le Moy, Nguyen, Trang, Van Nem, Van Soc, Secken, and Soekarno, as well as European ones like Aparisi, Casaroli, Colonna, Berdichevski, Gaya, and Gurrera. Francois Gurrera's wife, Madeleine, was a local Melanesian, and as such had the distinction of being the first native New Caledonian to be baptized into the Church (May 27, 1972).[24]

The success of the missionary efforts among the francophone population of the capital city was to provide the first test for the Church and its membership. It soon became apparent that the language needs of the French-speaking Saints would have to be acknowledged, particularly if member-missionary work and invitations to attend Church were to be successful. Moreover, the language desires of the older generation of Tahitian members, many of whom were branch leaders and who spoke only a limited amount of French, increasingly clashed with their French-speaking children and grandchildren.

A general reading of the mission records indicates that this Tahitian-French divide was one of the greatest challenges of the 1970s. Separate auxiliary meetings and sacrament services were tried for a time, then recombined, attempted again, then merged once more. The problem was that though separate meetings would seem to alleviate problems for a time, that same separateness tended to increase divisive feelings and undermine the Saints' quest for a Zionlike unity. The language limitations of the mostly Tahitian branch presidency members and the limitations of the mostly new francophone converts resulted in misunderstandings and missteps on both sides. And each time morale broke down, the mission president was asked to fly in and negotiate differences of opinion and administration and sometimes to make changes in branch leadership.

The cycle of experimentation repeated itself a number of times until the Noumea Branch was finally divided into two different language-based branches in 1979.[25] The time seemed right. The francophone members had gained sufficient maturity in the gospel, and there were enough members to support two independent branches. Francois Gurrera became the new French-speaking branch's first president. The Church's maturity was also evidenced by its ability to produce its first local missionaries in the latter 1970s—Elder Victor Tuhei and Sisters Othis Manoi and Franciska Vergoz.

One of the decade's memorable "skirmishes" with diversity occurred in early 1973 after the conversion of a young Frenchman "so eager to be baptized he nearly jumped into the water."[26] Unfortunately, his Vietnamese Buddhist wife was violently opposed to his baptism. Upon learning that her husband had joined the Church, she threatened to harm him with a paring knife at the missionary quarters unless he recanted and warned the missionaries to leave him alone. She further vowed to put a spread in the newspapers on how the Mormons had broken up her family. Before she stormed off, she "slugged" one elder in the eye and brandished a knife toward the other.[27]

Despite such isolated incidents, diversity was actually courted from the mid-1970s on. In 1975, during one of his regular visits, Tahiti Mission president Joseph Childers specifically challenged the missionaries to move out of the capital city of Noumea and to reach out to the Wallisians and the local Melanesians.[28] Shortly thereafter two elders, Mark James and Victor Tuhei, were sent to live in a large low-income apartment complex in the Noumean suburb of Tindu. These missionaries initiated contact with Wallisian, Ni-Vanuatu, and local Kanak families. The Kanaks, though ill-disposed toward the French (not without good cause), were very friendly toward the missionaries. They retained fond memories of American soldiers who served during World War II. As a result, Elders James and Tuhei found some success in entering the homes of local Melanesians near Tindu. Soon these two elders had entered into contracts with several Wallisians and Ni-Vanuatu to have certain Church pamphlets translated into Wallisian and Bislama (Melanesian Pidgin English). The elders also created notes on rudimentary conversational Wallisian for other missionaries and brought the first Ni-Vanuatu investigators to Church.

The first real breakthrough, though, with the Melanesian people of New Caledonia occurred in January 1976 when several Kanak families were baptized. This turning point was nothing less than an instance of divine intervention. Elders Mark Hardy and Scott Elliot were returning home by bicycle late one night from an uneventful referral. As they raced down a hill through a neighborhood called Riviere Salee, Elder Elliott dropped his discussions—colored pages scattered everywhere in the wind.

In Hardy's words,

> There we were, late at night, searching through the bushes in peoples' front yards. A stranger pulled up—Pierre Ounei. He offered a flashlight and helped us search. We asked for an appointment to return for a lesson. He invited us back. As we entered the home, the spirit was powerful. [His wife] Suzanne had prepared. She had just joined the Jehovah's Witnesses and viewed us as the first test of her new religion. Yet, she never debated, and both accepted the baptismal challenge that same night. Later, when I asked what it was about the teaching that had touched her (i.e., the Book of Mormon, the Plan of Salvation, the Joseph Smith Story, etc) she responded simply that it was the 'light' that surrounded Elliot and I on the first night, and the 'voice' that instructed her that we would speak the truth and that she should do whatever we asked of her.[29]

Needless to say, Elders Hardy and Elliot viewed Riviere Salee with a renewed interest and subsequently discovered the de Geoffroy and Bull families on the same street. It was, in Hardy's words, "a testimony to me from the Lord: Elders, if you don't want to spread my gospel in Riviere Salee, I will do it for you; and, he tossed those discussions up the street and around the corner in the direct path of the families we were to teach."[30]

Coincidentally, only a few weeks later another six converts were baptized, "of which the most touching, surely, is that of a woman from the island of Futuna, Sister Malia Patea, the first native of Futuna to become a member of the LDS church."[31] Elders Bill Leishman and Gerard Tuhoe contacted Sister Patea at the residence of her wealthy French employer. Although she was not interested in their "door approach," she offhandedly asked them as they were about to leave if they knew anything about a book of scripture that talked of a family that left Jerusalem and came to the New World. The copy she had found in a closet of her employer had no cover or title page. Needless to say, they did, and she was soon baptized.[32]

These early experiences and occasional successes led to the gradual expansion of the Church's ethnic diversity beyond the historical Tahitian-French divide. The Church was not only in New Caledonia, but New Caledonians of all backgrounds were now in the Church. Headway was made in nurturing a truly indigenous identity for the Church, maturing was only a matter of time.

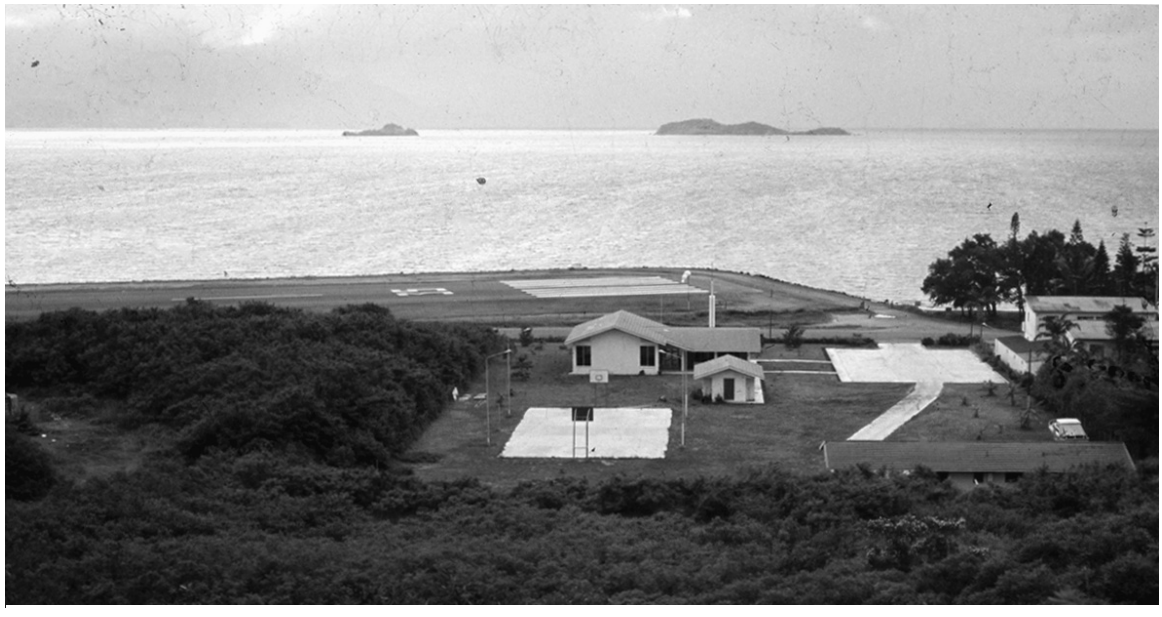


Fig. 3. Magenta Chapel, the first in New Caledonia, and missionary quarters (circa 1972)
Courtesy of Mark James

Indigenization

While most other churches throughout the South Pacific had successfully made the transition from "foreign mission" to "local church" during the second half of the twentieth century, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in New Caledonia was off to a relatively late start. Despite its growing diversity as it entered the final decades of the century, it was still seen as an expatriate organization. Initially it had been perceived as a Tahitian church, then as an American church because of its association with the mainly American-born missionaries. What was lacking was a sense of identity that was truly New Caledonian. There were few indigenous Melanesian members, particularly in visible leadership positions, and local Church leaders reported to primarily American-born mission presidents residing in distant places like Tahiti and Fiji. In addition, the Church, with a couple of minor exceptions, was still a Noumean entity at the southern tip of the island. The Church had little presence elsewhere on the main island or on Ouvea, Lifou, or Mare, three smaller islands off the east coast.

This ended up being a blessing in disguise during the 1980s, an era remembered by New Caledonians for riots and political violence. Collectively this period of unrest, particularly the protests and riots of 1984, is somewhat euphemistically referred to as *les evenements*, "the events." Decolonization was in full stride worldwide, and the indigenous peoples of France's South Pacific territories wanted to be a part of it. Fortunately, the Church and its members were largely spared this ethnic turmoil. In part this was because they did not take a public stand, as did the Protestants (largely proindependence) or the Catholics (loyalist). In equal part, it was because the Church and its members began to make concerted efforts in the early 1980s to invite and involve local Melanesian neighbors, friends, and workmates in Church activities. Cultural celebrations included Melanesian foods and dances along with the usual French and Tahitian contributions.[33] These efforts paid off, and soon the Church began to find converts and leaders among the local Melanesian population in and around the Noumea area. Important early Melanesian Church leaders included Wadra

Bearune, the first Melanesian branch president (Tontouta Branch), and Jacques de Geoffroy, first counselor in the district presidency (under Ricardo Gaya) for over a decade.

The 1990s witnessed continued growth and development in several important respects. First, there was an increase in the missionary force to an average of ten companionships. Second, missionary work became less and less confined to the capital. Now, at the beginning of the new millennium, members of the Church are found in a number of important towns up and down the length of the island, and one may expect that branches will soon be organized in a number of these towns. The newly established branch in Bourail represents the first in what is hoped will be a series of successes.

Just as significant, the Church has gained a foothold in the Loyalty Islands off the east coast of New Caledonia, with branches organized on Mare and Lifou. The first converts tended to be individuals working in and around Noumea at the time of their conversion. The branches there are small, and the Church has had to confront both the diversity of local Melanesian languages and cultural challenges such as the custom of paying a bride price. Yet the French language and French schooling have made significant inroads among the younger generation of Melanesians, and they are anxious for the freedoms of choice that westernization brings. On the other hand, it has only been a few years since missionaries were beaten and chased off the island of Ouvea.[34]

Nonetheless, the mood among Church leaders is unwaveringly positive. As district president Abel Seiko, a Kanak himself, puts it, "The people know where the truth is."[35] Former district president Ricardo Gaya said, "Where once we had a total of 20 or 30 baptisms a year, we now have 80 or 90, and most are Melanesians. I believe this is their time to accept the gospel. That is why we have Brother Seiko now as our district president. He has a great job to do with the Melanesians."[36]

Also encouraging has been the outward migration of Church members from the capital city to other towns and other islands for work. As was true in the early twentieth-century United States with outward-migrating Utah Latter-day Saints, President Seiko sees this pattern as the means of planting seeds and spreading the gospel throughout the country. Similarly, a few Wallisian and Futunan Church members, converted in New Caledonia, have returned to their island territories to help establish the Church in their homelands.

Conclusion

Today New Caledonian Church leaders in Noumea and elsewhere are optimistic and future oriented. Despite contented affluence in Noumea and cultural resistance elsewhere, President Seiko remarked with typical confidence, "It is important that we not close ourselves in, but open ourselves up and share with the people around us the values of the gospel."[37]

Early in the twenty-first century, the Church in New Caledonia totals close to sixteen hundred members and is organized into eight branches—Noumea 1 and 2, Tontouta, Riviere Salee, Mont Dore, Mare, Lifou, and most recently, Bourail. New Caledonia experienced its first visit by a prophet of God on June 17, 2000, when President Gordon B. Hinckley visited as part of a six-nation tour of Asia and the South Pacific. One thousand Saints crowded into one of the local meetinghouses and into tents outside.[38] Land, including a highly visible hillside location in Noumea, had been purchased for purposes of expansion, and stake center and temple plans are being contemplated. The largest ethnic group in the Church in New Caledonia is still Tahitian, but Melanesians now make up the second largest segment, followed by Europeans, Asians, and Wallisian/Futunans.[39]

The future of New Caledonia itself as a people, territory, or nation remains uncertain, but "the stone" described by the prophet Daniel, that was "cut out from the mountain without hands

. . . and became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth" (Daniel 2:34–35) has now gained great momentum in the land called "the rock."

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Notes

This brief history is dedicated to the memory of pioneer Teahumanu Manoi, who passed away during the time this chapter was written.

1. *Kanak* is a Melanesian term referring to one who has ties to the land or belongs to the land. Similar terms exist elsewhere in the Pacific Islands, including Kanaka *Maoli* (Hawaiian), *Ma'ohi* (Tahitian), and *Maori* (New Zealand Maori) (Nic Maclellan and Jean Chesneaux, *After Moruroa: France in the South Pacific* [Melbourne: Ocean Press, 1998], 18, 50).

2. Teahumanu Manoi, address, Pioneers in the Pacific Conference, October 9, 1997, Lā'ie, Hawai'i; videotape in author's possession.

3. Manoi, address, Pioneers in the Pacific Conference.

4. New Caledonia District Mission Journal, 1, Brigham Young University–Hawai'i Archives; hereafter cited as New Caledonia Journal.

5. New Caledonia Journal, 1.

6. New Caledonia Journal, 1.

7. New Caledonia Journal, September 15, 1968.

8. New Caledonia Journal, August 30, 1968.

9. New Caledonia Journal, 5, 9.

10. New Caledonia Journal, November 16, 1968.

11. New Caledonia Journal, January 2, 1969.

12. New Caledonia Journal, April 25, 1969.

13. New Caledonia Journal, January 13, 1970.

14. New Caledonia Journal, May 12, 1970.

15. New Caledonia Journal, July 25, 1971.

16. New Caledonia Journal, November 29, 1971.

17. New Caledonia Journal, December 22, 1972.

18. New Caledonia Journal, March 30, 1975.

19. New Caledonia Journal, 2.

20. Jimmy Stevens, the leader of the Na-Griamel/Nagriamel movement that began in the late 1960s, together with French provocateurs, sought to secede and form a new and independent nation—the Republic of Vemerana, just six months prior to the scheduled date (July 31, 1980) for the independence of Vanuatu from the co-colonial rule of Britain and France. Stevens's primary issue was the return of "dark bush lands" to the native people of Vanuatu. However, Stevens accepted financial support from the Phoenix Foundation, an American right-wing organization seeking a tax-exempt free enterprise nation on which to establish its headquarters. Ultimately, Stevens's agenda was overwhelmed by the Phoenix Foundation, and Walter Lini, the newly appointed prime minister of Vanuatu, was forced to quell the rebellion two months later with the aid of military forces from Papua New Guinea (Peter Hempenstall and Noel Rutherford, *Protest and Dissent in the Colonial Pacific* [Suva, Fiji: University of the South Pacific, 1984], 13–14).

21. New Caledonia Journal, July 18, 1969.

22. New Caledonia Journal, July 18, 1969.

23. New Caledonia Journal, May 31, 1969.

24. New Caledonia Journal, May 27, 1972.

25. Jacques de Geoffroy, interview by Grant Underwood, June 12, 1997, Noumea, New Caledonia; in author's possession.

26. New Caledonia Journal, December 6, 1972.

27. New Caledonia Journal, February 5–8, 1973.

28. New Caledonia Journal, February 17–24, 1975.

29. Mark Hardy, personal communication with author, July 25, 2004.

30. Mark Hardy, personal communication with author, July 25, 2004.

31. New Caledonia Journal, January 31, 1976.

32. Mark Hardy, personal communication with author, July 29, 2004.

33. Jacques de Geoffroy, June 12, 1997.

34. Sonia Seiko, personal communication.

35. Abel Seiko, interview by Grant Underwood, June 12, 1997, Noumea, New Caledonia; in author's possession.

36. R. Val Johnson, "Islands of Light," *Ensign*, March 2000, 31–35.

37. Abel Seiko, June 12, 1997.

38. *2004 Church Almanac* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 2004), 335.

39. Jacques de Geoffroy, June 12, 1997.