



Address by Bishop Tutai Pere, Chair of the Seabed Minerals Advisory Committee at the Cook Islands 2020 Exploration Licensing Launch

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King Solomon said “*To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven*” [Eccl: 3] and today we are here, together, to launch the Seabed Minerals Exploration Licence process. How blessed are we the Cook Islands people to be recipients of the manifold works of God who has made the earth full of his riches. [Psalm 104] In our country’s seabed, providence has placed over 12 billion tonnes of manganese nodules. The Lord surely has put this in our hands and all the glory belongs to the All-loving, All-Supplying Almighty God.



My **Advisory Committee members** and I are together in applauding our government in taking the next step to explore how we can benefit from these riches. It is 50 years already since these nodules were discovered and the time for exploring how we can recover them is now. What better time than the present. Doing nothing is like a man who when given a talent [Matt 25], he buries it and when the Lord asks, he shows that he gained no interest nor profited from this talent that the Master has given. “And I was afraid, and went and hid thy talent in the earth: lo, there thou has that is thine.” **This is**

a sin to do nothing. The Lord calls this man who does nothing with what the Almighty God has blessed him "...Thou wicked and slothful servant"...

It is high time, our time, for the generation of today to **rise up and claim ownership of what our Heavenly Father God Almighty has blessed us with**; these rich deposits in our very own ocean floor – thus challenging our **FAITH** like that of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob of the Jewish nation, to also put ours into action. True to what his word says in James 2: 18-20 "Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: show me thy faith without thy works, and I will show thee my faith by my works. Faith without works is dead faith and certainly sin of omission.

We Cook Islanders are people of **Faith in the One God** of the Bible, who definitely promised to see us all through faith in Him to a successful and prosperous end. Scientific facts and proofs are not the only means to an end but Faith in an Almighty God who holds the beginning and the end of this universe in the palm of his hands and all there is within.



Our beloved Cook Islands has, like the rest of the world experienced the impacts of COVID 19. We are truly blessed and fortunate to still be COVID free. However our main economic driver, Tourism – has been at a standstill for seven months now.

We as a country have awakened from 50 years inertia and the time to move with the faith of our fathers and claim our One God-given mineral is at hand. "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen" [Hebrews 11] As the

Good Book reminds us even more: “And the Lord shall make thee the head, and not the tail; and thou shalt be above only, and thou shalt not be beneath.... And thou shalt lend unto many nations, and thou shalt not borrow” [Deuteronomy 28 13a & 12b]



Let us in the Cook Islands not be held hostage or at ransom by some people lacking discernment into the mind of a Creator God who alone sees above all and for the good of all, if only man could wisely harness and restrain himself of personal greed and selfish motives . Nauru was blessed with phosphate, Papua New Guinea with numerous mining resources but sadly through greed and corruption have their problems, but we, Cook Islanders let us move in fear and praise of our All-loving God to claim our heritage because God has promised it to those that **fear him and respect him.**



So let us get behind our government and at least investigate for ourselves what gains we might achieve with our rich nodules resource our All-loving God has given us. Let us not fear nor be afraid of prosperity and harnessing riches we are so blessed with.

I have a niece, in her late early 50s – married to a Norwegian and both have 4 grown up teenage daughters, they both lived in Norway. She learned and spoke the Norwegian language so fluently, lived and worked in a Caregiving Day care Centre for some years. But 5 years ago in 2015, her dad, my older brother, a fireman in Tokoroa died of a traffic accident at age 72. She and her girls would on occasions fly across from Norway to visit

her dad and their grandpa; but this time to attend his funeral, and there we met and shared about her life Norway.

Since then, she had chosen to stay in Tokoroa to look after her dad's home. Most interestingly is the fact, that she is living in Tokoroa, NZ, yet still receives Royalty benefit from the country of Norway for as long as she shall live. Norway has been named the most prosperous country in the world in 2018 by the Boston Consulting Group.....Norway scored 85.3 on the Sustainable Economic Development (SEDA), a scale which measures wellbeing in ten dimensions split across three categories: economics, investments and sustainability.... Norway is globe's best country for turning prosperity into citizen wellbeing. Production and exploitation of North Sea oil and natural gas drive the economy of Norway – plus fishing, petroleum, forests, minerals and hydroelectric power, which not only makes its economic wealth extremely efficient and stable, but also helps to be one of the richest countries for many many more years to come.

This is just one amongst a whole lot of other examples, where a country can be turned into huge economic prosperity, trusting even our very own Cook Islands to do the same. Let us gather much faith in our Almighty God in tapping into the unknown to be known, the unreached to be reached; dispel all fears and doubts and not be afraid of prosperity and harnessing riches that we know for certain is sitting upon our own ocean floor. This will be our Royalty Privilege and Blessing – from the hands of our Almighty God and Saviour Jesus Christ. **Doubt and Fear destroy visions and dreams but Faith, Smart and Hard Work accomplishes and fulfils.**

For “If God be for us, who can be against us – For greater is He that is in us than he that is in the world - we are but more than Conquerors in Christ Jesus our Lord”. Amene!

God bless our beloved Cook Islands.

Kia Orana e Kia Manuia rava!