



Address by Bishop Tutai Pere, Chair of the Seabed Minerals Advisory Committee at the Exploration Licence Granting Ceremony 2022

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Turou, Kia Orana tatou katoatoa I te aroa mata o tatou Atua.

Greetings and welcome to everyone who patiently sat in for this jam-packed, interesting, historic milestone event for the Cook Islands. Congratulations. Those on live-stream, far and near, we embrace you with the love of our Lord and Saviour Jesus. Being the last speaker I feel a huge sigh of relief. Everyone eager for a quick break; for a cup of tea, coffee and lunch.

Early this morning, I couldn't help but email to my commissioner, Alex Herman, and commend her and congratulate her for wonderful work that she and her team has done. I named her this morning as the 'Esther' of the Seabed, Cook Islands.

Not forgetting of course the first SBM Commissioner, Paul Lynch. 2013, we had the first advisory board, 2019, the current advisory board. You are the 'Mordecai' of that advisory board that brought us this far. On that note, and for the same token, each and every man and woman that has been involved in the Seabed Minerals Authority, since the very beginning until today, we are the Mordecai's and Esther's of the Seabed Minerals Authority of the Cook Islands, because we have laid our heads down for the salvation, and for the prosperity, and also the future success of seabed mining for the Cook Islands.



Let me start with a short Cook Island saying: “Te Ulu o te Akauroa, Ka oki rai kite Akauroa.” This is the short sight vision, where we think this ‘Akauroa’ refers to the Aitutaki reef. To Au’Au Enea, Ngaputoru, or Pa Enea Tokerau, that’s a short sight vision. This ‘Akauroa’ where the fish will go back for food sources in the ‘Akauroa’ extends 200 nautical miles in our Marae Moana. And I’m happy to see our Ambassador for the Marae Moana, Kevin Iro, with us this afternoon. Let’s acknowledge him, and his team.



To begin with, Charles Dickens in his most famous novel ‘Tale of Two Cities’ open up his storyline with his most historically popular and famous statement: “It was the best of times, and it was the worst of times.” On one side of the coin we can rightly say that our time right now and toady is the worst of all times.

Our world is moving into the third year under the most frightening and devastating effect of COVID-19. As of yesterday, five million, nine hundred six thousand five hundred eighty already dead of COVID specifically. Never in the history of mankind have we seen our global airspace just so suddenly come to a halt. All airlines grounded. Travellers cease to travel. Huge tourists cruise liners turn into a breeding grounds for COVID.

Global social economic, and political system with kind of like held at ransom and hostage by unexplainable adverse effect of Covid-19 pandemic. It started off with a mere

coronavirus, quickly mutated, evolved starting with the alpha variant, delta variant, and now a much more wide-spread, most infectious omicron, with absolutely no light of reversal in view at the end of the tunnel. It appears to be like a prophetic message. Writing is on the wall, like as of in the days of King Nebuchadnezzar of the Great City of Babylon around 6th century BC, with the words which read 'Mene. Mene. Teckel. Uphrasin.' 'You're days are numbered' whereas the Prophet Daniel interpreted in Aramaic: 'Mene'; God has numbered your Kingdom and is finished. 'Teckel'; Thou art weighed in the balances and are found lacking. 'Peres', the plural of 'Uphrasin'; a prediction that the kingdom shall be divided and given to the Persians.

We can ask the question are we in the worst of times where our world is being numbered, coming to its end.



Are we being morally weighed and evaluated by God and found lacking so much in him with all so much lock downs, quarantines, isolations here and there is that now the division we shall become but flip over to the other side of the coin, can there be any hope for the best of times for us at this juncture?

I must give a positive Yes and right here in the Cook Islands, Galatians 4:4 and 5 has this to say "But when the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law. To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons."

God don't have grandchildren he has sons and daughters, heirs directly and joint heirs to the blessing. So for us in this whole scenario of Seabed Minerals exploration research program I must say this is the best of times when we successfully enter this exploration phase of our diligent scientific research, reach the mineral harvesting stage we shall reach the stage of adoption as sons and daughters we become heirs and joints heirs with right of inheritance, right of ownership and right of custodianship of our very own mineral prosperity.

We become masters of our own destiny we cease to run to beg and borrow from foreign masters carefully and wisely manage and administered with ultimate fear of God on our backs we fulfil what God has promised all his adopted children, all heirs, joint heirs unto him in Deuteronomy 28:12 "The Lord open unto thee thy good treasure, will bless all the work of your hands we shall lend unto many nations not few but many nations you shall not borrow you shall make us the head and not the tail.

You shall make us above only not beneath but only if we harken unto his commandments and observe them" Our successful companies for exploration and research expedition's congratulations.

Throughout the many months of vigilant and diligent assessment, evaluation, screening process have already shown and positively proven not as novices and amateurs in the business but have had decades of practical exercises and experiences with total confidence in what they are capable of doing.

Equipped with state of art sophisticated exploratory equipment, latest technological capabilities as such that can minimize or eliminate as much as possible. The much feared damages and harm to our Marae Moana marine biodiversity and deep sea environment.

Yes I still dare say that we the Cook Islands is at the best of times to begin exploring and researching and what might not might or may will eventually become precious treasure deposit down here in our very own Seabed Minerals bank for us to work out in our faith in order to obtain in due time.

To very major characteristics that made the ancient Roman Empire the greatest super power throughout the ancient world.

1. They build a network of roads – that gave their military might speedy and easy access to conquer
2. In doing so they established what was called ‘Pax Romana’. Roman peace throughout the entire ancient world. Piracy, Terroristic activities were minimised and finally obliterated
3. Alexander the Great thirdly, the Greek empire came along and spread his great coeathen language, education and culture right throughout Asia Minor.



Which brings us to our final concluding point the best of times for the spreading of the Christian faith. One only says Roman is not built in one day so conquest and success take time and it has taken time 57 years of our political history, 87 years of colonial rule.

So back to Galatians 4:4, 5 “When the fullness of time is come, God sent his Son under the woman, under the law that we might receive his Son” The Roman Empire didn’t ever imagine never even thought, what they were doing would open up a road way for a King coming greater than Julius Caesar, greater than Alexander the Great and all other throughout history. So the networks of roads built for the Roman Army gave easy and rapid access of the gospel spread right throughout Asia Minor.

The establishment of the roman peace gave easy spread of the gospel throughout the inhabited world no passport, no fear of piracy and so forth. The one common Koine Greek language into the New Testament Bible was written was one language spoken.

They only learnt the Greek they were able to communicate to all people throughout and knew and understood Greek one language.



In conclusion what is the moral of that story in connection to exploration license granting today? Number one, though this seems and appears to be the worst of times in this COVID 19 pandemic, global climate change and environmental impacts and social-economic travel, political challenges versus our seabed exploration expedition I positively still say ours is the best of times.

The potential wealth that lies at the depths of our oceans in our very own EEZ Marae Moana will far outweighs all major and much feared risk factors and all doomsday prophetic messages against seabed minerals exploration or harvesting in our sea.

We shall pursue and march on forward to prove the rest of the world wrong in all whatever adverse and negative presupposition that are made.

Many who have turned into mighty rich affluent and wealthy super rich power countries of the world today have all had their turns of mining, harvesting and extracting all kinds of any God-given natural resources but many sadly and very unfortunately out of much greed abuse and exploitations of wealth have turned into hungry money mongering tycoons but leaving behind in their very own backyards trails of millions upon millions of the world's population living under the poverty line dying of malnutrition, disease, homelessness, uncontrollable innocent human lives lost in wars, abortion, crimes of abuse and violence and the rest.



Somebody, someone, some people, some country must rise up, to show and cause a difference and change for the better, brighter and enormity of prosperity future. Not just for our little tiny nation of the Cook Islands but the whole of our Pacific Island nations and the whole world at large. The God and faith of our fore-fathers to us the new generation of today those who shall follow after us shall pursue with vigour, confidence and trust in each other after our promised blessings and with God on our side we shall overcome.

Finally my dear friends the Prophet Elisha's servant despaired when he woke up one morning and saw himself, in his master Elisha surrounded by a host of enemies army "O no my lord what shall we do?" he exclaimed. The Prophet Elisha calmly responded "Don't be afraid those who are with us are more than those who are with them."

Elisha then prayed “Lord, open my servant’s eyes so that he may see” the Lord opened the eyes of the servant and he looked and behold the hills were full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha. My dear friends although things at first seem bleak to the servant’s eyes Gods power ultimately proved greater than the enemy horde.



This, our Seabed Minerals exploration research program that we have just signed authorised, and ready to be activated may seem difficult, impossible may lead us to believe all may be lost. God desires to open our eyes and reveal to us that he is greater, with Him alone nothing is ever impossible as Chairman of our Seabed Minerals Advisory Committee I would like to invite all to our very learned, our very educated specialists and experts in whatever fields you are specialised into to please come on board.

Let us work together for a better, brighter and prospers future for our children, their children and all generations who shall come after us. This is uniquely yours nowhere else in the whole wide world in this type of mineral deposit to be found with such immensity, density of enormous value let’s not be distracted nor be despised by the size of our country, our population, our wealth and whatever we may think we lack that our faith in our God and his word be our rock of defence and offence. If God be for us who are against us we can do all things through Christ who strengthens us we are more than conquers through him who loved us.



In conclusion a young boy was taken up to the stage to sing in the United States of America for talents he was blind and he sang a song “Open my eyes O Lord, Open my eyes O Lord, Open the eyes of my heart Lord that I may see you”. We do not walk by sight we walk by faith I pray God we pray that God open the eyes of our hearts, the eyes of sight sees lusts and greed but the eyes of the heart sees from the heart of God then we will succeed in all our explorations.

God bless our Seabed Exploration research programmes, God bless all our team at Seabed Minerals Authority, God bless our first Seabed Exploration research teams, God bless all who shall kindly offer us your support and assistance, God bless our Cook Islands Prime Minister and all government leaders traditional, religious and business community. God bless our indigenous Cook Islands people abroad and at home all of diverse nationalities who are now permanent residence, intermarried with our sons and daughters or who have made the Cook Islands your home. God bless our beautiful paradise Cook Islands.

Kia Orana e Kia Manuia Rava