Today I will be speaking about the missionary work in Tonga. This paper includes information from a brief history of the church compiled by Ernel J. Morton, which is kept in the mission home in Tonga. I also interviewed several individuals who have a great knowledge concerning the work of the missionaries in Tonga.

This is not a complete history of the missionary work in Tonga. I am continuing to collect information from many sources for future use.

There were two periods of missionary work in Tonga. The first one started on July 15, 1891 and ended in April of 1897.

In 1891 the president of the Samoan Mission, President William R. Lee, took the first steps to open the door to the preaching of the gospel in the Tongan Islands. President Lee called Elders Brigham Smoot and Alva Butler to travel to Tonga and commence the preaching of the gospel. A native Tongan was assigned to accompany them. The name of this Tongan is not known at this time. Before leaving Elder Smoot was set apart as the presiding elder of the Tongan District of the Samoan Mission.

The elders and their companion arrived in Nuku'alofa on board the ship S. S. Vainui. They arrived on Wednesday, July 15, 1891, to begin the first preaching of the restored gospel of Jesus Christ in Tonga. As in many other places of the world, when the missionaries arrived, their arrival stirred up considerable interest and comment.

On July 16, 1891, the two elders and their Tongan speaking companion had an audience with the king. His Royal Highness, King Siaosi (George) Tupou I, received the missionaries very kindly.

The missionaries had their Tongan companion read the "Articles of Faith" to the king. In reply to this message, King Siaosi Tupou I wished the missionaries success and said that the people of his country were "free to join whichever church suited them best."

As has happened wherever the church has gone with the true gospel, opposition soon arose. The Europeans, who were living in Tonga, apparently wanted to keep Tonga to themselves, started spreading wild and untruthful anti-mormon stories. At first, many of the Tongans were hostile toward the missionaries, but after a while they became more friendly.

On Sunday, August 1, 1891, the first public meeting was held. The elders and their companion went to the village of Pea, where they held the meeting in the home of the village officer. Many people came to this meeting.

Sometime during the month of August, the missionaries located a small cottage in the center of the village of Nuku'alofa. It was from this cottage that the missionaries carried out their work of spreading the gospel truth.

After the missionaries moved into their new quarters, their missionary activities began to increase. The people were coming to them, and they weren't just the commoners, but there were several distinguished visitors were Tungi, one of the highest chiefs of Tonga; Tuku'aho, the premier; the governors of the different islands, and all members of Parliament. Everyone was interested and wanted to hear what the missionaries had to say. One elder wrote, "The Spirit of God and the spirit of tongues rested upon the brethren to an exalted degree, which enabled them to bear good and faithful testimonies to their visitors, all of whom seemed satisfied with
the explanation of the scriptures given by the elders, and a great deal of prejudice was allayed”.

With all this activity, the missionaries decided that they should buy or build a house to be the headquarters of the church in Tonga. After fasting and praying, the brethren decided on a piece of land in Mu’a. The elders therefore made application to the government to lease the land. After some delays and problems, King Siaosi Tupou I approved the lease. Tungi, the chief, owned the land, so the missionaries went to him to arrange the terms of the lease and the price to be paid per year. Tungi allowed the missionaries to set the price at $20 a year.

With the land problem settled, the missionaries ordered 5,000 feet of lumber from New Zealand for the erection of the mission house. They also applied to the general authorities of the church in Salt Lake City for a $500 appropriation to pay for the cost of the new headquarters.

The hand of the Lord was manifest on November 22, 1891. Previous to this date public meetings were forbidden by an unestablished church. The repeal of this law opened the doors for the unrestricted preaching of the gospel.

In January of 1892 the large room of the new mission headquarters and the cookhouse had been built. On Sunday, January 24, 1892, the first Latter-day Saint meeting was held in the new mission home. The new mission home was not dedicated until May 15, 1892, after one of the regular Sabbath evening missionary meetings. Elder Smoot offered the dedicatory prayer.

In the month of May three more missionaries were sent to Tonga to help in the building up of the church. Their names were Elders Kinghorn, Hunter and Merrill.

Elders Smoot and Butler went on a tour on May 4. They traveled a distance of ten miles and held two meetings on the eastern end of the island of Tongatapu. This was the beginning of several such tours to various parts of the island.

An important day of the church in Tonga occurred on July 15, 1892, a Friday, in that it was the first year anniversary of the missionaries arrival in Tonga. This day became even more important, for in 1892 permission was granted by Premier Tuku’aho to open a school at Mu’a. The school was not opened though until August 22, 1892. The school proved to be a failure by September 2, because the other churches encouraged their members not to support it.

Even though the school failed, the missionary work continued and on September 11, 1892, the first convert baptism occurred in Mu’a. The individuals name is only known as ‘Alipate. It took fourteen months of missionary effort, before the first fruits of the gospel in Tonga was realized. This effort was accomplished against much opposition from the other churches in Tonga. The event is described in the mission records as follows: “It was indeed a source of joy and encouragement to give ‘Alipate a hearty shake of the hand and call him brother, and it is hoped that many will soon follow in the wake”.

Elder Smoot had been working on a tract written in Tongan and finished it on September 16, 1892. It was entitled “The Kingdom of Heaven” (show copy). Shortly after finishing the writing, Elder Smoot was released from his mission. Upon Elder Smoot’s leaving the mission field, Elder Alonzo Merrill was appointed as the pre-
siding elder of the Tongan Mission District.

February 18, 1893 was a day of sorrow for the people of Tonga, for it was the day that King Siaosi Tupou I died. A period of mourning followed his death. On March 5, a great grandson of the late king, Taufu'ahau, was crowned the King of Tonga as Siaosi Tupou II.

In April of 1893, two missionary couples arrived in Tonga by the names of Elder and Sister Thomas Adams and Alfred Durham. The wives of the Elders were the first Sister missionaries to preach the gospel in Tonga.

On April 16, 1893, there were two more baptisms. They were Feasii Mi and his wife Mele Sisifa, who were from the village of Alaki, Tongatapu. The services were held in the lagoon at Ma'a. After almost two years of effort to bring the restored gospel to the Tongan people, there were but three converts in the Tongan District of the Samoan mission.

In May of 1893, while the missionary effort was vigorously being carried out on the island of Tongatapu, Elders Kinghorn and Hunter were dispatched to Ha'apai. They were sent to commence doing missionary work in this group of islands and their efforts were successful, though not right away. It was not until February 12, 1894 that they had their first baptism. Elders Kinghorn and Hunter worked diligently and their work bore fruit when Teite Haliana, a 17 year old boy was baptized at Pangai, Ha'apai.

In August of 1893, a terrible epidemic of measles raged through the Ha'apai and other island groups in the Tongan chain. The fatalities reached as high as 1000 people.

On September 19, 1893, a day school was started again with Elder Butler in charge. Sister Adams took over the reigns at a later time. The school was open three days a week, with only a small number of children in attendance.

All fifty-nine villages on the island of Tongatapu had been visited by the end of 1893. Many meetings had been held and many testimonies had been born as to the truthfulness of the gospel, however, the people in general just didn't appear to be interested at this time.

Sadness touched the missionaries in January of 1894, when Sister Durham gave birth to a baby girl in the mission home and the baby died and was buried at Ma'a.

In March of 1894, Elders Butler and Kinghorn were released to return home and Elders Atkinson and Jones were sent to take their place.

The missionary efforts in Ha'apai spread to the island of Nomuka. Elder Hunter and Jones worked the island and finally their efforts bore fruit. They were able to convert Tevisi Luli, a forty year old man, who had been a preacher in another church. He was the fifth convert to the church in the Tongan Islands.

As Elder Hunter and Jones furthered their work in Pangai, they were able to convert three more people. These baptisms took place two weeks after Tevisi Luli's, which date is not known at this time. Elder Hunter baptized Robert Crichton, a half cast; his wife, Loua Fau; and Samuela Fau, a brother of Mrs. Crichton's.

Two days after the Crichton's baptism, Elder Hunter baptized three more people at Pangai. They were Sio Sateki, VaineKolo and Mele Sumu. This now brought the total number of baptisms in Tonga to eleven.

On September 1, 1894, Elders Merrill and Durham left Fatumu to sail to 'Eua, to introduce the gospel to the people living on
Tonga in February of 1895. After their arrival the work was intensified in the Ha'apai Island Group.

From the very beginning the missionaries had struggled with the Tongan language. During March and April, Elder Merrill began spending considerable time instructing the missionaries in Tongan grammar. He prepared a small book, which proved to be beneficial to all the missionaries in learning the Tongan language.

In April of 1895 the island of Tongatapu was divided into three districts, with two elders assigned to each district. During the next four months each village on the island was visited twice and many meetings were held.

On May 12, 1895, Sione Paula at 17 from the village of Lifuka, became the first member of the church to die.

The first school in the Ha'apai group was started in June of 1895 by Elder Adams and remained open until the latter part of the year.

Two more baptisms were held in the Ha'apai group, to bring the total number of converts to 13 in Ha'apai. In four years of missionary efforts by seventeen missionaries, sixteen people had been baptized. Three of these conversions had occurred on Tongatapu and 13 in the Ha'apai Group. Two members had been excommunicated, three moved to Samoa, and one died; leaving only ten members in all of Tonga in August of 1895.

The Assistant Church Historian, Elder Andrew Jensen arrived in Tonga on August 17, 1895. Elder Jensen met with several government officials, preached at many public meetings, gathered historical information for the church archives, and instructed the missionaries on how to keep records.

In August it was decided that Elders Welker and Jensen would
be sent to Vava'u to open a new area of labor. They boarded the S. S. Ovalau and arrived in Vava'u on September 8, 1895. That very evening a meeting was held with about fifty people in attendance.

The following morning, the elders walked to the hill "Talau" and there sang "Lo Thank Thee 0 God, For A Prophet" and then knelt in prayer. Elder Jensen wrote of the occasion: "I sit knelt in humble prayer to Almighty, and dedicated the Vava'u Group of Islands and its people to the preaching of the Gospel. The Spirit of God rested upon us and we rejoiced as servants of the Lord only can rejoice when they know they are in the line of their duty".

Niuafo'ou was opened to the preaching of the gospel in October of 1896 by President Welker, Tongan District, and Elder Robert Smith. They met with the governor of the island, Governor George Finau, who gave them permission to preach the gospel and saying that the people were free to join any church that they wished. The elders planned a meeting for the next day. A large crowd came to the meeting and they showed considerable interest in the message which the elders shared with them. A second meeting was planned for that same evening and also for the following Tuesday. These first two meetings were held on a Sunday.

During the time between Sunday and Tuesday the elders visited four of the villages on the island holding several meetings and distributing tracts. During this time the opponents of Mormonism were able to stir up considerable opposition. When the two missionaries came to the home where the meeting was to be held on Tuesday, they found the home closed and no one was there. Upon locating the owner of the house, the missionaries were told that such a meeting was considered illegal.

The next day the elders went to the governor to ask why the meetings were being stopped. The elders wrote: "He began to try to justify the act by reading a few points of law from the law book, and also to prove that we had been violating the law by preaching the gospel in a private dwelling house. But we showed him from his own law book that all people are given the privilege to hold meetings and worship God in any place they might appoint and that he was laying himself liable to the law by interfering with us. He asked us to pardon him, and go on with our work and he would do nothing more to retard the progress of the same".

Another meeting was planned for Wednesday night and when it began there were few people present. When the singing began, the house filled up and many people were standing outside to listen. One elder wrote: "The Spirit of the Lord rested upon us as I have never felt it before, and the people sat almost spellbound for one hour and a quarter. Many, whom we learned afterwards, had come to make fun and try to break up the meeting were the most attentive listeners". This meeting was very successful, for afterwards six people asked for baptism.

The baptisms were set for Friday, the 30th, at 7 o'clock in the morning. When the appointed time came, though, no one showed up. The missionaries left the island on November 5, 1896, without baptizing anyone.

President Welker, Tongan District and Elder Smith then went to Niuafo'ou. The king and his people were not interested in hearing what the missionaries had to say.

Upon leaving Niuafo'ou, the missionaries went to 'Uvea. They found on 'Uvea that all the inhabitants belonged to one church. The king refused to listen to their message and were forbidden to distribute tracts, so as soon as they could, they set sail again.
The missionaries next stop was at Futuna, which was governed by two kings. Upon arrival they started to tract, but their activities were soon stopped by a message from one of the kings. This message forbid their missionary activities on the island, so they boarded a schooner to return to Tonga.

Missionary work was only to last a few more months after this in Tonga. In spite of the efforts of the missionaries, there were little results. The formal action of closing the Tongan District occurred in April of 1897, when the missionaries boarded a schooner and returned to Samoa.

The Gospel had been preached in the Tongan Islands for nearly six years and yet there were only 16 baptisms and only one man had been ordained to the Aaronic Priesthood. But it was not all a failure, for the seeds of the Gospel had been planted and they would bring forth fruit at a later time.

There were no definite record of missionaries being sent to Tonga from 1897 until 1907, however, there are found in the records a few baptisms which occurred during this period.

MISSIONARY WORK IN TONGA -- PART 2
1907 to Present

The ability to get information from people who knew the church during the period of re-introduction was easier. Many of my informants were living during this period and remembered the things that occurred.

In Daniel J. Norton's account it says that the Church Historians Office received a letter from President W. V. Coombs, Tongan Mission, dated 8 November 1921, which said that missionary work was reintroduced in Tonga about 1906. The first missionaries to arrive were Elders Birkenshaw McKay and W. O. Facer, who searched out those who had previously been baptized. They found three or four of them who were still faithful to the best of their knowledge. One of them was a white man named Jacob Olson, of who it was written that he was still faithful and staunch as any member of the church.

In another brief history, written by Meli Sakalava, it is written that there were two Americans, apparently missionaries of the church in Samoa, who came to Vava'u. They arrived at Neiafu, Vava'u from Saumiatu, Samoa in the latter part of 1906 to buy horses. According to Sakalava's account, Iki Tupou Fulivai (also identified as Iki Lolohea, who later became Noble Fullival of Hunga, Vava'u, though he resided at Neiafu, Vava'u) was the harbor master at the time. The two Americans properly identified themselves as missionaries for the church and said that the horses were to be used at a school in Samoa. Iki was very kind to the two Americans and took them to his home to feed them and then he helped them to buy two horses to take back to Samoa. Iki asked the missionaries to ask the President of the Samoan Mission to send someone to teach his children. He even offered to provide lodging and food for a teacher, if one was sent. The missionaries thanked him for his
kind hospitality and bade him farewell before departing. A few
months later in 1907, 'Iki received a letter from the Samoan Mission
President saying that there are two missionaries being sent to
Vava'u, Tonga to teach his children. In Sakalaia's account, Elder
Winn and McKay arrived in Neiafu, Vava'u, Tonga on an unknown date
at the time of this writing. These missionaries established a
school at the home of Namosi, also known as Mata'utuliki, who re-
side at Neiafu.

It didn't take long for the news of this school to spread
throughout Vava'u. According to one of my informants, Pita Afu of
Ha'alaufuli requested 'Iki to send one of the missionaries to teach
his children. The missionaries saw that the school would progress,
but they were not baptizing anyone. They expressed this to 'Iki
and told him that if they didn't baptize anyone, that their purpose
in staying could not be justified and that they would have to re-
turn to Samoa. Because of this 'Iki and his family were baptised
along with Pita Afu and Sione 'Esau, an adult student of the school
in Neiafu. There were others who were baptized at the same time
but their names were not known at the time of the interview. These
baptisms occurred in 1907 and there were more in early 1908. It
was not mentioned if a school was started in Ha'alaufuli immediately
after Pita Afu's request.

In Ermel J. Horton's account, it says that a man in 1909, by
the name of Se, father of Misi Palate, came to Neiafu from Ha'alauf-
uli and asked 'Iki if a missionary could be sent to teach his
children. This school was established.

From this small beginning the church started to grow and spread.
A year later the church was introduced to Koloa, Vava'u.

Meli Sakalaia was baptized in 1910, when he was nine years
old, at a conference held in Ha'alaufuli. A frame chapel was built
here and dedicated in 1912.

The records of this time were very sparse, but my informants
who lived during these times were able to fill me in on a lot of
things that occurred. For instance, one of my informants knew
Tu'aufo'ou Tupone, mother of Maliame, Kelikupu and Uepi, who were
baptized in 1912. The known records though do not show this.

According to my informant, Tu'avavau Mataele Napa, grand
daughter of Sepi'uta Lolohea Mataele and Sosia Mataele of Po'ui,
told me the following: "My grandfather, Sosia Mataele (described
by two other informants, as being a well known business man and a
member of the Parliament from Po'ui) heard about the new school in
Vava'u that taught the English language. Mataele wanted his child-
ren to learn English, so he sent his wife, Lolohea, with a letter
to 'Iki and the missionaries in Neiafu, saying that he wanted the
English missionaries to come and establish a school in Po'ui. The
missionaries gave the answer that someone had to be baptized there
in order to start the school at Po'ui".

There is no record if Lolohea was baptized in Vava'u or not,
but the informant and her husband, Dr. Feni Napa are certain that
this is what happened in the latter part of 1909, because when
Lolohea returned, she brought with her Mini Uini (Elder Winn), of
Logan, Utah. In that time the missionaries also never allowed any
non-member to wash or care for their temple garments, but upon her
return to Po'ui, Tongatapu, Lolohea not only washed, but also saved
the temple garments of Elder Winn and all other missionaries who
came to labor in Po'ui.

The people were interested in the teachings of the full time
missionaries, but also in Sosia Mataele's preaching of the gospel,
even before he became a member. Two of my informants expressed, "Because of his wealth and his position in the government, people listened to him".

In early 1910, Maile Mataele, the father of my informant and the oldest son of Sosai and Lolohea, was baptized at the age of ten. After his baptism the church was established in Po'u'i and so was the school. Maile's brother, Lolo Mataele, was baptized at the age of eight. My informant, Sosiai Tongahena, said that those who were baptized in Po'u'i after Maile Mataele were 'Aseali Afesu, Tevita Huni, Natelau, a young man named Hanisela, and Tevita Koma'ii.

These members with the help of Sosai Mataele, donated some money to build a chapel. The chapel was built on 'Aseali Afesu's land. After it was built, all the church meetings and the school were held in it and the missionaries continued to live at the Mataele's home.

The church began to grow rapidly on the island of Tongatapu. It went from Po'u'i to Nukumuku, where Elder Hiser Watts converted Kitiona Maile and his family. From Nukumuku the church went to Fafea and was accepted there by Metui Tui'one Kuma and his family. From Fafea the church spread to Hau'ulu and was accepted by Semisi Latuhan, and then it moved on to Houma and was accepted by Sakopo and his son Fomua. The church continued to spread and went from Houma to Ha'akame and was accepted by a short man named Kelepi Fa'a, his wife Ane and son Tahi. From Ha'akame the missionaries went to Pea and converted Tevita Mahu'inga and his young son, Fola Mahu'inga, who willed the acreage upon which the temple in Tonga is to be built, to the church. They also converted a few people in the neighboring village of Ha'atelu, one of which was named Kotone. The names of the others were not remembered at the time.

of the interview. The missionaries traveled on to Ma'a where 'Unga Afuhasamango, a doctor from Vava'u and Hika, a lawyer, took the Elders in and provided for their needs, however, there are no records of their being baptized. It is known that Filimone Fililau and his brother Tupou'uli were converted. The church spread from Ma'a to Fua'amotu and the missionaries converted Sione Ma'u and Mele Ma'u, the parents of Napeli. The missionaries returned to Ma'ofanga and baptized Nau and Siope Filimoeha and family and a young Fijian fellow named 'Usula.

From about 1909 until 1915, the headquarters for the missionaries was in Po'u'i. The missionaries divided the island of Tongatapu into districts and Misi Eleno was placed in charge of the missionary work on that island.

According to Samuel Fakatou, my cousin, Tevita Tuliakono, his wife Hola and Samuel, himself were the only three members living in Nuku'alofa. Samuel said that they had to walk three miles to Ma'ofanga every Sunday to church meetings and to other church functions.

The missionary headquarters moved to Ma'ofanga. A missionary, whose Tongan name was Misi Peti (actual English name not known at this time), who was the District Leader of the Tongan District under the Samoan Mission, asked Samuel and Tevita to find a piece of land in Nuku'alofa to build a new missionary headquarters of the church. Tevita and I immediately went to and asked Kolinca, who owned a vacant lot in Kolomotou'a, however, he lived in Fafea. Kolinca accepted the offer and gave them the land. The saints and students helped to move a two room house from Ma'ofanga to Kolomotou'a, placing it onto the vacant lot. The missionaries called the new mission headquarters Matavaimo'ui, which means "active source of
a river". This new mission headquarters was to be the first mission home, when Tonga became a mission of its own.

While this move was taking place, the First Presidency of the Church separated the Samoan and Tongan Missions, so that Tonga became a separate and independant mission. Under the instructions of the First Presidency, President Edward J. Wood of the Samoan Mission traveled to Tonga with Elder and Sister Willard L. Smith. Elder Smith was then set apart as the first Mission President in Tonga on 11 May 1916.

Before President Smith arrived, Samuelu Fakatou listed the following missionaries as laboring in the villages on the island of Tongatapu.

1. Fo'ui — Misi Aila (Elder Iyler)
2. Nakunuku — Misi 'Asavasa'a (a Samoan Elder)
3. Fahefa — Misi Filipo (a Samoan Elder)
4. Ha'akame — Misi Metane (English name not known)
5. Ha'ateiho — Misi Senisi (Elder James)
6. Mu'a — Misi Uate (Elder Viner Watt)
7. Ma'ofanga — Misi Peti (English name not known)

The church was now well established in Vava'u and Tongatapu, so President Smith sent Elder Cutler and Rollison to open a school in the Ha'apai Goup in 1917. Because records were not kept very accurately in those days, there is some discrepancy or some information which was not recorded correctly. In an interview with 'Alisi Tupou, born in 1905, and her sister 'Elenoa Ke Mataele, born in 1906, they both said that 'Alisi and Lavaka were baptized in 1916 by Elders James and Iyler. This was before Elder Cutler and Rollison came in 1917 to open the school. When Elder James and Iyler were sent to Ha'apai from Ha'ateiho and Fo'ui is unknown.

'Alisi and Me are the daughters of Manu Mataele and Palauni of Fanga, Ha'apai, Tonga. They said that when Elder James and Iyler arrived in Fanga, their mother invited them to stay at her home, providing room and board. The missionaries were allowed to hold meetings with non-member friends at "Haufolau" the family home.

My informants said that in 1917, Elders Rollison, Ruben, Oborn, 'Eleno Haloti and Nora came to help with the school. With the arrival of these elders the church started to grow in Fanga. Some of the new converts at this time were Tema Tu'il'iloila, Seini Kolokesa, Vili Fakataha, Seini Fakalolo, Nafi Ma'ake, Sisi and Tupou Kapetani, Sione Kongaika and wife, and Sunia Pasi. There were many others, whose names were not remembered at the time of the interview.

From this start in the Ha'apai Group, the church started to spread. It was next taken to Hihifo and then to 'Ulha. The missionaries had great success on 'Ulha, where Paula Langi accepted the Gospel, followed by Kinkiki and many others.

'Alisi and Me named some of the classmates of Alisi during the first year of the school in Fanga. They were Hela Finau, Fatila Anderson, Tokilupe Vavae, Petu'u Tausinga, Tisilo Sunia, 'Ana Kava, Sinote Iangi, of whom all were baptized. They also remembered the name of Kelapi Talakai and that this person and the children were baptized on 22 July 1919.

In November of 1918, President Willard Smith presided over and conducted the first mission wide conference in Tonga, which was held at Matavainiu.

Emel J. Horton and one of my informants, Paula Malugo, both described this conference and the dedication of the new mission home and headquarters at Matavainiu to be a very significant event.
My informant expressed, "The spirit of fulfillment and happiness was present when able to see the fruits of the efforts of the missionary effort of the previous ten years, because there were hundreds of members and investigators present." However, the event was marred by sadness with the news that King George Tupou II had died, and there began a great mourning among the saints.

In Ernel J. Morton's account it says that during this same month, President Smith wrote in his diary, "This is one of the most eventful months of the year as far as a real test to the Saints is concerned.

President Smith continued his writing by saying, "The steamer (from Vava'u) had on board the influenza and many passengers were down (sick), the doctors didn't know the disease and allowed the band members and many of the saints to get passage on it. Elder Jacobs, who was the presiding elder of Vava'u was ready to go along. After he made sure all were aboard, he was impressed to remain and did.

"This proved to be a God send. He was the only one left on the island with the priesthood. Nearly everybody had the flu and he was busy going from house to house administering to the sick. Many were saved through his efforts. In some places whole families became victims to this disease. Many converts and friends were made.

"As soon as the steamer arrived in Tongatapu, many of the Saints were sick... and many had to leave the conference. All the missionaries were down, some worse than others. A Brother Langston was sick before he got the flu. He succumbed. I was very bad, the elders expected me to die too.

Many of the saints from Vava'u and Ha'anal found when they returned home that their families or parts of families had succumbed to this dreadful disease.

"People were too weak to dig graves to bury their dead, often three or four people were buried in one shallow grave. In Tongatapu, the government hired sailors from a large sail boat that had landed in the harbor to bury the dead. They were all half drunk, but they managed to do the work.

"Our home was not far from the cemetery. We could look out day or night and could see someone being buried. It was a sad sight, we thanked the Lord that we had been spared".

In 1920, President and Sister Willard Smith were released as mission president and Elder and Sister Mark V. Coombs arrived to take over the responsibilities as Mission President.

In 1921, Elder Wiberg and Oborn arrived on their mission.
Later that year Elders Sorensen, Olsen, Rasmussen, Robinson, Phillips, Putnam and Parkin arrived on their missions. Because of difficulty in obtaining visas, Elders Clark, May and several others already in the mission field, were asked to stay longer and many stayed as long as four years.

The missionary work began to progress very rapidly and at one mission conference, President Coombs reported that 20 baptisms had occurred. He wrote, "The people are anxious to hear the gospel. Some are asking for the Book of Mormon, which as yet we have not translated to the Tongan language.

Elder May, who already had spent four and a half years in the mission field, expressed an earnest desire to remain in the field until he had finished translating the Book of Mormon into the Tongan language. He had completed translating two books at the time of his request. His request was turned down, but before he left the
mission for home, he was able to complete translating half of the
Book of Mormon.

By November of 1921, there were 900 members in the mission.

All of my informants agreed that the adult male members had
to work for the church for almost four years before they could hold
the Aaronic Priesthood. They said that they then had to work almost
another four years before they became an Elder in the Melchizedek
Priesthood. Although the male members weren't given the Priesthood,
it didn't stop them from their desire to preach the gospel.

Most of my informants were able to remember the names of some
of the local missionaries during the early days of the church.
They are as follows: 1) Eki Pulivai, 2) Naesata, 3) Sione 'Esau,
4) Tevita Rauni, 5) Tu'i Kolongahau, 6) Sosia Mataele, 7) Kitone
Miale, 8) Hiatame Ve'a, 9) Kelepi Talakai, 10) Lavaka, 11) Paula
Langi, 12) Lisiate Talanoa, 13) Sione Fina Valahulu, 14) Sione
Taufa, 15) Lolohaa Pupungatau, 16) Matui Tuione, 17) Filiisione
Fisilau, 18) Sione Nau, 19) Sifa Falepapalangi, and 20) Tuliakione.

In January of 1922 a problem arose which could have meant the
closing of the mission. A letter was received from U. M. 'Unufuke,
acting minister of lands, by the church leaders. The letter said
that the church must stop sending missionaries to Tonga because
the Tongan Government Cabinet questioned their desire to grant any
more leases to the Mormon Church.

Two of my informants said that shortly after this letter was
received, some missionaries arrived, but they were not allowed to
come ashore. When the ship left, they were still on board.

In 1925 the church continued to progress and grew. President
Coombs divided the branches up into three groups and held confer-
ences in each area. The groupings of the branches were as follows:

Tongatapu -- Nuku'alofa, Ha'akane, Fua'amotu, and Ma'a
. Ha'apai -- Lifuka and 'Ulya
Vava'u -- Ha'aliaulufi, Mataika, Koloa, Tefisi, and 'Otea

Records available in Tonga indicate that prior to August of
1926, at least ten Tongans had been ordained to be an Elder. The
tradition says that the first ordinations were made at the time
that Elder David O. McKay visited the islands in 1921. Among the
first elders to be ordained were C. F. Wolfgamna, Jacob Olsen, Paula
Langi, Lisiate Talanoa, Salesi Toutai, Sione Ma'u, and Sione 'Umu
Puska, Nasata, and Tu'i Kolongahau.

Elder and Sister Mark V. Coombs were released and Elder and
Sister Jay A. Coahon arrived and took over the mission in 1926.
In 1929 another change was made in the mission presidency, when
president and Sister Jay A. Coahon were released and Elder and
Sister Hewell J. Cutler took over.

The missionaries in 1929 not only taught about the church,
but also other things. In June of 1929, Elder Floyd C. Fletcher
organized a Boy Scout Troup and began teaching the young Tongan
boys the principles of the scouting program.

In 1932, Elder Roberts and Morton were sent to 'Eua. They
remained on the island for one week and held meetings in most parts
of the island. On December 31, 1932, at a cottage meeting, Elder
Morton spoke for 30 minutes on the principles of the gospel in the
Tongan language. Elder Morton had been blessed with the gift of
tongues, for he had been in Tonga for only two months.

From 1933 to 1936 President Reuben H. Riberg was president
of the Tongan Mission. During his time as president there are no known
records in the mission home. In talking to one of my informants
concerning this period of time, he said that President Riberg
semisi when paying tithing in hatavaimou conferences held visited persecution towards the church by the non-members and the inactive members.

In 1936 President Riberg was released and Elder Emile C. Dunn became President of the Tongan Mission.

Elder George Albert Smith of the Council of the Twelve Apostles visited Tonga in May of 1938. He spoke at three separate district conferences held in Nafuvalu and Lifuka in Ha'apai. Most of his talks were on paying tithing, the members being a light unto the world, the truth of the Book of Mormon, living worthy so that they could go to the temple and on keeping records.

Before Elder Smith departed the islands, he held a special mission conference for all the Europeans living in the islands. Two events of significance occurred at this conference. First, President Dunn called Elder Ernel J. Morton to commence the translation of the Book of Mormon into the Tongan language. Second, he called Sioeli Kauvaka of Niutoputapu and 'Epahame Kamhia Tu'aone to leave immediately to commence the preaching of the gospel at Niutoputapu.

When these two elders arrived at their destination no one would talk to them, so they went to the town where Kauvaka was born and found lodging at his brothers house. They conducted their first meeting on December 4, 1937, at the home of Semisi Sika. On December 18, the first fruits of their missionary efforts were realized when Semisi Sika and Kasinia Sika were baptized and confirmed members of the church.

At the end of November 1938, the membership of the church in Tonga stood at 1,672.

In a conference held in Vava'u in April 1939, President Dunn announced to the saints that the Book of Mormon had been translated into the Tongan language. Elder Morton was transferred to Vava'u, where President Dunn resided. President and Sister Dunn, Elders Morton, Lee, Wilding and others assisted in revising and typing the manuscript into its final form. In August of 1939 Elder Ernel J. Morton was released from his mission. He left for America, taking with him the manuscript to deliver to the First Presidency of the Church, who would arrange for it to be printed and published.

There is no record of any native Tongans helping with the translation, however, two of my informants said that Brother Maka and Brother Tuiketei did assist with the translation.

In July of 1940 the missionary efforts on Tuna finally bore fruit, when six persons were baptized and confirmed members of the church.

On October 15, 1940, President Dunn received a cablegram from the First Presidency. The message read, "Having in mind possible developments, please make necessary boat reservations and return all elders to the United States as soon as possible in American ships where available. We will try to facilitate reservations from this end. Install local officers to take charge of branches. Send elders in as large of groups as possible, properly organized and officered. We urge the strictest possible conduct and caution against political controversies. The president of the mission will remain for the present using his own discretion whether his family will remain with him or return now."

The mission president and the elders immediately carried and
sent word to all the American missionaries to prepare at once to leave Tonga. Although the church members were stunned by the news, they immediately began their farewell feasts for the departing missionaries.

On October 26, 1940, the S. S. Mataua arrived and the saints turned out en masse to bid farewell to the ten departing elders. The scene was described as follows: "It was indeed a sad occasion. The saints cried so hard that it was almost impossible for them to sing and the elders had in their hearts a grief that no one knows unless he has gone through such an experience."

In his annual report, President Dunn stated that there were 1,866 members of the church in Tonga at the end of 1940.

In early 1942, it was reported by President Dunn that there were 12 Tongan missionaries in the field. Later, that same year, he reported that there were 19 Tongan missionaries serving in the mission field and a total membership of 2,073.

In 1944, Penisimani Latusela Maya was called as a part-time missionary to Fiji, while he attended medical school there. Also during this year Samuel V. Pakatou and Sione Vea and wife were called to labor on Niuafo'ou.

An informant of mine, Solomone 'Ulu'ave of Ma'a, Niuafo'ou, gave me the following story: "About February 1944, two men came by my home. One was Sione 'Esau and the other was Simote of Ta'oa, both coming from Vava'u. They were hot, tired, thirsty and hungry; after their long walk from the next village of Tongananafo. My wife, Salome 'Ulu'ave offered them water, baked breadfruit and a pot of "lu hana". Before they ate, one man blessed the food and in his prayer he said, "Heavenly Father please bless this home with the light of the gospel."

Solomone continued his story, "Vaha'i Tonga moved into the village shortly after the two men had left and found Salome 'Ulu'ave to be very ill. He blessed Salome and she became well. She was baptized in June of 1944 and Solomone was baptized in September of 1944.

This informant also knew that 'Inoke Mataele of Po'ui and Penisimani Mataele and his wife, Kato, were laboring in Ma'a. He was also aware of Samuel V. Pakatou, who was laboring in a neighboring village.

According to another informant, Penisimani Mataele, he and his wife were called to work on Niuafo'ou in May 1946. He said that they returned to Nuku'alofa, Tongatapu in December 1946, when all the saints and missionaries were evacuated after the eruption of a volcano on the island.

With the war over the time had come to send more missionaries and a new mission president. On June 2, 1946, Elder Ern. H. Huntsman and his wife, Martha, arrived at Nuku'alofa to take charge of the Tongan Mission. The former president's wife and children left on the same boat, while President Dunn remained a short time to finish up on the mission records. He had served faithfully as mission president for ten years.

The first order of business for the new mission president was to present Queen Salote with a copy of the Book of Mormon, bound in black leather and with her name on it. It had been inscribed by President George Albert Smith. Similar copies of the Book of Mormon were presented to Tungi, in the royal house; 'Ata, the premier; and 'Ulukalala, the noble of Vava'u and chairman of the parliament.

It is known that the Deseret News Press printed the first copies
of the Book of Mormon in the Tongan language in April of 1946. The first shipment of 504 copies arrived in January of 1947 and were made available to the members duty free.

President Huntsman was involved in getting a lease on some land for a new school, which he called "Liahona".

In the history from the mission home, there are no records of the missionary activities from 1947 until 1953, when Elder John H. Groberg arrived on November 17 to serve his mission and was sent to Niutoputapu with his native companion Fekoa Pofuha.

Through his informants I was able to fill some of the gap from 1947 until 1953. One informant, my father Sosima 'Alatini, wrote in his journal that President Huntsman called him in June 1948 in a conference at Ha'alaufuli, Vava'u to go on a mission with his wife and children to Tu'amotu, Vava'u to replace Haataua of Niutoputapu. He served throughout the Vava'u Group from June 1948 until June 1950. Sosima's oldest son Semisi Koa 'Alatini and his wife Lousaline Ta'a Sikau arrived in Vava'u to replace him. Semisi served from June 1950 until 1952.

My father said that there were many other missionaries who were called to labor throughout the Tongan Mission, but he doesn't remember their names.

In 1953 another important event took place in the Tongan Mission, and that was the transfer of Niue to the jurisdiction of the Tongan Mission from the New Zealand Mission. This took place in July, when President D'Honte W. Goomba of the Tongan Mission and President Sidney G. Ottley of the New Zealand Mission met to carry out the transfer. There were four elders working in Niue and they were also transferred to the Tongan Mission.

President David O. McKay visited Tonga in 1955. He arrived on to the youth. He told them that they should study hard about the church and to prepare to go on serving the Lord by carrying the gift and message of the gospel to the world.

The next day he visited Ha'alaufuli, Vava'u and spoke to the saints there. During his talk, President David O. McKay electrified the congregation by saying, "Do you know what I saw today in vision? — a temple will be built on one of these islands where the members of the church may go and receive the blessing of the Temple of God. You are entitled to it".

The first major event of 1958 was the transfer of Fiji from the Samoa Mission to the Tongan Mission. Information from one of my informants, Penitima Napa, who was a part time missionary in Fiji, while he was attending a medical school from 1944 to 1947, said, "It was very difficult to change the life style of these people. Especially when it came to their moral standards and the word of vision". He was able to baptize four native Fijians, whose names had been forgotten at the time of the interview, except for one whose name was Dennis Smith, son of Joseph Smith (nick named "Bunchi")

The most up to date information about the missionary work in Tonga is that Pita Hopoate of Pau'amotu, Tongatapu is the mission president. The total number of full time missionaries as of February 1981 is 266 and the total number of converts in the same month is 148.

Before I do close, I do want to bring up one more event which stands out as being the most important event in the minds of every Tongan member, since the introduction and reintroduction of the Church in Tonga. That is the fulfillment of the prophecy which David O. McKay made on January 12, 1955 in Ha'alaufuli, Vava'u.
On February 18, 1981, President Spencer W. Kimball broke ground and blessed the ground at Liahona where the new Tongan Temple is to be built. This was the climax of the hard work which the missionaries began and the Tongan saints had worked for.

In conclusion, I would like now to introduce some important guests, who are present, who played an important part in the building up of the Kingdom of God in Tonga.

(If there is any time left, ask if anyone has any questions.)
MISSIONARY WORK IN TONGA

July 15, 1891 -- Elders Brigham Smoot, Alva Butler and Tongan companion arrived in Nuku'alofa, Tongatapu, Tonga from Samoa.

August 22, 1892 -- School opened at Ma'a, Tongatapu.

August 11, 1892 -- First convert baptized at Ma'a. His name was 'Ali'pate.

September 16, 1892 -- First tract written in Tongan called "The Kingdom of Heaven" by Elder Brigham Smoot.

April 1893 -- First missionary couples arrive: Elder and Sister Thomas Adams and Elder and Sister Alfred Durman.

September 21, 1894 -- First Aaronic Priesthood ordination given to Tevisi Luli of Nomuka, Ha'apai, Tonga.

April 1895 -- Tongatapu divided into 3 districts with two Elders assigned to each district.

April 1897 -- Tongan District closed to missionary work with the Elders returning to Samoa.

1907 -- Reintroduction of the church to Tonga at Vava'u by Elders Worr and Berker McKay.

May 11, 1916 -- Tonga became an independent mission from Samoa.

November 1918 -- First mission wide conference held at Matavai'o'ui, Tonga, which was conducted by Mission President Willard Smith.

1921 -- Elder David C. McKay visited Tonga. At the time of his visit it is believed to be when the first ordinations to the Melchizedek Priesthood took place.

May 1928 -- Elder George Albert Smith of the Council of Twelve visited Tonga.

1946 -- First copy of the Tongan Book of Mormon was presented to Queen Salote Tupou III. Similar copies presented to Tungi, in the royal house; 'Ata, the premier; and 'Ulukalala, noble of Vava'u and chairman of the Parliament.

January 1947 -- The first 500 copies of the Book of Mormon made available to the members duty free.

July 1953 -- The Island of Niué transferred into the jurisdiction of the Tongan Mission from the New Zealand Mission.

January 11, 1955 -- President David O. McKay visited Tonga and prophesied that a temple would be built in Tonga.

February 18, 1961 -- President Spencer W. Kimball broke and blessed the ground at Lahoua, Tonga, where the Tongan Temple is to be built.

MISSION PRESIDENTS THAT SERVED IN THE TONGA NUKU’ALOFA MISSION

1. 1916-1920 President and Sister Willard L. Smith (Misi Uiliate )
2. 1920-1925 President and Sister Mark V. Coombs (Misi Vina )
3. 1925-1928 President and Sister Jay A. Cahoon (Misi Kahuni )
4. 1928-1932 President and Sister Nevell J. Cutler (Misi Selisi )
5. 1933-1936 President and Sister Ruben M. Hiberg (Misi Vaiuka )
6. 1936-1946 President and Sister Emil C. Dunn (Misi 'Emili )
7. 1946-1948 President and Sister Ervin V. Huntsman (Misi 'Evona )
8. 1948-1950 President and Sister Emil C. Dunn (Misi 'Emili )
9. 1950-1952 President and Sister Ervin V. Huntsman (Misi 'Evona )
10. 1952-1955 President and Sister D'monte V. Coombs (Misi Tirani )
11. 1955-1959 President and Sister Fred W. Stone (Misi Sitouni )
12. 1959-1963 President and Sister Mark V. Coombs (Misi Vina )
13. 1963-1966 President and Sister Patrick D. Dalton (Misi Polotoni )
14. 1966-1969 President and Sister John H. Groberg (Misi Kolopiki )
15. 1969-1972 President and Sister James F. Christensen (Misi Kalilatisi )
16. 1972-1974 President and Sister Charles J. Rockworth (Misi Utu'fu )
17. 1974-1977 President and Sister Tonga Toutai Paletu'a
18. 1977-1980 President and Sister Stone T. La'atu
19. 1980-1983 President and Sister Pita F. Hopkins