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Remembering and Honoring Māori Latter-day Saints

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REMEMBERING AND HONORING Māori LATTER-DAY SAINTS

Louis Midgley

Review of Robert Joseph, “Intercultural Exchange, Matakite Māori and the Mormon Church,” in *Mana Māori and Christianity*, ed. by Hugh Morrison, Lachy Paterson, Brett Knowles and Murray Rae (Wellington, New Zealand: Huia Publishers, 2012), pp. 43–72;¹ and of Selwyn Kātene, ed, *Turning the Hearts of the Children: Early Māori Leaders in the Mormon Church* (Wellington, New Zealand: Steele Roberts Publishers, 2014). 231 pp. Glossary (pp. 220–22), Index (pp. 223–31). N.Z. \$39.99.²

Abstract: Dr. Robert (Rob) Joseph’s essay on Māori matakite (seers) is described and assessed, along with the contents of a book, edited by Dr. Selwyn Kātene, consisting of essays on twelve nineteenth-century Māori Latter-day Saint “leaders.” All these essays are indications that Māori scholars are setting out and defending the Māori Latter-day Saint narrative. These essays also make available to future generations the stories of some of the Māori who subsequently helped set in place a Māori community of Latter-day Saints in Aotearoa (now the official Māori name for all of New Zealand rather than merely the name for the North Island). One crucial fact is that there were divine special revelations to Māori seers that opened the way for the message brought to them by Latter-day Saint missionaries. These essays will help Māori Saints (and others) remember and honor earlier encounters with the divine that yielded what was for at least a hundred years primarily a Māori community of Saints in New Zealand.

1 Hereafter cited as Joseph.

2 Hereafter cited as *Turning the Hearts* (when necessary preceded by the name of the “leader” whose career is described).

A Personal Prolegomena

Why am I again opining on Māori things? I grew up hearing stories about how the Māori came to be Latter-day Saints. How so? Several in my extended family served as Latter-day Saint missionaries in New Zealand, including my older brother, Rushby C. Midgley Jr., first under my uncle, M. Charles Woods (1935–1938), and then under Matthew Cowley (1938–1945), who was my father's close friend.³ In addition, some Māori Saints visited my family, and one lived with us for a while. As a missionary in New Zealand in 1950–1952, I heard additional stories of how various *whanau* (extended families) had come to be Latter-day Saints. I wrongly assumed that others had recorded these stories,⁴ which was most often not the case. Hence I very much applaud efforts to assemble accurate accounts of these remarkable stories.

In 1950 my initial missionary assignment was north of Auckland in the area around Whangarei and the Bay of Islands. In my first and subsequent encounters with Māori Latter-day Saints (and also with Māori who were not Latter-day Saints) I discovered a people not yet affected by enervating post-enlightenment skepticism about divine things. Though they were often candid about their own struggles with the lusts of the flesh, even some non-Latter-day Saints saw in the account of the recovery of the Book of Mormon, and also embedded in its narratives and messages, the lessons that, if acted upon, would eventually make them genuine Saints. By contrast, non-Māori were, if not hostile, very skeptical about our message, and insisted on arguing about whether or not it is true. In addition, the Māori did not see in what we taught something at odds with their own deepest beliefs but as an extension, correction, and even vindication of those beliefs.

I also discovered that faithful Māori Saints did not focus on the quirks of Latter-day Saint mission presidents nor on the foibles of immature missionaries from the United States and Canada. Instead, they had charity toward mission presidents who, in the way they presided over the Saints, were not always consistent or wise; and they also manifested a genuine love for young, immature, inexperienced Latter-day Saint missionaries. I was a benefactor of such love.

3 In addition to President Woods (1935–1938), two other members of my extended family served as New Zealand Mission presidents: James Lambert (1916–1920) and Rufus Hardy (1907–1909 and 1933–1934).

4 For more details, see Midgley, “Māori Latter-day Saint Faith: Some Preliminary Remarks,” *Interpreter* 8 (2014): 45–65 at 52–54, 63–65.

In addition, I also discovered that special divine revelations were not for many Māori a scandal or stumbling block, though they have begun to be for those colonized by a European secular ideology that is profoundly skeptical about divine things. A version of the ideology can now be seen in the opinions of a few Kiwi critics of their former faith. Hence the need for the kinds of essays I wish to introduce.

Launching *Turning the Hearts*; Remembering and Honoring

On 23 October 2014 a *hui* (conference) was held at Waikato University in Hamilton, New Zealand.⁵ The title of this gathering was: A Symposium to Commemorate the 160th Anniversary of the Mormon Church in NZ; the 125th Anniversary of the Translation of the Book of Mormon into Māori; and Early Māori Mormon Leaders (Book Launch).⁶ The conference was chaired by Rob Joseph. Selwyn Kātene introduced *Turning the Hearts*, and versions of several of these essays were presented.

The twelve essays in *Turning the Hearts* challenge the cultural ignorance and resulting insensitivities as well as the often overt and covert secular assumptions, biases, and the resulting skepticism that one finds in accounts written by some non-Māori who have been indoctrinated in and enthralled by secular categories, assumptions, and explanations found in the dominant non-Māori intellectual culture. I urge non-Māori who are interested in the history of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Aotearoa/New Zealand to take seriously what faithful Māori Latter-day Saints have to say about the faith of Māori Saints past and present.

In his “Introduction” (pp. 9–23) to the twelve essays in *Turning the Hearts*, Selwyn Kātene indicates that a crucial aim of this book “is to help the present cohort of Church members to *remember and honour* the

5 For the program for this *hui*: <http://www.mormoninterpreter.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/Maori-Mormon-Symposium-Programme-Proposal-9-Octo-2014-Update-2.pdf>. See also <http://www.mormoninterpreter.com/announcing-the-Maori-mormon-symposium/>.

6 For an account of this conference, see <https://pacific.lds.org/a-significant-step-in-lds-church-history-in-new-zealand>. One should note that Dr. Gina Colvin, a cultural Mormon critic of the faith of Latter-day Saints, presented her opinions on what she called “2050 Destination,” which was ignored in the report above. Herewini Jones, who was scheduled to give a “keynote” address on “Māori and the Book of Mormon,” does not seem to have attended. I suspect a link between the Colvin’s being invited to speak and his withdrawal from the conference.

contributions from past leaders” (p. 20, emphasis added).⁷ The Latter-day Saints addressed in *Turning the Hearts* include the following:

- Hirini Te Rito Whaanga, 1828–1905 (pp. 25–47).
- Hemi te Whatahoro Jury, 1841–1923 (pp. 62–77).
- Raihi Miraka Kewene-Ngawaka, 1830–1933 (pp. 48–61).
- Ngahuia Pikeka Chase, 1857–1943 (pp. 78–91).
- Percy Stanley Connorton Going, 1868–1940 (pp. 92–107).
- Hohepa Heperi, 1870–1964 (pp. 108–21).
- Te Rawhiti Paerata, 1876–1931 (122–35).
- Stuart Meha, 1878–1963 (pp. 136–53).
- Wetekia Ruruku Elkington, 1879–1957 (pp. 154–69).
- Sidney Christy, 1883–1955 (pp. 170–87).
- Polly Duncan/Pare Takana, 1892–1974 (pp. 188–203).
- Tūrake Manuirangi, 1896–1969 (pp. 204–16).⁸

Kātene explains that those whose lives and faith are dealt with in *Turning the Hearts* were “matriarchs, high priests or politicians,” each of whom, with the exception of Percy Going,⁹ was of Māori ethnicity (p. 20). They were also all “born in the nineteenth century.” The authors of these biographical essays, all members of the extended family of those early “leaders,” had access to the currently available oral and textual

7 There are some fine biographical vignettes already in print. For example, Marjorie Newton’s essay entitled “‘Her Very Presence Is a Sermon’: Mere Mete Whaanga (1848–1944),” in *Women of Faith in the Latter Days*, vol. 3 (1846–1870), ed. Richard E. Turley and Brittany A. Chapman (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2014), 252–62, 344–47. (Mere Whaanga was the third of Hirini Te Rito Whaanga’s wives, the other two having passed away before he and Mere were married and also before their becoming Latter-day Saints.) Newton stresses that numerous similar accounts await to be written, which is true.

8 I have favorably reviewed Marjorie Newton’s *Tike and Temple: The Mormon Mission in New Zealand, 1851–1958* (Salt Lake City: Greg Kofford Books, 2012). It is an excellent “faith promoting” account of Latter-day Saint Māori faith (and faithful Saints are its intended audience). Her *Mormon and Māori* (Salt Lake City: Greg Kofford Books, 2014) is a much revised version of the analytical and highly critical portion of her “Mormonism in New Zealand: A Historical Appraisal,” her 1998 PhD thesis at the University of Sydney.

9 The Goings raised a large and faithful family, whose gifted children and grandchildren often married Māori and eventually Samoan Saints.

sources as well as *whanau* (extended family) approval and support (p. 20), which Māori feel is necessary and hence seek. In addition, four of these essays examine the faith of Māori women, and six of the authors of these essays are women (p. 20).

Without the availability of accurate, detailed, written accounts, the Māori past is easily lost and forgotten, and some of the important grounds and contents of faith are impoverished or may wither. This collection of biographical vignettes is an effort to *remember* and thereby bolster, deepen, renew, and restore the faith of Māori Latter-day Saints, and all who love the Lord.

Māori are, of course, the primary audience of *Turning the Hearts*. However, those who have served as Latter-day Saint missionaries in Aotearoa/New Zealand constitute an important potential secondary audience. If they have not had the privilege of actually knowing any of those whose lives and times are described in these essays, they may have known some of their descendants or have heard stories about these and other faithful Māori Saints.¹⁰ But there should also be other audiences for this literature.

Both the essay by Dr. Robert Joseph¹¹ and the collection of essays edited by Dr. Selwyn Kātene¹² are readily available to Māori (and other) Saints in Aotearoa/New Zealand. However, their being published in New Zealand makes them less accessible elsewhere.¹³

The contents of *Turning the Hearts* and Rob Joseph's essay are evidence that the Māori Saints are preserving the Māori Latter-day Saint

10 I was privileged to know five of these truly remarkable Saints: Polly Duncan, Sid Christy, Wetekia Elkington, Stuart Meha, and Hohepa Heperi. My mother took me with her in the early 1940s to visit Mere Whaanga, Hirini's wife, in her modest Forest Dale home, just south of Salt Lake City. In 1950–1952 I also got to know members of the Going *whanau* in Maromaku as well as members of the Whaanga *whanau*.

11 Dr. Robert (Rob) Joseph is Senior Lecturer at the Te Piranga Faculty of Law at the University of Waikato in Hamilton, New Zealand. See http://www.waikato.ac.nz/law/about-us/staff/academic/robert_joseph/; and for his publications, see <http://www.waikato.ac.nz/php/research.php?mode=show&author=57008>. See also <http://mormonscholarstestify.org/955/robert-joseph>.

12 Dr. Selwyn Kātene is the Assistant Vice-Chancellor (Māori and Pacifica) at Massey University, Palmerston North, Aotearoa/New Zealand. He is also the editor of *Fire that Kindles Hearts: Ten Māori Scholars*, "Foreword" by Tipene O'Reagan (Wellington, New Zealand: Steele Roberts, 2015).

13 I hope to see an enlarged version of Rob Joseph's essay made available in *Interpreter* so that it becomes easily accessible to English-speaking Latter-day Saints everywhere.

narrative by keeping some significant events and people in remembrance. What Rob Joseph also calls “the Mormon historical narrative” (Joseph, 51, and 58, 62, 63) ought to be retained in remembrance by Māori Saints; it should also be taken seriously by Latter-day Saint historians as well as non-Latter-day Saint scholars.¹⁴

A Prepared People

Rob Joseph provides a detailed account of some but not all of the proclamations by Māori *matakite* (seers) that prepared Māori in some *iwi* (tribes) for both Latter-day Saint missionaries and the contents of their message. And in his editor’s “Introduction” to *Turning the Hearts*, Kātene sets out a Māori understanding of the Māori traditional “religion,” while also drawing on Rob Joseph’s essay (see Kātene, “Introduction” to *Turning the Hearts*, 10–17) in his own account of the role of Māori *matakite* and their crucial role in opening the way for Latter-day Saint missionaries and their message.

Rob Joseph demonstrates that although Latter-day Saint missionaries had no way of anticipating it, “Māori tohunga ironically predicted that the fullness of religious truth and salvation would come to Māori from the Pākeha” (Joseph, 44), and that these *Pākeha* (European) messengers turned out to be Latter-day Saint missionaries. He explains that “a number of tohunga matakite made significant prophecies concerning the coming to Aotearoa/New Zealand of a true church. In the *Mormon historical narrative*, as a result of such prophetic utterances, a number of Māori in certain tribal areas ultimately joined the Mormon Church” (Joseph, 48).

Then, after apologizing in advance “to those Mormon Māori whanau, hāpu and iwi” [extended families, subtribes, and tribes] whose stories he could not include in his essay (Joseph, 44), he sets out the

14 The standard faithful accounts of the foundational stories of the faith of Māori Saints include, in chronological order, Ian Rewi Barker, “The Connection: The Mormon Church and the Māori People,” MA Thesis, Victoria University, 1967; Brian W. Hunt, *Zion in New Zealand: A History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in New Zealand, 1854–1977* (Hamilton, New Zealand: Church College of New Zealand, 1977), which is the published version of his “History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in New Zealand,” an MA thesis at Brigham Young University, August 1971; and especially R. Lanier (Lanny) Britsch, *Unto the Isles of the Sea: A History of the Latter-day Saints in the Pacific* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1986), 253–345. (See also his essay entitled “Māori Traditions and the Mormon Church,” *New Era*, June 1981, 37–46, which is available at <https://www.lds.org/new-era/1981/06/Maori-traditions-and-the-mormon-church?lang=eng>).

proclamations made by a few of the Māori seers who opened the way for the conversions of Māori to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. He examines in detail the statements made by the following Māori *Matakite*: Arama Te Toiroa (Joseph, 48–54), Paora Te Potangaroa (Joseph, 54–60), and King Tawhiao (Joseph, 61–67). Also woven into his detailed treatment of King Tawhiao's opinions is a commentary on Roma Heruru Ruruku, and his daughter, Wetekia Ruruku Elkington, who was herself a seer (Joseph, 61–67).¹⁵ He also introduces his essay by describing how traditional Māori ways were transformed and severely eroded by British colonization (Joseph, 43).

The Historical Setting

The arrival of colonists in New Zealand led to an immediate, rapid challenge to the customs, social controls, and way of life of a previously stone-age people. However, the Māori adapted rapidly to much of the new material culture the British colonists brought to them, including such things as woolen clothing, leather shoes, alcohol, and especially muskets, which they soon used to settle accounts between competing tribes.

The Māori did not, of course, choose to have their land stolen by the new settlers. In a cynical effort to gobble up their land, their new “masters” sought to destroy many of the key traditional ways of the Māori. Anglican, Methodist and Roman Catholic missionaries who arrived with the first settlers soon managed to make most Māori Christian, who soon soured on the version of Christian faith brought to them by those missionaries, especially when they sided with the Crown as efforts were made to steal Māori land. But the picture is more complicated.

Christian missionaries sought to suppress Māori *atua* (Gods), and hence also the traditional modes of Māori piety and also moral restraint.¹⁶ They were not, however, entirely successful. Hence the work of those first Christian missionaries also facilitated our own subsequent missionary endeavors among them by introducing literacy and also by making the Bible available in Māori.¹⁷

But there is more. Beginning late in 1882, Latter-day Saint missionaries soon discovered that those Christian missionaries, who

15 There is, in addition, in *Turning the Hearts* a fine essay by Nolanmay Campbell on Wetekia Elkington entitled “He Matakite — A Visionary” (pp. 155–69).

16 See Midgley, “Stairway to Heaven,” *Interpreter* 12 (2014): 97–110 at 97–102, 104–105.

17 See Midgley, “Māori Latter-day Saint Faith,” 50.

then, as now, discounted the importance of revelation, dreams, and visions had thereby inadvertently assisted Latter-day Saint missionary endeavors. The reason is that they seemed to the Māori to have lost contact with their own God (see Joseph, 47). Hence some crucial older Māori ways worked to the missionaries' advantage, despite or because of the efforts of Christian missionaries and at times in subtle opposition to them. Both Protestant and Roman Catholic missionaries downplayed or flatly rejected Māori beliefs that easily found an important place in the faith of Māori Saints.¹⁸

In addition, an elite of male Māori were being taught cosmological mysteries in *whare wānanga* (a house of learning). And some *tohunga matakite*, as Rob Joseph demonstrates, had also prepared some Māori for the arrival and message of Latter-day Saint missionaries. Māori *tohunaga matakite* (seers) prepared the way and opened the door for the Saints' missionary endeavors. And, much like the Māori, Latter-day Saint missionaries did not teach that the heavens were closed to special divine revelations. Hence some Māori discovered that crucial elements of their traditional world were compatible with what Latter-day Saint missionaries brought to them.¹⁹

In 1950 I soon became aware that, while Māori were often remarkably open to divine special revelations, the *Pākehā* (and their preachers), much like those who first brought Christianity to Aotearoa, were more or less dominated by post-Enlightenment skepticism about divine things. Māori were able, however, to see affinities between elements of their own traditional world and their new Latter-day Saint faith, some of which is celebrated in the essays under review.

The Māori Latter-day Saint Narrative

In the "Preface" to her fine narrative history of the first hundred years of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in New Zealand, Marjorie Newton indicated that she realized "that as an Australian, I am vulnerable to errors of fact and interpretation in both New Zealand and American history and especially in Māori culture. I hope that one day a Māori historian will produce a scholarly history of Mormonism in New Zealand that will remedy any omission and defects in both my works. *I also hope to see additional work done with the hundreds of stories*

18 See Midgley, "Māori Latter-day Saint Faith," 57–63.

19 See Midgley, "Māori Latter-day Saint Faith," 47–48, 51–57.

of New Zealand Saints, both Māori and Pākehā, that are still waiting to be told.”²⁰

The most interesting and challenging portion of the history of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Aotearoa is the story of the Māori community of Saints. Faithful Māori Saints are, I believe, those most likely to know, understand, and appreciate the subtle elements of the changing patterns in Māori ways. They are also best able to select from the welter of Māori customs and traditions the most basic and noble features and also to figure out which are truly base and degrading. For this and other reasons I insist that faithful “Māori scholars are best situated to provide an explanation of the faith of Māori Saints.”²¹

Both the essay by Rob Joseph and the collection of essays by Selwyn Kātene demonstrate that Newton’s “hope” that Māori scholars would eventually remedy the omissions and defects in previous historical accounts of the faith of Māori Latter-day Saints is now taking place; Māori Saints are beginning to assemble what Newton has described correctly as “the hundreds of stories of New Zealand Saints, both Māori and Pākehā.”²² Newton indicates that “much of this gap is being filled by the Rangi Parker, whose dedicated work over many years in collecting and preserving stories and the photographic records of the Māori Saints and Mormon missionaries is unique and is now receiving the recognition it deserves.”²³ Rangi Parker has assembled both historical materials, including something like 40,000 Latter-day Saint missionary photographs of primarily Māori Saints, going back to the beginning of

20 Newton, *Tiki and Temple*, xiv (emphasis added). I reviewed this book favorably in the *Journal of Mormon History* 40/1 (2014): 253–56; and also engaged it in “Māori Latter-day Saint Faith,” 45–65, where I included some cautions about crucial lacuna in her otherwise fine book. See also Louis Midgley, “Comments on the History of Mormon Māori Faith,” Association of Mormon Letters, posted 26 July 2013 at http://www.forums.mormonletters.org/yaf_posts2657_Newton-Tiki-and-Temple-The-MormonMission-in-New-Zealand-18541958-reviewed-by-Louis.aspx.

21 Midgley, “Māori Latter-day Saint Faith,” 47.

22 Newton, “Preface” to her *Tiki and Temple*, xiv, which I have quoted fully above.

23 *Tiki and Temple*, xiv. For some details on the work of Rangi Parker, see Don L. Searle, “So They Will Know Their Heritage,” available at <https://www.lds.org/ensign/2011/01/so-they-will-know-their-heritage?lang=eng>; and also John L. Hart, “Māori memories,” at <http://www.ldschurchnewsarchive.com/articles/50741/Maori-memories.html>; and “Love for Past and Present Generations Motivates Mormon Historian,” <http://www.scoop.co.nz/stories/CU1302/S00238/love-for-past-and-present-generations-motivates-mormon-histo.htm>.

missionary work among the Māori; and she has been able to identify many of the places where the photographs were taken, and the names of most of those in those photographs. Māori scholars are also making efforts to preserve and enhance the memory of what often made their ancestors remarkable Latter-day Saints.

Faithful Stories; Stories of Faith

Rob Joseph has carefully uncovered the details of the proclamations of Māori *matakite* that prepared Māori in some *iwi* (tribes) for both Latter-day Saint missionaries and for the contents of their messages. And Dr. Kātene often cites Rob Joseph's essay in his "Introduction" (*Turning the Hearts*, pp. 9–21), where he describes the crucial role of Māori seers in preparing the way for the message of Latter-day Saint missionaries (see especially "Māori Prophecies" in his *Turning the Hearts*, 10–17), which is integrated with a description of the reception of Latter-day Saint missionary messages that fit rather snugly with the traditional Māori "religion," which it both supplemented and corrected.

Accurate and culturally sensitive accounts of the lives and experiences of various Māori Saints as well as assessments of their contributions to the Kingdom of God in Aotearoa, are now very much needed. What grounded and sustained the faith of Māori Saints when they were still fully in the grips of an oral culture is no longer the case. The remedy is rich, accurate, written accounts. Elsewhere I have demonstrated that there is "increased interest in recovering and preserving the crucial *memory* of what made the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints essentially Māori during much of its first century in New Zealand."²⁴

I highly recommend the fine collection of essays that Dr. Selwyn Kātene assembled and introduced. These essays were written by descendants of those he describes in the subtitle of his book as *Early Māori Leaders in the Mormon Church*. This intriguing book is, among other things, an effort to *remember* (and hence also *honor*) some of the truly noteworthy early Māori founding mothers and fathers of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in New Zealand. It is also a contribution to the history of the faith of Māori Saints from a genuinely Māori perspective. These essays are not, as is typical of other excellent accounts, primarily dependent on and derived from the opinions of Latter-day Saint missionaries and mission presidents. In addition, this is not an institutional history. Instead, these essays express the faith of

24 Midgley, "Māori Latter-day Saint Faith," 47.

Māori Latter-day Saints, and hence also manifest their personal piety. These essays give voice to earlier Māori Saints; they are also not set out in secular categories, nor are they grounded in secular assumptions, which is, unfortunately, sometimes the case with accounts written by others about the faith of Māori Saints. Instead, these essays set out *the* Latter-day Saint Māori narrative.

The “Ways of Remembrance”

Remembering the mighty acts of God on our behalf is a crucial element of the faith of all genuine Latter-day Saints. Why? On virtually every Sabbath, faithful Saints assemble to renew their covenants by offering to God their “broken hearts and contrite spirits” as a communal prayer is read asking God first to sanctify bread to “the souls of all those who partake of it; that they may eat in *remembrance* of the body of thy Son,” and then “that they are willing to *remember* him and *keep* his commandments” as they consume the emblem to indicate that they genuinely desire to have “his Spirit to be with them always” (Moroni 4:3; D&C 20:77).²⁵ This ritual memorial meal with which the Saints renew their covenants with God is also a manifestation of individual and collective turning or returning to God — that is, repentance.

Saints must desire to have the assistance of the Holy Spirit, and hence be sanctified.²⁶ For this to happen, they must also *remember* the ominous stories of previous carnal captivity and then the joyful liberation from sin as well as their own past encounters with God and his ambassadors. The larger web of such stories must also become an integral part of life histories.²⁷ Various “ways of remembrance” are stressed in the LDS scriptures,²⁸ which tell us that we must continually be stirred up by ways

25 With slightly different wording, the emblem of wine (now water) is blessed and sanctified “to the souls of all that who drink of it, that they may do it in *remembrance* of the blood of thy Son, which was shed for them; that they may witness unto thee, O God, the Eternal Father, that they do always *remember* him, that they may have his Spirit to be with them” (Moroni 5:2; D&C 20:79; emphasis added).

26 Forms of the biblical Greek word *hagios* (Holy and Holy One) are rendered in KJV English as either the verb “to sanctify” or the nouns “sanctification,” and hence also “Saint.”

27 See Midgley, “A Plea for Narrative Theology: Living In and By Stories,” *Interpreter* 8 (2014): vii–xxi.

28 See, for example, 2 Nephi 5:25; Mosiah 1:17; Mosiah 4:11; 6:3; 9:17; 13:30; Alma 4:3, 5–6, and so forth. For a detailed account of the links set forth in the Book of Mormon between remembrance and keeping the commandments as the

of *remembrance*. This is, it turns out, the laudable primary purpose of *Turning the Hearts*.

Esoteric Lore and the Māori Story

I must again call attention to the published work of the late Dr. Cleve Barlow, who was the last Māori to be initiated in the esoteric lore of the Io cult that traditionally took place in a *whare wānanga*.²⁹ Professor Barlow's most significant publication was *Tikanga Whakaaro*.³⁰ In this standard guide to important elements of Māori culture and language, he dealt with seventy important concepts. His initiation in a *wānanga* in the Hokianga area of the Northland of New Zealand, and also his being a faithful Latter-day Saint — he was a convert to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints — as well as a distinguished scholar, fit him well to grasp important links between the traditional Māori lore and the faith of Latter-day Saints.

I first met Professor Barlow at the Pioneers in the Pacific Conference, held at BYU–Hawaii on 7–11 October 1997 to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the arrival of the Saints in the Salt Lake Valley.³¹ In 1999–2000, when as Latter-day Saint missionaries, my wife and I directed the Lorne Street LDS Institute (next to the Auckland University of Technology and Auckland University), Professor Barlow described for

necessary and proper response to the covenants that the Saints make with God, see Midgley, “‘To Remember and Keep’: On the Book of Mormon as an Ancient Book,” in *The Disciple as Scholar: Essays on Scripture and the Ancient World in Honor of Richard Lloyd Anderson*, ed. Stephen D. Ricks, Donald W. Parry, and Andrew H. Hedges (Provo, UT: FARMS, 2000), 95–137.

29 For a cautious indication of what took place at a *whare wānanga* initiation, and its significance for an elite among the aristocratic social order of the Māori, see Midgley, “Māori Latter-day Saint Faith,” 57–62.

30 *Tikanga Whakaaro: Key Concepts in Māori Culture*, first published by Oxford University Press in 1991, and then reprinted in 1992, 1993, 1994 (with corrections), and again in 1996 and 1998.

31 Nearly three thousand attended this remarkable academic conference, which included one hundred sessions on the history of the Saints all over the South Pacific. The largess was such that my wife and I could not attend all of the sessions on New Zealand. I presented a brief version of an essay entitled “A Singular Reading: The Māori and the Book of Mormon,” *Mormons, Scripture, and the Ancient World: Studies in Honor of John L. Sorenson*, ed. Davis Bitton (Provo, UT: FARMS, 1998), 245–76. See also Louis Midgley, “A Māori View of the Book of Mormon,” 8/1 *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* (1999): 4–11, 77.

me some of what he had learned in his initiation in a *wānanga*,³² and also his understanding of how that fit closely his own Latter-day Saint faith.

Those Māori privileged to be initiated in a *wānanga* were made aware of the premortal existence of human beings. And of the sons of Io — the Māori high God — in the highest heaven, where the peopling of the earth was debated.³³ They learned of a war of the Gods between Tu (the Māori God of war) and also Whiro (the God of evil or Hades) against *Tane* (with his consort, the first humans on earth) and Rongo, the God of peace and prosperity, which war continues even now here below.

The oldest recorded version of what was taught in a *whare wānanga* was dictated in 1863 and 1865 to Hemi Te Whatahoro (1841–1923)³⁴ by Moihi Te Motorohunga and Nepia Pohutu, two *tohunga* of the Ngati Kahunganu — an *iwi* on the East Coast of the North Island. This took place long before any Latter-day Saints had encountered any Māori. Eventually a remarkable amateur ethnologist, S. Percy Smith (1840–1922), published the Māori text and an English translation of Whatahoro's Māori manuscripts.³⁵

Whatahoro eventually became a Latter-day Saint.³⁶ For months in 1888 he helped to revise the Māori translation of the Book of Mormon. Marjorie Newton has shown that Whatahoro eventually gave his precious manuscripts to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. James E. Lambert, then New Zealand Mission president, had a fireproof vault built in the little Latter-day Saint chapel at Scotia Place on Queens Street in Auckland to safeguard those manuscripts.³⁷

32 It was not unusual for those who had been initiated in a *whare wānanga*, since the details of that initiation were *tapu* (sacred), to agree not to reveal the details of what they had learned to those not also initiated.

33 There is a debate among different *iwi* over whether there are ten or twelve heavens, and on other details of the cosmology and cosmogony.

34 See Rwiri Smith, "Between Two Worlds: Whatahoro Jury, 1841–1923," *Turning the Hearts*, 51–77.

35 Whatahoro's manuscript was published in two volumes in the Memoirs of the Polynesian Society under the title *The Lore of the Whare-Wānanga or Teachings of the Māori College on Religion, Cosmogony, and History*. In 2011 these two volumes were recently republished by Cambridge University Press. In 1913 the first volume was published under the subtitle *Te Kauwae-Runga, or "Things Celestial."* The second volume was published in 1915, under the subtitle *Te Kauwae-Raro or "Things Terrestrial."* Whatahoro assisted Percy Smith with the translation of his Māori text into English.

36 Newton, *Tiki and Temple*, 57–59.

37 Newton, *Tiki and Temple*, 71–72.

Marjorie Newton also has shown that Whatahoro's manuscripts could not be sent to the Church Archive in Salt Lake because of the Māori Antiquities Act of 1908, and also over objections by some non-Latter-day Saint Māori.³⁸ Marjorie Newton also calls attention to a failed attempt to have an aged Whatahoro travel to Salt Lake to receive his endowment.³⁹ However, she seems unaware of the contents and hence importance of Whatahoro's manuscripts. Put bluntly, she ignores the esoteric lore of the *whare wānanga*.

It is not my intention to set out in any detail the contents of the *whare wānanga*. Māori often consider these teachings *tapu* (sacred), and those actually initiated in a *wānanga*, like Professor Barlow, felt bound by the restrictions accepted by those who underwent such instruction not to make public that into which they had been initiated. The elite initiated Māori were for a long time able to keep most *Pākehā* unaware of the existence and most of the details of what was taught in a *wānanga*. This has led some to insist that the *wānanga* initiation was fashioned by Māori after the arrival of the Europeans. Bronwyn Elsmore, in an influential book, indicates that "in the early years of the twentieth century" the entire

Io cult was open to much debate, with some scholars maintaining that it was not part of the old tradition but was post-European, being the result of Christian teachings, and others answering that the doctrine was not generally known ... because of the custom of the Māori to restrict the highest esoteric spiritual knowledge to selected initiates of the *whare wānanga*.⁴⁰

The Māori, who just a few generations earlier were a stone-age people, were actually able to keep most *Pākehā* from knowing about the Io cult. The initiates learned that their ultimate home, if faithful, was with Io in the highest heaven. Those Māori initiated into the Io cult knew of the premortal existence of the souls of human beings, of a council in the deep past of those representing human beings, and also of a war that broke out over whether to people the earth, which struggle still goes on

38 Newton, *Tiki and Temple*, 171–73.

39 Newton, *Tiki and Temple*, 172.

40 Bronwyn Elsmore, *Mana from Heaven: A Century of Māori Prophets in New Zealand* (Auckland: Reed Books, 1999), 150. Elsmore describes a host of those she calls "Māori Prophets," but other than Paora Potangaroa (pp. 246–55), essentially ignores the *matakite* who figure in Māori Latter-day Saint accounts, and also garbles Latter-day Saint Māori beliefs (see pp. 150–52; 246–55).

here below between those loyal to Io — who seek to ascend back to the highest heaven — and a demonic opposition. This does not seem to me to be a belief system fashioned by the Māori from Anglican, Methodist or Roman Catholic systematic or dogmatic theology or fashioned out of thin air after the *Pākehā* arrived in New Zealand. Those initiated into the Io cult saw in what Latter-day Saint missionaries taught a cosmology that fits with some of their own arcane traditional beliefs. And it also provides a clue to why those first endowed Māori Saints found in the Latter-day Saint temple endowment a correction and completion of their own deepest mysteries.

There is now a growing interest among Māori in the details of their traditional arcane teachings. In addition, despite the contents of these teachings being *tapu* (sacred),⁴¹ accounts of what was set out in various *wānanga* were preserved by Te Whatahoro and eventually published or, more recently, recovered.⁴² In addition, many informal *wānanga*, such as those conducted by Heriwini Jones,⁴³ then by Professor Barlow as well as others, have made traditional Māori wisdom available to interested Māori (and non-Māori) Saints.

My own experience with the Māori Saints sixty-five years ago (and also more recently) grounds my belief that those with traces of Māori ethnicity have found within The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints a genuinely safe, life-affirming place to celebrate an honorable, even heroic past as well as an appreciation for what is most noble and enriching in the Māori world while also rejecting the most debasing

41 The word *tapu* (*kapu* in Hawaiian) entered the English language as “taboo” when Captain James Cook’s crew garbled either the Tahitian word *tapu*, or the Tongan cognate *tabu*. See <https://www.vocabulary.com/dictionary/taboo>.

42 See, for example, Pei Te Hurinui Jones, *He Tuhi Mārei-kura: Ngā Kōrero a te Māori mo te Hanganga mai o te Ao Nonga Whare Wānanga o Tainui* (Hamilton, New Zealand: Aka and Associates, 2013); and also the English translation by Pei Te Hurinui Jones of the Māori version under the title *A Treasury of Sacred Writings; A Māori Account of the Creation, based on the Priestly Lore of the Tainui People* (2013).

43 Heriwini Jones is a gifted Māori convert to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, with a remarkable memory and rhetorical style. In 1999–2000, when my wife and I were in New Zealand, he conducted informal Latter-day Saint *wānanga* at Māori *marae*, and often for more than one day. These were held under the direction of Howard Hunter and Paul Mendenhall, while they were serving as Latter-day Saint mission presidents in Auckland, New Zealand. These informal *wānanga* were helpful in missionary endeavors, including both convert baptisms, reactivations, and strengthening the faith of the Saints. He has also held similar instruction sessions in many other places in Pacifica, and elsewhere.

elements. This is true for contemporary Māori. And just a glance at some of the surnames of faithful Māori Saints — for instance, such non-Māori sounding surnames as (and I am not making this up) Jones, Smith, Barlow, Lambert, Midgley, Elkington, Going, and so forth — indicates that Māori ethnicity is now something chosen, exactly as is one's faith (or unfaith) in God. The reason is that we all may become genuine Saints by both *remembering* the mighty acts of God on our behalf and then *keeping* our covenants with him, which the essay by Rob Joseph and the essays assembled by Selwyn Kātene both demonstrate and promote.

Louis Midgley (PhD, Brown University) is an emeritus professor of political science at Brigham Young University, where he taught the history of political philosophy, which includes efforts of Christian churchmen and theologians to identify, explain, understand and cope with the evils in this world. Dr. Midgley has therefore had an abiding interest in both dogmatic and systematic theology, and the alternatives to both. His doctoral dissertation was on the religious socialist political ideology of Paul Tillich, a German American Protestant theologian most famous for his systematic theology which is a radical elaboration of classical theism. Dr. Midgley's encounter with the writings of Leo Strauss, an influential Jewish philosopher/intellectual historian, drew his attention to the radical challenge posed by what is often called modernity to both the wisdom of Jerusalem, which is grounded on divine revelation, and also the contrasting, competing wisdom of Athens, which was fashioned by unaided human reason. Dr. Midgley has an interest in the ways in which communities of faith have responded to the challenges posed by modernity to faith in God grounded on divine special revelation.

