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## **The Māori Latter-day Saint Historical Narrative: Additions and Amendments**

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# THE MĀORI LATTER-DAY SAINT HISTORICAL NARRATIVE: ADDITIONS AND AMENDMENTS

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Louis Midgley

**Abstract:** *Selwyn Kātene has again assembled twelve essays written by the descendants of famous Māori Latter-day Saints. This volume flows from a revival of interest in the ground and content of the faith of early Māori Saints that began in the late 1990s. In various ways the essays in this volume add to and amend what has previously been known about what began unexpectedly on Christmas Day in 1882, when the first group of Māori joined the Church of Jesus Christ. Not only did the Māori have Seers who opened the way, some of those elite Māori men, who had been initiated into Māori esoteric knowledge of divine things, also found that their temple endowment fit rather snugly with their previous initiation ceremonies. Unlike other Christian missionaries, Latter-day Saint missionaries did not see the Māori as primitive heathens, and Māori saw in the restored gospel crucial elements of their own deeper understanding of divine things. Latter-day Saint missionaries were seeking to liberate Māori from the soul-destroying vices brought to them or enhanced by British colonization, while relishing the most noble elements in the Māori world.*

Review of Selwyn Kātene, ed., *By Their Fruits You Will Know Them: Early Maori Leaders in the Mormon Church*, vol. 2 (Wellington, New Zealand: Steele Roberts Publishers, 2017). 295 pp. N.Z. \$39.99 (hardback).

**L**ike *Turning the Hearts*,<sup>1</sup> which was the first volume in this series, *By Their Fruits* consists of twelve essays written by the descendants of early Māori Latter-day Saints who set out what can now be known

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1. Selwyn Kātene, ed., *Turning the Hearts of the Children: Early Mormon Leaders in the Mormon Church* (Wellington, NZ: Steele Roberts, 2014). See Louis Midgley, “Remembering and Honoring Māori Latter-day Saints,” *Interpreter*:

about each on their own journey of faith. There is a fine “Foreword” to this anthology by Whatarangi Winiata, a distinguished Anglican<sup>2</sup> scholar. He begins by acknowledging that

In 1881 the prophet Paora Potangaroa told a gathering at Te Ore Ore marae in the Wairarapa that a new and great power would come from the direction of the rising sun. Later that year, the first Mormon missionaries arrived from the United States of America in the east; within two years, hundreds of Maori in the region were converted to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Within ten years, one in twelve Maori, or roughly 3000, belonged to the Mormon Church. Five years later approximately 4000 Maori had committed themselves to the Book of Mormon. (p. 7.)

He then explains that, beginning in 1882, Latter-day Saint missionaries

moved humbly through [Māori] communities, conversing in te reo Maori with little concern for land or colonization but with an intense interest in whakapapa [genealogy], a concept fundamental to all Maori. *Rather than judging Maori as faithless heathens*, which happened in some quarters, this new church welcomed them as whanaunga (relatives) with whakapapa to one of the twelve tribes of Israel. (p. 7, emphasis added)

These insightful remarks set the stage for the accounts of the following Māori Saints, three of whom are women, whose identity is shown by an asterisk (\*):

Henare Potae, 1828–1895 (pp. 21–37).

Rangikaweā Hoani Puriri, 1840–1942 (pp. 38–58).

Pere Wihongi, 1848–1928 (pp. 59–74).

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*A Journal of Mormon Scripture* 21 (2016): 275–90, especially at 277–79, for comments on the essays assembled in the first volume in this series.

2. It seems that most of the Māori who initially became Latter-day Saints were previously Anglicans. Hence, if one consults the useful index to *By Their Fruits* (pp. 284–95), one will find for “Anglicans, see Church of England” (p. 285), followed by pages 7, 9, 12–13, 15, 22, 27, 29, 33–34, 62, 66, 68, 125, 127, 130–131, 138, 151–152, 154, 170, 187, 210, 265, 275; and for the Church Missionary Society (CMS), which was the initial Anglican evangelical missionary endeavor in New Zealand (and elsewhere), pages 12, 22, 25–26, 61, 65, and 279. See also Wikipedia, s.v. “Anglicanism,” last modified March 26, 2019, 21:19, <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anglicanism>.

Pepene Eketone, 1848–1928 (pp. 75–97).

\*Haana Cootes Wineera, 1858–1933 (pp. 98–122).

\*Alice Matawai Mataira, 1861–1946 (pp. 123–42).

Henare Hamon, 1873–1961 (pp. 143–67).

Hemi Whautere Witehira, 1881–1965 (pp. 168–85).

\*Mereana Hall Bean, 1888–1957 (pp. 186–202).

Pere Ihimaera Smiler, 1888/89–1972 (pp. 203–20).

Whakahe Tui Matenga, 1903–1976 (pp. 221–38).

Sydney Hutana Crawford, 1909–1991 (pp. 239–56).

Selwyn Kātene again provides an “Introduction” (pp. 11–20), and a “Conclusion” (pp. 257–69). In his “Conclusion” (pp. 261–68), he calls attention to six additional important early Māori Latter-day Saints:

(1) Roma Hoera Ruruku, whose daughter, Wetekia Ruruku Elkington, was a *matakite* (seer) who also played a part in bringing together the South Island Ngati Koata *iwi* (tribe) and the Ngati Toa *iwi* that had earlier migrated to Porirua, which is just north of Wellington, from Kawhia, which is much farther north on the west coast of the North Island (pp. 261–62).

(2) Manihera Te Rangiakaiwaho, who in 1883 responded to what he heard and saw from Elders Alma Greenwood and Ira Hinckley. He found that the missionaries and their message matched the prophetic proclamation of the Paora Potangaroa in 1881. In August 1883 he became a faithful branch president (pp. 262–63).

(3) Piripi Te Maari became a Latter-day Saint on 2 June 1887, and was one of those, with Te Whatahoro, who helped translate the Book of Mormon into Māori (pp. 263–65). Piripi benefitted considerably from the efforts of the Christian Missionary Society (CMS),<sup>3</sup> since he had been trained in a school operated by William Williams (1800–1878).<sup>4</sup>

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3. The Christian Missionary Society (CMS) — the missionary endeavor of the evangelical faction of the Anglican Church — made efforts to civilize the indigenous heathen before trying to convert them to their version of Christianity. Methodists had their own Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society, and both Anglicans and Methodists established mission stations in New Zealand, but avoided direct competition for converts.

4. William’s brother, Henry Williams, was the leader of the Church Missionary Society (CMS) mission in New Zealand that followed Samuel Marsden’s first

(4) Eriata Nopera, who was among those who in 1881 had gathered at the Te Ore Ore *marae*, and who therefore witnessed Paora Potangaroa dictate his prophecy concerning the coming of a new and true version of the Christian faith. In 1920, Nopera and his wife were among those who went to Laie, Oahu, Hawaii, for their temple endowments, when that temple was dedicated. He was also among a small group of Māori who also traveled to Salt Lake City, where they were greeted by President Heber J. Grant. He was the second Māori to be ordained a high priest (pp. 265–66).

(5) Maihi Parone Kawiti (1807–1889), who was born in 1807 at Waiomio, which is just south of Kawa Kawa in the Northland, and who was a son of the paramount chief of the Ngati Hine *hapu* (subtribe). He became a Latter-day Saint on 18 October 1888, when he was 81, and passed away on 21 May 1889 from typhoid (pp. 266–68).

(6) Kātene also quotes at length a story told by Elder Robert L. Simpson in 1975 about Hirini Taiwhanga Heremaia (p. 286), who was a lively and colorful Māori Latter-day Saint in 1950 when I was serving as a missionary in the Bay of Islands.

### **Māori *Matakite* and Faithful Māori**

*By Their Fruits* has an Appendix (pp. 270–74) which begins with Hirini Whaanga's famous account of how he and his people had been prepared in 1830 by Arama Toiroa, a famous Māori *matakite* (seer), for the Latter-day Saint missionaries and their message (pp. 270–71). My own preference is to see Arama Toiroa as the most important of the Māori *matakite* whose declarations led Māori to become faithful Saints. However, Paora Potangaroa (d. 1882) is also seen as the key Māori “prophet” who opened the door for both Latter-day Saint missionaries and their message.

In March of 1881, at a huge *hui* (conference) at Te Ore Ore *marae*, which is just outside of Masterton in the Wairarapa, Paora Potangaroa responded to the question of which Christian denomination the Ngati Kahunganu *iwi* (tribe) should join. They were faced with several sectarian alternatives, which then included the Anglican, Methodist, and Roman Catholic versions of Christian faith. After a period of

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attempts to teach Christianity to the Māori in 1814. Henry Williams, with his brother, eventually made the moves that led to the baptism of many Māori by teaching them to read the Bible in the *te reo* (Māori language).

prayer, he dictated to a scribe *He Kawenata* (the Covenant).<sup>5</sup> In 1883, after Potangaroa had passed away in 1882, Latter-day Saint missionaries visited the Wairarapa. They and their message were seen by many Māori as the authorized messengers bringing them the authentic Christian faith as set out in the Covenant.<sup>6</sup>

### Critics — and a Response

Māori *matakite* (seers) opened the door for our missionaries, but their message has been explained away, minimized, or ignored by authors, some of whom have never been Latter-day Saints, and also by some who still are but for various reasons decline to believe that such things actually happen. These critics tend to focus on Paora Potangaroa's Covenant. They point out that the followers of Tahupotiki Wiremu Ratana (1873–1939), a famous political activist and faith healer, who launched his own church on 15 July 1925, claim that Ratana and his church were identified in Potangaroa's prophecy. In 1928, Ratana sought to retrieve the copy of the famous Covenant that had been dictated to a scribe and then placed in a cement monument located in the carved house at the *marae* in Te Ore Ore. It had been destroyed by humidity.<sup>7</sup> Without the document, Ratana's followers had only stories about its contents.

In 1944, a photograph of the Covenant was recovered. The story of its recovery involves Eriata Nopera (pp. 265–66). As a young boy he was present at the *hui* (gathering) at the Te Ore Ore *marae* when Potangaroa dictated the Covenant to a scribe. Nopera and Matthew Cowley were at a meeting of Latter-day Saints in Masterton in 1944 when a previously unknown photograph of the presumably lost document was given to Nopera, who presented it to Elder Cowley, who published an account of its recovery and crucial contents. Marjorie Newton has told this story reasonably well.<sup>8</sup> However, she has also stressed that “the followers of the

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5. Henceforth I will use the English word *Covenant* (as a proper noun) instead of the Māori word *Kawenata*.

6. See Matthew Cowley, “Maori Chief Predicts Coming of L.D.S. Missionaries,” *Improvement Era* 53, no. 9 (September 1950): 696–98, 754–56; and also Stewart Meha, “A Prophetic Utterance of Paora Potanagaroa,” *Te Karere* 43/10 (1948): 298–99. (Note: *Te Karere* is Māori for “the messenger.” This was a monthly publication, beginning in 1907 and ending in 1960, of the New Zealand Mission of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.)

7. Some preserved relics are now located at the Ratana Pa — the headquarters of the Ratana church — which is a community located near Whanganui.

8. Marjorie Newton, *Tiki and Temple: The Mormon Mission in New Zealand, 1854–1958* (Salt Lake City: Greg Kofford Books, 2012), 42.

Māori prophet Ratana believe that Te Potangaroa's prophecy foretold the coming of the Ratana church in the 1920s.<sup>9</sup>

To support her argument, Newton cites but does not quote a biographical sketch of Paora Potangaroa. The crucial language reads as follows:

Various interpretations were made: it was believed to herald the arrival of the gospel of Jesus Christ, as interpreted by the Mormons; and it was believed that missionaries would come from the east and set in place a new church. In 1928, when the religious leader T. W. Ratana visited Te Ore Ore at the request of the people, he removed the stone set up by Paora inside Nga Tau e Waru [the *wharehau* — carved house], repositioning it outside. *The move silenced the medium.*<sup>10</sup> The coming of the Ratana faith is now widely believed to be the fulfillment of Paora's prophecy.<sup>11</sup>

Please notice that there is no mention in this account that Latter-day Saint missionaries and their messages were seen in 1883 by those who were directly familiar with Potangaroa's prophecy as the authorized messengers sent by God with the correct version of Christian faith. There is no mention that Potangaroa's Covenant had been dictated to a scribe and placed in a concrete monument, and that the crucial document was destroyed by humidity. Nor is there mention of the recovery of a photograph of the Covenant.

The fact is that in 1883, Latter-day Saint missionaries, who were not even aware that there were *matakite*, nor that there was a Paora Potangaroa, discovered that Māori in the Wairarapa saw them and their message as having been predicted by Potangaroa. It was the followers of Wiremu Ratana, in the 1920s, who claimed that he fulfilled Potangaroa's Covenant. This was, however, more than four decades after that famous prophecy was dictated in 1881.

However, there is more. In *Mormon and Maori*, Marjorie Newton indicates that "in New Zealand, where, Mormons believe, indigenous prophets foretold the coming of a new religion, several such prophecies are celebrated by Mormons."<sup>12</sup> She then adds:

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9. Ibid., 43.

10. I have no idea what this remark means. Is the silenced "medium" Potangaroa?

11. Angela Ballara and Keith Cairns, "Te Potangaroa, Paora," *Dictionary of New Zealand Biography* (1990); see also *Te Ara — the Encyclopedia of New Zealand*, s.v. "Te Potangaroa, Paora," accessed February 21, 2019, <https://teara.govt.nz/en/biographies/1t57/te-potangaroa-paora>. Angela Ballara is a highly respected Māori scholar.

12. Marjorie Newton, *Mormon and Maori* (Salt Lake City: Greg Kofford Books, 2014), 2.



Some Maori religions, such as Ringatu and Ratana, have likewise been seen as the fulfillment of these prophecies. Particularly is this true of the prophecy most frequently quoted by Mormons, that of Paora Potangaroa, made at Te Ore Ore, near Masterton in the Wairarapa Valley, in 1881, one version of which reads: “There is a religious denomination coming for us; perhaps it will come from the sea, perhaps it will emerge here.”<sup>13</sup>

When Wiremu Ratana went to Te Ore Ore in 1928 to retrieve the document, he discovered that humidity had destroyed it. He then moved the monument in which it had been placed outside of the building and took with him some relics that had survived. Marjorie Newton seems to indicate that there are competing “translations” of the Covenant that cast doubt about the Māori Latter-day Saint understanding of the Covenant.<sup>14</sup> Matthew Cowley possessed the photograph of the previously lost Covenant dictated by Potangaroa and written down by Ranginui Kingi on 16 March 1881.<sup>15</sup> So what we have is competing interpretations of the famous Covenant, but not different translations.

In *Mormon and Maori*, Newton cites Bronwyn Elsmore’s opinions found in her *Mana from Heaven* on Potangaroa’s prophecy.<sup>16</sup> Elsmore quotes what she calls a “translation” of Potangaroa’s Covenant made by James Rimene (1931–2017), who was a prominent Te Ore Ore *kaumātua* (elder).<sup>17</sup> Elsmore also mentions conversations she had with Rimene and also with both Rimene and Margaret Haeata, his wife, both of whom were

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13. Ibid.

14. Marjorie Newton cites Bronwyn Elsmore, *Mana from Heaven: A Century of Maori Prophets in New Zealand*, ed. Peter Dowling, rev. ed. (1985; repr., Auckland, NZ: Reed Books, 1999). Bronwyn Elsmore has a PhD from Victoria University of Wellington and was a senior lecturer at Massey University, Palmerston North, for sixteen years. However, her real passion is writing fiction and plays. See “Elsmore, Bronwyn,” New Zealand Book Council, accessed February 21, 2019, <https://www.bookcouncil.org.nz/writer/elsmore-bronwyn/>.

15. A photographer in Masterton had heard about the Covenant and was given permission to photograph it, and that photo later came into the possession of a Māori Saint who gave it to Nopera at a conference held in 1944 in Masterton. It was then Nopera’s *koha* (gift) to Elder Cowley.

16. Newton, *Mormon and Maori*, 2; Elsmore, *Mana from Heaven*, 246–55.

17. James Rimene was a *kaumātua* closely associated with the famous *marae* at Te Ore Ore. In 2007, during the Queen’s Birthday, James Rimene was given the New Zealand Order of Merit Award for his work with at-risk Māori youth. See the *Wairarapa Mailer*, issue ten, June 2008. Rimini passed away on December 1, 2017. See Beckie Wilson, “Revered *kaumātua* James Rimene dies,” *Wairarapa Times-Age*, December 5, 2017, <https://times-age.co.nz/revered-kaumatua-james-rimene-dies/>.

devout followers of Ratana.<sup>18</sup> Drawing from Elsmore, Newton claims that “Mormon accounts usually give a slightly different ‘translation’ of the Potangaroa’s famous Covenant.”<sup>19</sup> But a translation of what? The only copy of the Covenant is the photograph that Eriata Nopera gave to Matthew Cowley in 1944. What text was James Rimene “translating?” This seems to me to be a matter of different and competing interpretations.

Elsmore’s informants on Potangaroa’s Covenant were James and Margaret Haeata Rimene.<sup>20</sup> In 1985 they provided her with the Ratana understanding<sup>21</sup> fashioned more than four decades after Potangaroa dictated his “Covenant.” Clearly, Ratana’s followers see in Potangaroa’s Covenant a prophecy of him and his church. Then Marjorie Newton focused on a phrase from Elsmore’s comments on Potangaroa’s Covenant when she wrote *Mormon and Maori*, in which she brushes aside these prophecies as merely Māori/Mormon wishful thinking.<sup>22</sup> Beginning in 1950, I sought to understand the faith of Māori Latter-day Saints, as well as that of Anglican and Ratana Māori. They were all then disarmingly honest; they sometimes described themselves merely as Beer Drinkers. Nearly seven decades later my own affection for the ways of Māori Saints has not abated. The truly remarkable stories of how God prepared some

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18. Elsmore, in her chapter “The Prophet Paora Potangaroa” (*Mana from Heaven*, 246–55), both cites and quotes “‘The Prophecies of Paora Potangaroa,’ translation by Jim Rimene, unpublished TS,” ten times (see p. 255n4, n10 [twice], n11, n13, n14, n20, n24, n25, n26), as well as an interview with Jim Rimene on January 12, 1985 (see p. 255n10) and with Jim and Margaret Haeata Rimene on February 13, 1985 (see p. 255n10, 17, 18). Neither the “translations” nor the interviews are currently available for public inspection.

19. Newton, *Mormon and Maori*, 2.

20. Elsmore, *Mana from Heaven*, 255n10. See the description of Margaret Haeata, now James Rimene’s wife, who had a vision in 1946 in which she learned how to fashion a replica of a flag that Potangaroa once flew. “It is flown only on exceptional occasions,” and “witnesses who have seen it flying say that they have seen it fluttering even if there is no breath of wind.”

21. James Rimene was aware of how Māori familiar with Potangaroa’s prophecy were immediately attracted to the Latter-day Saint missionaries and message. For a solid indication of this see #6 of “3.1 Statement of Evidence of James Rimene,” Rangitane Tu Mai Ra Trust, <https://tumaira.iwi.nz/file/3-1-statement-of-evidence-of-james-rimene/>.

22. For a partial assessment of Newton’s *Mormon and Maori* (and her PhD thesis), see Midgley, “Marjorie Newton’s Account of the Faith of Māori Saints: A Critical Appraisal,” *Interpreter: A Journal of Latter-day Saint Scholarship and Faith* 30 (2018): 179–206.

of them for the Church of Jesus Christ must be told as honestly and fully as possible.

### The Io Cult and Initiation in a *Whare Wānanga*

In her introduction to her remarks about Potangaroa,<sup>23</sup> Elsmore also explains the rise of “the King movement” among the Māori,<sup>24</sup> which was an effort to unite all the Māori tribes under a monarchy. She links this movement to the idea that there were

meetings of tohunga of a number of tribes being held for the purpose of reconciling various accounts of ancient mythology into an acceptable common version. As a result of this, knowledge of a traditional cosmology headed by a supreme god called Io was spread. This supreme figure, described by terms such as Io-matua, Io-roa, and many more, was believed to be the eternal, omnipotent, uncreated, originator of all.<sup>25</sup>

Elsmore then points out that “this teaching was open to much debate, with some scholars maintaining that the belief was not part of the old tradition, but was post-European, being a 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 wananga.”<sup>26</sup> She does not directly indicate where she might stand on this crucial issue. Instead, she merely indicates that in the 1860s “the doctrine of Io had the effect

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23. Elsmore, *Mana from Heaven*, 141-67. This is the crucial introduction to the major portion of her book. Her first period is “I. 1830-50: ‘The Early Reactions’” (1-79); then “II. The 1850s ‘The Decade of the Healers’” (79-139); then “III. 1860-1900: ‘The Prophetic Period’” (141-316); then “IV. 1900-1920: ‘The Maori Christian Churches’” (319-48), which ends with her account of “The Ratana Church” (337-46), which are followed by two brief chapters in “V. Conclusion” (349-58).

24. For Elsmore’s explanation of the King Movement, see “The King Movement and the Tariao Response,” in *Mana from Heaven*, 233-43.

25. Elsmore, *Mana from Heaven*, 150. See *Maori Dictionary*, s.v. “Io,” accessed February 21, 2019, <https://maoridictionary.co.nz/search?idiom=&phrase=&proverb=&loan=&histLoanWords=&keywords=Io>. Io “may be a response to Christianity,” but the fact that Io “occurs in a number of traditions from the Polynesian Islands, including Hawai’i, the Society Islands and the Cook Islands,” and that this high God being known also in Eastern Polynesia, “suggests a more ancient tradition.” Io very often has what seems to me to be attributes associated with the name. Hence *Io te Mātua* means “Io the father (or parent),” which is the primary of more than half a dozen attributes of Io known in New Zealand. This is also true in the Cook Islands.

26. Elsmore, *Mana from Heaven*, 150.

of reestablishing the validity and value of the traditional beliefs of the Māori, since Christian missionaries had insisted that their traditional beliefs, as she puts it, “were without truth or substance.”<sup>27</sup>

In addition, especially the Anglican clergy, despite the fact that they had made the Bible and their version of its teachings available to the Māori, were no longer trusted. With “the ground so well prepared,” Elsmore argues, some Māori found the message of Latter-day Saint missionaries attractive. And hence the “initial campaign” of the Latter-day Saint missionaries “between 1880 and 1900 ensured that the Mormon alternative was established for some years at least.”<sup>28</sup> Her final assessment is that what Latter-day Saint missionaries brought to the Māori “was essentially another foreign message which also did not answer the needs of the Maori.”<sup>29</sup> She does not explain what those needs might have been, other than having their own way of protesting against the *Pakeha* incursion into Aotearoa/New Zealand. Hence the last half of her book is an account of various political/religious movements whose rhetoric was often cast in biblical metaphors as they sought to deal with the theft of land often backed by the Crown, which was often supported by the Anglican clergy.

### **Additional Details in *By Their Fruits***

I have previously mentioned my own fondness for the prophecy made in 1830 by Arama Toiroa, which differs in detail from that of Paora Potangaroa. It also led to many Māori who then lived far to the north of where Potangaroa’s Covenant was set down in writing to join the Church (see pp. 270–71 for details). In an appendix to *By Their Fruits*, entitled “The Smith whanau and the LDS (Mormon) Church” (pp. 270–74), there is a description of how the Whaanga/Smith extended family were drawn to the Church of Jesus Christ. Hyran Smith, who is unfortunately not identified, describes Hirini and Mere Whaanga’s epic journey to Utah in 1894, where they were endowed in the Salt Lake Temple. They took with them some of their *whānau* (extended family), including Walter Smith, Mere’s nephew, who “would later become the foremost LDS church musician in New Zealand” (p. 272). What then follows is an interesting account of the Smith *whānau*.

The twelve biographies that constitute the body of *By Their Fruits* are told from currently available sources; they are also often told with

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27. Ibid.

28. Ibid., 151.

29. Ibid.

much gritty detail and sometimes by those who are not Latter-day Saints. This is “warts and all” history, and there is no indication of an effort to tidy things up. There is, however, a serious effort to situate these individual Māori Saints in the historical context. They are not, however, told from a “Mormon studies perspective,” which is very often modeled on a secular “religious studies” ideology. Instead, they are told from within the categories of the Māori world and also the faith of Māori Saints. This is made evident, for example, by many references to the role played by Māori *matakite* (seers) in the first conversions of Māori. There are numerous references to Arama Toiroa (see pp. 12, 39, 222, 270–71) and to Paora Potangaroa (see pp. 6–7, 12, 19, 169, 182, 222–23, 263, 265). Among others, it was these two Māori seers who had authentic divine, special revelations, first in 1830 and then in 1881, that opened the door for Latter-day Saint missionaries and their message.<sup>30</sup>

### Light Shining Out of Darkness

Given the very limited resources, both human and otherwise, then available to the Church of Jesus Christ, the Latter-day Saint missionary endeavor among the Māori depended upon those first often dedicated and stalwart Anglican, Methodist, and Roman Catholic missionaries who had earnestly sought to bring their versions of Christian faith to the Māori 68 years before the first Māori became Latter-day Saints. In addition, those first CMS missionaries to reach New Zealand simply could not avoid “judging the Maori as faithless heathens,” given the dogmatic theology in which they had been indoctrinated, and not merely “in some quarters,” as Whatarangi Winiata has it (see p. 7).<sup>31</sup>

However, this must be contrasted with Latter-day Saint missionaries who did not see the Māori as savages in need of being civilized. In addition, those same Latter-day Saint missionaries saw nothing incongruous when they suddenly discovered that Māori had genuine seers. Instead, they rejoiced to discover that, to gloss the words that begin the famous poem by William Cowper (1731–1800), entitled “Light Shining out of Darkness,” that God had moved in an unexpected and even mysterious way to perform

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30. There were still other Māori *matakite* whose proclamations helped other Māori become Latter-day Saints. For some of these, see Robert Joseph, “Intercultural Exchange, Matakite Maori and the Mormon Church,” in *Mana Maori and Christianity*, ed. Hugh Morrison, et al. (Wellington, NZ: Huia, 2012), 43–72.

31. See Midgley, “Māori Latter-day Saint Faith: Some Preliminary Remarks,” *Interpreter: A Journal of Mormon Scripture* 8 (2014): 49–50.

his wonders among some Māori in Aotearoa/New Zealand.<sup>32</sup> I have argued that what we see with those Māori *matakite* opening the door for our missionaries is a providential momentary merging of two authentic prophetic traditions.<sup>33</sup> This seems to me to have been made evident in several essays in *By Their Fruits*, and especially in Wallace Wihongi's essay on his own beloved ancestor (see pp. 59–74).

### Initiation in *Whare Wānanga* and Māori Latter-day Saints

I first met Dr. Cleve Barlow at the huge Pioneers in the Pacific Conference that was held at BYU-Hawaii on 7–11 October 1997. In 1999–2000 I had long conversations with him. He was then one of the last three Māori to have actually been initiated in a *whare wānanga* (house of learning). He felt free to discuss details of his intense *wānanga* training with me because we had both been endowed in a Latter-day Saint temple.<sup>34</sup> He insisted that the version of the *whare wānanga* initiation published many years ago under the title *Lore of the Whare Wananga*, by S. Percy Smith, from manuscripts provided by Hemi Te Whatahoro Jury,<sup>35</sup> was garbled, perhaps intentionally.

Cleve Barlow's initiation took place in the Hokianga region of the Northland when he was young. He told me that the Māori Anglican Priest who instructed him in that *wānanga* saw nothing in his Anglican faith that resembled the instructions he provided in that *wānanga*. I wonder if some elite Māori men could have been trained in a *wānanga*, and become or been Anglicans or Methodists soon after those first Christian missionaries arrived in the Bay of Islands, without those missionaries being aware of those esoteric teachings, since those initiated took an oath not to reveal what they had learned in a *wānanga*. In addition, could some of those now Anglican and Methodist Māori who had been initiated in a *wānanga* also continue living in their own Māori world?

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32. John Newton and William Cowper, "Light Shining Out of Darkness," in *Olney Hymns in Three Books*, 5th ed. (London: J. Buckland and J. Johnson, 1788), 3: 255. "God moves in a mysterious way, his wonders to perform" is the first line.

33. See Midgley, "Maori Latter-day Saint Faith," 48–49.

34. Very similar *tapu* restrictions apply to both and for similar reasons. Dr. Barlow agonized over whether he should publish the written account he had made of the instructions he had received in that *wānanga*.

35. Te Whatahoro's manuscript, or parts of it, was published in 1913 in two volumes in the *Memoirs of the Polynesian Society* under the title *The Lore of the Whare-Wananga or Teachings of the Maori College on Religion, Cosmogony, and History*. In 2011 these two volumes were republished by Cambridge University Press. The first volume is the crucial text.

There are hints that this is the case. According to Bronwyn Elsmore, Aperahama Taoni, who “was taught at the Wesleyan mission at Hokianga ... apparently experienced an instance of religious inspiration or revelation in September 1834” that involved “the Messiah, the Son of God.”<sup>36</sup> This claim both confused and troubled the Wesleyan clergy. However, for many years he was “a firm supporter of the Wesleyan Church.” He was, she also claims, “an initiate of the *whare wananga*.” In 1856, Taonui, according to Elsmore, even “agreed to record his sacred knowledge” for John White, a government interpreter, on condition that it not be shown to the Māori. He later opened a *whare wānanga* among the Ngāti Whatua, the traditional enemies of his own *iwi*.<sup>37</sup>

Some of those early Māori Saints who were endowed in either the Salt Lake Temple, or later in the temple in Laie, had been initiated in a *whare wānanga*. And much later, Cleve Barlow, after having been trained in a *wānanga*, joined the Church of Jesus Christ and became a faithful Latter-day Saint. He found in both the Church of Jesus Christ, and especially in the Latter-day Saint temple endowment, much that matched, as well as deepened, his own understanding of Māori *tikanga* (the correct or proper way of being Māori), as well as his own striving to be a genuine Latter-day Saint. There are reasons to believe that this was also true with many of those first Latter-day Saint Māori men who had also been initiated in a *whare wānanga* and who later saw a congruence between their own Māori world and their temple endowment. *By Their Fruits* contains several appropriately cautious references to the esoteric instruction that certain elite Māori underwent in *whare wānanga* (see pp. 15, 42, 61, 168, 170, 174, 257, 259).

The deepest Māori and Latter-day Saint understandings of both divine and human things are remarkably consonant, while sectarian Christian dogma clashes especially with the esoteric lore at the heart of the Māori world. I simply cannot explain how the essentially *tapu* (sacred) initiation that elite Māori men underwent turned out to be consonant with their own subsequent Latter-day Saint temple endowment. However, it seems clear that those first endowed Māori were thereby made powerful disciples of Jesus Christ and also very able teachers and preachers when they returned to New Zealand. It would be a mistake to overlook the role played by elite Māori who had been initiated in a *whare wānanga* in efforts to understand the grounds and contents of the faith of early Māori Saints. This initiation seems to me to have yielded a more

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36. Elsmore, *Mana from Heaven*, 32.

37. *Ibid.*, 35.

nuanced and clear understanding of the gospel of Jesus Christ for Māori Latter-day Saints.<sup>38</sup> This was certainly true of Hirini and Mere Whaanga, and it can be seen in Hirini Whaanga's impact on the faith of Wihongi *whānau* (see pp. 65–66).

The problem was getting those Māori who were attracted to the faith brought to them by Latter-day Saint missionaries to jettison their dependence on vices brought to them by English colonizers. Those who had been initiated in a *whare wānanga* clearly saw the teaching of Latter-day Saint missionaries in the light of their own Māori understanding of divine things. This often grounded their longing for the necessary moral and spiritual discipline needed to eventually return to the highest heaven. All of this is an important part of the Māori Latter-day Saint historical narrative. Now, of course, greater challenges threaten the Māori world. Meeting these challenges can, I believe, be aided by remembering the first staunch Māori Latter-day Saint disciples of Jesus Christ.

However, this contrasts with the kind of Christian faith taught to the Māori by Anglicans, Methodists, or Roman Catholics, which did not seem to either Māori or their Christian teachers to have anything in common with the older, authentic Māori understanding of divine things. Nor did the Māori tend to see elements of their own esoteric lore in versions of Christian faith to which they were first introduced by Anglican missionaries beginning in 1814 by Samuel Marsden.

### **The Impact of the Bible on the Māori**

Those first Anglican missionaries eventually made portions of the Bible available to the Māori, who could then read of divine revelations, visions and dreams, theophany, and so forth. Their Christian teachers restricted these to the Bible, and were alarmed when some Māori who had become Christian began to receive their own manifestations from God. Those first Anglican and Methodist missionaries insisted on *sola scriptura* (Bible alone) and hence were also radical cessionists — that is, all real, divine, special revelations had ceased with the death of the Apostles. Māori saw this as strange, while what little those CMS missionaries understood of the Māori understanding of human and divine things seemed to them to be primitive, crude superstition.

Some Māori then began to see those who had brought them Christianity as less than fully committed to what they found when they began to read the Bible in Māori, which those dedicated CMS

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38. I have previously drawn attention to the *whare wānanga*. See Midgley, "Māori Latter-day Saint Faith," 55–65.



missionaries had made possible. Though I have criticized Bronwyn Elsmore's chapter on Paora Potangaroa<sup>39</sup> and find her comments on the faith of Latter-day Saints deeply flawed,<sup>40</sup> she properly stresses the crucial role of CMS missionaries in making possible both remarkable Māori literacy and also making the Bible available in *te reo*.

The English struggled with written Māori. For example, very simple place names like *Kerikeri* might be written as *Kitty Kitty*, *Keddi Keddi*, or even *Kiddee Kiddee*. Teaching Māori to read their own language forced those first CMS missionaries to find a way of fixing the orthography of written Māori before they could begin to publish portions of the Bible in *te reo*.

To do this properly, Thomas Kendall (1778–1832), a CMS missionary, traveled to England with Hongi Hika (1772–1828), the famous Nga Puhi paramount chief, to consult with Samuel Lee (1773–1852), a linguist who was a professor of Arabic at Cambridge University. Lee sorted the Māori orthography, which has subsequently remained the same, except for the conventions on long vowels. Soon portions of the Bible were available in Māori. William Williams (1800–1887), also a CMS missionary, quickly became fluent in *te reo*. He was able to fashion a grammar and, in 1844, published *A Dictionary of the Maori Language*.<sup>41</sup> Those endeavors made it possible for Māori to read the Bible in their own language. And soon, most Māori were Christians. For the Latter-day Saint missionary endeavors that began in the late 1880s, this was necessary and, I believe, providential.

I began my own missionary endeavors in August 1950 in the Whangarei area, and especially in the wonderful Bay of Islands, where the Bible reading/Bible translation began. I did not realize that the Williams Memorial Church on Marsden Road in Paihia was the fourth building on that plot of land. However, the wooden Christ Church in Russell is the oldest functioning church in New Zealand. In 1950, the Māori Saints in Paihia met in the famous Waitangi Treaty House, since Peter Heperi, the branch president, was then in charge of the Treaty grounds. That entire complex has now become a major tourist attraction. I had a look at Russell, which was in 1950 a quaint, quiet little town. But it was once known as Kororareka, when it was the “hell hole of the Pacific,” with grog shops, prostitution, gambling, and violence. All of these vices, and more, were soon, unfortunately, to be introduced to the Māori.

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39. Elsmore, *Mana from Heaven*, 246-55.

40. *Ibid.*, 150-52.

41. Seven editions of *A Dictionary of the Maori Language* have been issued. My own copy of the 1975 edition was a gift from dear Māori friends. There is now a 1985 softbound printing.

Just north of Russell is Maiki Hill, with its famous flagstaff. This was where Hone Heke began the first Māori war with the Crown by cutting down the flagstaff to show his opposition to the British claim that Waitangi Treaty, which had been sort of signed on 6 February 1840, led the British to think it made the Māori subjects of the British monarchy. The first time he did this was on 11 March 1844. I also had a look at most of the places where that war, which ended on 11 January 1845, was fought. I heard the stories of those dreadful battles, and also had a look at where most of them took place. Māori who were Christians fought on both sides.<sup>42</sup> I still find that fact deeply troubling. However, I now like knowing that the flagstaff was finally replaced in January 1858 by Maihi Paraone Kawiti, whose father, Te Ruki Kawiti, had fought with Hone Heka. The motivation was a desire for peace (see p. 266). I like knowing that it was a Latter-day Saint who was responsible for that gracious symbolic act.

Elsmore calls attention to how many of those she calls Māori “prophets” appropriated the language of the Bible in fashioning what they taught in opposition to the Crown. They were, she argues, borrowing metaphors from the Bible to express their disappointment with the behavior of Christian missionaries.<sup>43</sup> She opines about Māori “prophets” in two books. In *Mana from Heaven* she uses only the English word *prophet*, which she uses to describe Māori who launched protest movements or founded Māori churches. However, she does give attention to the Māori word *matakite* (seer) in *Like Them that Dream*.<sup>44</sup> One needs to keep in mind that in the Book of Mormon, seers are greater than

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42. For details see Wikipedia, s.v. “Flagstaff War,” last updated March 29, 2019, 23:37, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Flagstaff\\_War](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Flagstaff_War).

43. See Elsmore’s *Mana from Heaven* and also her earlier *Like Them that Dream: Maori and the Old Testament*, 3rd ed. (Wellington, NZ: Moana Press, 1985; Auckland, NZ: Libro International, 2011).

44. In the “Glossary” of *Like Them that Dream*, Elsmore has “Matakite — second sight, prophecy” (p. 201). However, H. W. Williams, *A Dictionary of the Maori Language*, 7th ed. (Wellington, NZ, 1975), has *matakite* mean “Seer, one who foresees an event,” and then also to “Practice divination” (p. 188). An alternative word is *matatuhi*, meaning “Seer, augur” (p. 191). In addition, in Māori lore, seers use two *whatu kura* (seer stones), since *whatu* means “stone” (p. 492). And *whare kura* had a place in the initiation in a *whare wānanga* (p. 157). During the initiation in a *whare wānanga*, small pebbles were “swallowed by the pupil (tauirā) during his initiation by the tohunga” (p. 492). In addition, two seer stones have names: *Hukatai*, which is “a stone used in the ceremonies of the *whare wananga*” (p. 68); and *Rehutai*, which means *mist*, while *Hukatai*, means *spray*, suggesting that *matakite* might have once been used by *tohunga* for navigating.

prophets.<sup>45</sup> Prophets speak for God, while seers, among other things, actually encounter divine beings. I am confident that something like this explains why, in *Mana from Heaven*, Elmore mentions only one “prophet” — Paora Potangaroa — who opened the door for Latter-day Saint missionaries, while ignoring Arama Toiroa and several others.

### The Larger Context

Samuel Marsden, the harsh Anglican chaplain of the Parramatta penal colony in Australia, made his first of many visits to New Zealand in 1814. He preached the first sermon to the Māori on Christmas Day. However, bringing Christian faith to the Māori proved difficult. It was in 1825, eleven years later, when the first Māori was baptized. There are several reasons. At first, instead of preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ to the Māori, CMS missionaries struggled to survive. They made a living by trading muskets to the Māori for provisions with which to sustain themselves. Henry Williams arrived in Paihia on Marsden’s fourth visit. Since muskets and Māori did not mix at all well, he ended the musket trade. But the Nga Puhi *iwi* had secured weapons that led to brutal raids in what is known as the Musket War, in which Māori sought to settle old accounts, and hence also fought and killed each other in large numbers with muskets.

Despite all of this and more, those first CMS missionaries eventually had remarkable success, primarily because those CMS missionaries made the Bible available in *te reo* and also trained the Māori to read it in their own language. Elmore describes this in both *Like Then That Dream* and *Mana from Heaven*. This also, she argues, eventually led Māori who were deeply troubled by the English incursion in New Zealand to fashion their own versions of faith, often based on the Old Testament rather than the Christian faith brought to them by Anglican and Methodist missionaries. The leaders of these movements also sought to use biblical imagery in radical protest movements. There were several short-lived Māori movements laced with elements drawn from the Bible, some even to justify guerilla warfare against the Crown, as well as those Māori who sided with the Crown. The primary issue driving these movements seems to have been the promiscuous appropriation of Māori land.

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45. Mosiah 8:15. And, for context, Mosiah 8:3-17; 28:6. In addition, Joseph Smith recovered two interpreters (seer stones) that he used when he began dictating the Book of Mormon to scribes, and then shifted to his own seer stone, when he had to surrender the interpreters to the heavenly messenger after the loss of the first portion of the Book of Mormon that he had dictated to his scribe.

However, the Māori who were attracted to the Church of Jesus Christ were, as both of the books edited by Selwyn Kātene demonstrate, essentially peace makers — that is, eager to find ways to live peacefully with the Pākehā.

### Disillusionment with Anglican Christianity

According to Peter Lineham, “The Mormon mission to the Māori flourished from 1882 in a direct reaction to the lowered reputation of other churches among the Maori.”<sup>46</sup> Most of the Māori who became Latter-day Saints seem to have been disillusioned Anglicans. This is illustrated in the remarkable account of Henare Potea by Gina Colvin and Hana Espie Tukukino (pp. 21–37). Potea was a devout Anglican who resisted radical Māori factions for much of his adult life. Then, in 1884, when he encountered Latter-day Saint missionaries, he became a faithful Latter-day Saint to the end of his life.

Colvin provides a fine account of the Anglican career of Potea (pp. 24–33). She also describes the earlier rapid social transformation that began when the “Napuhi’s rampage across the North Island saw the decimation of many Ngati Porou hapu at the hands of Hongi Hika and Pomare” (p. 24). This was, of course, the sour fruit of CMS missionaries in the Bay of Islands, who traded muskets for provisions, which made it possible for the Nga Puhi *iwi* from the Northland to make war on other *iwi* in the North Island. Colvin ably sets out these grisly details (pp. 23–25).

This grim history is introduced (see pp. 21–22) by a stunning account by Hana Espie Tukukino, “the great-great-granddaughter of Henare Potae,” who was once headed for the delights of Tolaga Bay when she “heard the unmistakable voice of her deceased grandmother speaking to her: “Hoki ki te kainga [go back to the home], there is something there for you” (p. 21). She disappointed her kids by not going directly to the beach, but “to the old family homestead — to what was left of her grandmother Tepora Kautuku Jury’s home” (pp. 21–22).

Rummaging around, she eventually found “a Maori version of the Book of Mormon translated by Hoani Te Whatahoro Jury, Henare Potae and Piripi Te Maari,” and other copies of Latter-day Saint scriptures (p. 22). She had connected with her noble ancestor and also with his truly remarkable *whānau*.

Henare Potae was a scholar who could read and write both Māori and English; he also had “expertise in translating and editing texts”

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46. Peter J. Lineham, “Missions and Missionaries,” *Te Ara — Encyclopedia of New Zealand*, accessed February 11, 2019, <http://www.TeAra.govt.nz/en/missions-and-missionaries>. I strongly urge readers to consult this essay. Lineham is the premier New Zealand church historian.

(p. 23). He began as a devout Anglican. “But in 1884 Henare disaffiliated from Anglicanism and joined the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints” (p. 22). Unfortunately, little is known about him “beyond his contribution to the Maori translation of the Book of Mormon” (p. 22),<sup>47</sup> which task is not insignificant. It is possible and perhaps likely, according to the authors of this essay, that he had experienced “some kind of witness or charismatic event that caused this radical conversion to a church that was fairly unpopular on the East Coast” of the North Island of New Zealand (p. 22). He also “dared to go against every cultural and social expectation of a person of his standing and join the fledgling and audacious Mormons to the end of his days” (p. 23).

This fine essay ends with a truly beautiful *korero* (speech) from Hana Espie Tukukino, addressed to Henry Potae, her beloved ancestor (p. 33). This is the Māori world at its very best.

### A Small Beginning

William Bromley (1839–1911),<sup>48</sup> who first served a brief mission in England in 1871,<sup>49</sup> was called early in November 1880 to preside over the Australasian Mission<sup>50</sup> of The Church of Jesus Christ. Then, on 11 December, he was instructed by John Taylor to strive to teach the

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47. The essay by Gina Colvin and Hana Espie Tukukino on Henare Potae should be compared and contrasted with Steven Oliver’s biographical sketch, where one bland sentence indicates that he “was a member of the Church of England, but in 1884 he was baptized into the Mormon faith with his son Wiremu and his cousin Hone Te Whaia.” See Steven Oliver, “Potae, Henare,” *Dictionary of New Zealand Biography*, (1990); *Te Ara — the Encyclopedia of New Zealand*, s.v. “Potae, Henare,” accessed February 27, 2019, <https://teara.govt.nz/en/biographies/1p25/potae-henare>.

48. Bromley’s journals are a real treasure. See Fred Bromley Hodson, ed., *None Shall Excel Thee: The Life and Journal of William Michael Bromley* (Yorba Linda, CA: Shumway Family History Services, 1990).

49. Hodson, *None Shall Excel Thee*, 33–70. This is the second chapter of this collection of Bromley’s missionary journals. The next eight chapters contain Bromley’s very detailed daily accounts of his endeavors in New Zealand. On December 10, 1880, Bromley started from his home to preside over the Australasian Mission, which included both New Zealand and Australia.

50. The first “official” Latter-day Saint missionary endeavors in Australia began in 1851. The official name was Australasian Mission. Since *australis* is Latin for “south,” it yielded the name for both Australia and the region that includes both New Zealand and Australia. Hence *Australasia* was the name for that mission until the Brethren formed separate missions on 1 January 1897 for New Zealand and Australia. In addition, beginning in 1854, there were brief visits by Latter-day Saint missionaries in Australia to New Zealand.

Māori, after which he was set apart by Franklin D. Richards.<sup>51</sup> He arrived in Auckland, New Zealand, on 4 December 1880 with two new missionaries. There were two missionaries on the South Island, both of whom were about to return home, and there were no missionaries in Australia.<sup>52</sup> (Bromley never visited or assigned missionaries to Australia.)

Though Bromley brought with him a letter from the president's office, signed by John Taylor and Joseph F. Smith, and addressed to "the Saints in New Zealand," indicating that he had been called to preside over them," on Thursday 20 January 1881, at a meeting of the priesthood of the Auckland Branch, he "presented his credentials and was received by the unanimous vote of the meeting as President of the New Zealand Mission, and upon being requested, appointed Auckland as the headquarters of the mission."<sup>53</sup> This was also approved. This seems to have been necessary because he was there essentially without purse or scrip, which meant that those often-quarreling Saints<sup>54</sup> had agreed to provide him with lodging, food, clothing, travel, expenses, and so forth, which they did.<sup>55</sup>

Bromley's own ardent first efforts to teach Māori the restored gospel were fruitless, and those of his few missionaries were bizarre, clumsy failures. Then Bromley, after rebaptizing William John McDonnel,<sup>56</sup> who was the graver at the Dry Dock in Auckland, also called him to be a missionary to the Māori<sup>57</sup> and blessed him to learn the Māori language.<sup>58</sup> This he did.<sup>59</sup> McDonnel then met, taught, and on 18 November 1881 baptized Ngataki,<sup>60</sup> the first Māori to become a Latter-day Saint in New Zealand.<sup>61</sup>

51. See Hodson, *None Shall Excel Thee*, 93. Also see Newton, *Tiki and Temple*, 27.

52. When Bromley arrived in Auckland, New Zealand, there were two missionaries on the South Island, both of whom were soon on their way home. One was George Batt, the acting Australasian Mission President (1880-1881).

53. Hodson, *None Shall Excel Thee*, 97.

54. Bromley often complains about the quarreling members of the Auckland Branch.

55. Having lived in Auckland twice, I am amazed at how far Bromley had to walk to visit fellow Saints and how far the Saints had to walk to and from, often in the rain, to meet together.

56. William John McDonnel, and his wife, had immigrated from Great Britain to New Zealand, where they became Latter-day Saints.

57. Hodson, *None Shall Excel Thee*, 123.

58. Ibid.

59. See Midgley, "Māori Latter-day Saint Faith," 51-53.

60. Hodson, *None Shall Excel Thee*, 310-11.

61. Ibid., 293-96.

### The First Māori Latter-day Saint Branch

However, the real breakthrough took place later when Bromley accepted an invitation to visit Thomas Cox, who had moved from Auckland to Cambridge, which is 14 miles south of Hamilton, where he hoped to make a living as a bootmaker. The Cox family had previously been members of the quarreling Auckland Branch. Bromley and Cox were surprised when William McDonnell, as a result of didactic dreams, turned up before breakfast on the morning of Christmas Eve.<sup>62</sup> McDonnell and Cox reconciled,<sup>63</sup> and then the three soon set out to pass out copies of a tract in the Māori language which McDonnell had managed to have fashioned and printed. Later in the day those three met Hare Teimana, who either had a dream or, as I believe, had a visit from the Apostle Peter, who then in a vision showed those three Latter-day Saints to Teimana and explained that they were authorized to act for him.<sup>64</sup> Teimana also explained that his daughter was seriously ill. They gave her a blessing, and the next morning she had mostly recovered.<sup>65</sup>

Then, after instructions by McDonnell, who could do this in *te reo*,<sup>66</sup> in the evening of Christmas Day, Teimana, his wife, and Hare Te Katere (Harry Carter) were baptized in the Waikato River, with other Māori observing.<sup>67</sup> On 26 December, William McDonnell left early in the morning for Auckland, but on 29 December Bromley sent a telegraph message to McDonnell asking him to come back to Cambridge to administer the sacrament for the new Māori Saints on Sunday, 31 December, and to explain the gospel to a group of Māori.<sup>68</sup> On 1 January 1883, six more Māori were baptized.<sup>69</sup> Bromley also makes it clear that those Māori were camped near the Māori Land Court, with which they had important business.<sup>70</sup> They had to secure a legal title to specific plots of land, since the Māori had no idea of private property prior to being “civilized” by the British. They had to do this or risk not owning the land upon which they depended.

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62. Ibid., 147, 311.

63. Ibid., 293.

64. Ibid., 293-96. Bromley's very detailed account covers his entries beginning on 23 December 1882 and ending on 2 January 1883.

65. Ibid., 296-97.

66. Ibid., 113, 118.

67. Ibid., 294.

68. Ibid., 296.

69. Ibid., 297.

70. Ibid., 298.

Bromley's journal contains a separate "summary" of his own endeavors to teach the restored gospel to the Māori which he inserted in his journal immediately after his Tuesday 6 March 1883 entry. His journal entry for 23 December 1882 reads as follows:

President Bromley visited Cambridge, and on the same date, Elder McDonnel was so impressed that he could not resist the influence which prompted him to follow. He had been warned in dreams, in relation to the matter, among other things it was shown to him that the Maories were waiting to receive the truth. He accordingly left Auckland at 4.15 P.M. and upon arriving in Hamilton completed the journey on foot to Cambridge, fourteen miles, and arrived at daybreak the next morning. After partaking of breakfast which was hospitably supplied by brother [Thomas] Cox, President Bromley, Elders McDonnel [and] Cox visited the Maories [*sic*] in the vicinity, but at first met with little encouragement, and as the party were returning from the journey, Elder McDonnel was led to visit a party of natives not before seen. He found them anxious to hear and they received the word, one of the party relating a dream wherein he had been forewarned in relation to the truths presented, and on the following day, 25 Dec 1882 two males, and one female, all adults were baptised, Elder McDonnel officiating, confirmation by Prest Bromley & Elder Cox. January 1 1883 six other adults, natives, were baptised, and much enquiry is manifest. Elder Wm Jno McDonnel interpreted, and was blest in enjoying the spirit of his calling, prompt to act when called upon.<sup>71</sup>

By 25 February 1883, there were, according to Bromley, 27 Māori ready to be organized into the first Māori Latter-day Saint Branch, in Waotu, which is about 18 miles south of Cambridge. With William McDonnel back at work in Auckland, Thomas Cox could not have been teaching them the restored gospel, nor could he have conducted the negotiations to determine who of the Māori men was willing to be ordained to the priesthood and assume the difficult task of leading this branch.

Anaru Eketone's essay (pp. 75–97) is a richly detailed account of Pepene Eketone, who was baptized in Cambridge on 9 January 1883 by

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71. *Ibid.*, 311. This is not, of course, a contemporary account. But for my immediate purposes it is a sort of "final summary" of those first Māori to become Latter-day Saints.



Thomas Cox. He became an important member of the Waotu Branch. I had entirely forgotten that in 1985, R. Lanier Britsch had called attention to Eketone's baptism and his immediate crucial assistance to the Church of Jesus Christ.<sup>72</sup> Now Anaru Eketone has fleshed out the brief account provided by Britsch by showing that before his becoming a Latter-day Saint, Pepene "was raised a Methodist by his native missionary parents, but became an early member of the Mormon Church and later the Ratana church, traveling with its leader as a kaumatua and advisor on two world tours" (p. 75).

Anaru Eketone provides a very detailed account of the ancestors of Pepene, and also the strong attachment to the Wesleyan movement by the Eketone whānau (pp. 75–77). Anaru indicates that Pepene "must have been a student of considerable ability." When he was 16 he attended the elite Auckland Grammar school, where he won prizes within six months (p. 77). Then, when Pepene was 18, he was a star student at the Wesleyan Three Kings school (p. 78), where he was being readied for the Methodist ministry (p. 79). In 1882, and married, he was in Cambridge translating for Māori camped there to conduct business with the Native Land Courts (p. 79).

"Pepene became an important part of the growth of the Mormon Church and was often used as a translator," according to Anaru (p. 79). Without William McDonnell to translate for the Māori, Thomas Cox had to rely entirely upon Pepene Eketone to translate, because those other Māori could not understand English.

On February 18 Thomas Cox gathered together a group of twelve Maori men to discuss giving some of them the Aaronic priesthood, but he was limited in that he could only speak in English. Pepene translated for Cox and was one of the twelve men asked if they were willing to be ordained. After some discussion over a week it was decided that Hare Te Katera should receive the ordination first, all the younger men feeling that it was something that should be left to the oldest in the group. (p. 79)

And on 25 February 1883, Thomas Cox organized the 74 Māori members of The Church of Jesus Christ into the Waotu Branch (p. 79).

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72. See R. Lanier (Lanny) Britsch, "Pakeha then Maori," in *Unto the Islands of the Sea: A History of the Latter-day Saints in the Pacific* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1986), 265–67. Britsch provides a fine account of what followed the events of the first baptisms of Māori camped at Cambridge to do business at the Native Land Court. I had forgotten that he had pointed out that some of the new Māori who were baptized had "talent and stature among their people, and on 9 January 1883, Cox baptized Pepene Eketone, who was very gifted."

However, when his business failed, Cox and his family went back to Auckland in mid-1883. “Without help and leadership,” according to Marjorie Newton, “the initial enthusiasm of the Waikato Maori waned, and the mission to the Maori in the Waikato was temporarily abandoned by the end of July 1883, though success began to occur elsewhere and soon resumed in the Waikato.”<sup>73</sup> Anaru Eketone demonstrates that Newton was wrong about this. He does this in part by providing an accurate account of the what began on Christmas Day in 1882 (p. 79), and what soon followed.

“All of what we know about Pepene’s subsequent involvement in the Mormon Church,” according to Anaru Eketone, “came from the journals of William Gardner, who spent over three years ministering in the Waikato area in the mid-1880s, and from Francis Kirkham, who was there in the late 1890s” (p. 81). Anaru Eketone is, of course, aware that “William Gardner visited Cambridge in December 1884 to find out what had become of the Waotu Branch but claimed that most of the early converts had turned their backs on the Church” (p. 80).<sup>74</sup>

However, Anaru Eketone, by drawing on the journals of both William Gardner and Francis Kirkham, has been able to demonstrate that there were Māori Latter-day Saints scattered around the Waikato, some with ties to that first branch. He points out that Cambridge, in 1882, “was a frontier town,” where Māori camped while waiting to have their claims heard by the Native Land Court; hence “it is unlikely that many of the early converts actually lived in Cambridge permanently” (p. 80),<sup>75</sup> and he is able to trace some of those early Saints who were visited first by William Gardner and later Francis Kirkham. And Papene Eketone was still a faithful Latter-day Saint in 1898 (p. 81).<sup>76</sup> Also, his “translation

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73. Newton, *Tiki and Temple*, 35.

74. See Kātene, *By Their Fruits You Will Know Them*, 93n37. Anaru Eketone cites William Gardner’s papers 1884-1916, for 17 December 1884.

75. Anaru Eketone quotes William Bromley’s vivid description of “over a thousand Maori camped” in fields waiting to try to settle their claims to land (p. 80). Waotu is twenty miles over rough country to the southeast of Cambridge. Why was Waotu the name of this first branch? I assume the answer is that at least some or even many of those who first joined the Church in Cambridge were from Waotu and planned to return once they had completed their business with the Native Land Court. This would explain why, when William Gardner first tried to locate those first Saints, it seemed to him that most of them had gone missing. But later he located some of them scattered around the Waikato. And much later Francis Kirkham was visiting those same Māori Saints.

76. On reading the New Zealand missionary journals of Francis Kirkham, I recognized the exact places and some of the Māori he mentions. But I did not see

skills were put to use when he translated a four-page Mormon tract by William Bromley entitled ‘Ko nga korero hari mo te haringa nui: Glad tidings of great joy’ in 1883” (p. 80).

“We are not sure at what stage Pepene left the Mormon Church,” Anaru Eketone indicates, “but we do know that he became an important member of the Ratana movement in the 1920s” (p. 88). Pepene’s vast experience in those Native Land Courts and his subsequent struggles for justice from the Crown seem to have molded him for the Ratana movement, which has always had a deep interest in the political struggle for social justice. Pepene’s important role in the Ratana movement, both as advisor and companion, is set out in detail in this essay. Pepene had a very “deep commitment to justice,” and he was “a man of generosity and dignity” (p. 92).

Why the shift in his faith? “Pepene’s involvement in Methodism and Mormonism concentrated on faith and good works in this life as preparation for the next; Ratana focused more on the here and now” (p. 89).

### “Let it be done”

Witi Ihimaera (aka Witi Tame Ihimaera-Smiler) is a truly gifted writer; he has published novels, collections of essays and short stories, much very astute social commentary, and autobiographical essays. He also has considerable musical talent in fashioning opera and as a librettist.<sup>77</sup> From 1973 to 1989 he was a diplomat in the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs, but also a very productive author.<sup>78</sup> Then for two decades he taught Māori literature at Auckland University. He is the single most important Māori writer. I am delighted that he has written a celebration of his Latter-day Saint grandfather and his descendants.<sup>79</sup>

The first of his novels that I read was *The Matriarch*.<sup>80</sup> I was enthralled by the rich detail about the Māori world on the East Coast of the North Island, including their struggles with the steady *Pākehā* incursion into

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the importance of his friendship with Pepene Eketone.

77. See “Ihimaera, Witi,” New Zealand Book Council, last updated September 2017, <https://www.bookcouncil.org.nz/writer/ihimaera-witi/>; and “Witi Ihimaera,” Penguin Books New Zealand, last accessed February 21, 2019, <https://www.penguin.co.nz/authors/witi-ihimaera>.

78. Witi Ihimarea began working in the post office in Wellington. Then in 1972 he published his first novel. The New Zealand Prime Minister, Norman Kirk, read the novel and shifted Witi to the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

79. Because they provided assistance, Witi Ihimaera has graciously included two other family members, Alice Brown Haenga and Tiopira Rauna, as authors.

80. Witi Ihimaera, *The Matriarch* (Auckland, NZ: Seeker and Warburg, 1996). This was one of many reprints of this complex bit of fiction first published in 1986.

their world. This is all woven together in this complex and intriguing novel. There is a subtle account of a string of Māori protest movements that resisted, even at times violently, the British colonizers messing with their world. When I first read this novel, it was for me, among other things, a very beautifully crafted “history,” but without quibbles and footnotes, and with very penetrating and troubling insights<sup>81</sup> than what one very often finds in stuffy academic historiography.

Latter-day Saints are mentioned once or twice in this novel. Then there is a rather detailed description of the mode of instruction given in a *whare wānanga* — what Witi Ihimaera described as “the university of the Maori, one of the most exclusive universities in the world, erected by priests and selected members of the rangatira and ariki. No commoners took part in the raising of the building and the students were selected from among the high-born.”<sup>82</sup> What follows the instruction of elite Māori was roughly what I later heard from Cleve Barlow about his training from an Anglican priest in the Hokianga.

When I reached Chapter 15 in *The Matriarch* I was convinced that its author was a Latter-day Saint, or had been, or somehow knew a great deal about the faith of Māori Latter-day Saints. I have been beguiled by Witi Ihimaera’s writings from the moment I read *The Matriarch*. Perhaps his most famous novel is a rather slim story presumably written for children entitled *The Whale Rider*,<sup>83</sup> which was made popular by the film adaption by the same name.<sup>84</sup> This novel was written in New York when he was living “in an apartment overlooking the Hudson River,” he explains in the American edition, “when my daughters ... arrived on vacation from New Zealand.” One of his daughters wondered, “Why are the boys always heroes?” At the same time a whale turned up in

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81. *The Matriarch*, for me, is in part a complex and exacting account of some of what Bronwyn Elmsore addressed in 1989 in *Mana from Heaven*, but without footnotes and also without the garbled commentary on *whare wānanga* (p. 150), which she traces to 1856 (p. 35) rather than the usual 1861 — a significant point. She then engages the “doctrine of Io,” the Māori high God, which she traces back to 1858 (p. 150). This leads immediately to her garbled account of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in New Zealand (pp. 150-52).

82. Ihimaera, *The Matriarch*, 342.

83. Witi Ihimaera, *The Whale Rider*, rev. ed. (Auckland, NZ: Reed Books, 1987; Orlando, FL: Harcourt, 2003).

84. For details concerning this wonderful film, see Wikipedia, s.v. “Whale Rider,” last updated April 8, 2019, 03:17, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Whale\\_Rider](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Whale_Rider).

the Hudson River. Ihimaera, in three weeks, had written this so-called “children’s novel.”<sup>85</sup>

My wife’s copy of *The Whale Rider* indicates that this novel was finished on 14 August 1986. She purchased her copy at Whitcoulls on Queen Street in Auckland early in 1987. I believe this to be the initial New Zealand publication. It is filled with Māori words and expressions, yet there is no glossary and no translation. My wife noticed the Māori incantation *hui e, haumi e, taiki e* at the end of about every other chapter, and she insisted that I provide a translation. She thought that language might be a key to understanding the novel, or at least might help her grasp the meaning of the lush metaphors and curious plot in the book.

The American edition of *The Whale Rider* includes a glossary,<sup>86</sup> in which *hui e, haumi e, taiki e* is said to be a “ritual incantation: join everything together, bind it together, let it be done.” This “incantation” ends 10 of the 21 chapters.<sup>87</sup> In the American edition, each repetition of this ritual language is followed by the English “let it be done.”

Nearing the crisis in this tale, “the chief, Koro Appirana,” explains to those faced with the death of the mighty whale: “Once, our world was one where the Gods talked to our ancestors and man talked with the Gods. Sometimes the Gods gave our ancestors special powers.”<sup>88</sup> Koro then adds the following:

But then ... man assumed a cloak of arrogance and set himself up above the Gods. He even tried to defeat Death, but failed. As he grew in his arrogance, he started to drive a wedge through the original oneness of the world. In the passing of Time he divided the world into that half he could believe in and that half he could not believe in. The real and the unreal. The natural and supernatural. The present and the past. The scientific and the fantastic. He put a barrier between both worlds, and everything on his side was called rational and everything on the other side was called irrational. Belief in our *Maori* Gods ... has often been considered irrational.<sup>89</sup>

Then, at a decisive moment, Koro thunders, “If we have forgotten the communion then we have ceased to be Maori!”<sup>90</sup>

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85. Ihimaera, author’s note to *The Whale Rider*.

86. Ibid., 151-52.

87. Ibid., 7, 23, 45, 59, 76, 92, 98, 107, 142, 150.

88. Ibid., 116.

89. Ibid.

90. Ibid., 117.

Now for my own little sermon. As I have indicated, I am pleased that Witi Ihimaera has fashioned a moving, carefully worded account of the faith of Pere Smiler, and also of his impact on his posterity, including himself. In addition, the language I have quoted from *The Whale Rider* seems to capture rather well the end product of European post-enlightenment skepticism about divine things that has infected the Māori world, and has also ended up contributing to the plight of especially urban Māori, who are vulnerable to the vices brought to them by British colonizers. In our post-enlightenment world, where there is a deep skepticism about divine things, faith in God is challenged precisely because humans have “assumed a cloak of arrogance.”

In addition, those first, often-dedicated, passionate Christian missionaries brought with them both a dogmatic theology that challenges much of the *tikanga* of the Māori world and a worldview in which they saw the Māori as unenlightened, pagan savages who had to be “civilized.” Part of what that included was, among other things, that they did not understand the real value of their land. And when they were converted to the sectarian version of the Christian God, who once revealed himself to humans, they found that God no longer can actually do that sort of thing, since genuine divine, special revelations ceased with the death of those first Apostles. The language I quoted from *The Whale Rider*, at least from my perspective, also signals that if we apply it to the current situation, there is a need to find wisdom in the very best elements of the Māori past.

### A General Assessment

In the late 1990s there was a renewed interest in old Māori arcane lore among Māori Latter-day Saints. The informal *wānanga* held by Heriwini Jones were for several years an important source for convert baptism and reactivation; followed by other similar and related public presentations by Cleve Barlow and others,<sup>91</sup> as well as the remarkable collection of photographs taken by Latter-day Saint missionaries and assembled by Rangi Parker, which provides a visual record of Māori Saints.<sup>92</sup> This seems to me to have prepared the way for Selwyn Kātene’s fine series of books on remarkable early Māori Latter-day Saints.

This second volume of essays assembled by Kātene helps to flesh out and correct details in the truly singular Māori Latter-day Saint historical

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91. See Midgley, “Māori Latter-day Saint Faith,” 62; and Midgley, “Remembering and Honoring,” 289n43.

92. See Midgley, “Remembering and Honoring,” 283-84.

narrative. Like the previous volume in this series, *By Their Fruits* helps to remedy omissions and defects in earlier sectarian and secular accounts of the faith of Māori Latter-day Saints. These two volumes should also help current Latter-day Saints, both Māori and *Pākehā*, to better understand why and how the Church of Jesus Christ, beginning in the 1880s, rapidly became essentially a Māori community of Saints, at least for the next eight decades.

In addition, knowing more about the faith journey of specific individual Māori who became Latter-day Saints should help contemporary Māori remember and thereby also emulate those early Saints in their own endeavor to become genuine disciples of Jesus Christ. This, I believe, is a crucial role of this series of volumes. Accounts of the discipleship of early Māori Saints will also, I believe, help build and sustain the Kingdom of God by reinforcing the shield that the restored gospel has provided Māori Saints from the continuing ravages of colonization that challenge indigenous peoples everywhere.

Those who currently identify as Māori and are faithful Latter-day Saints have been liberated from the usual temptations that every human being faces during their mortal probation, and also from the additional evils thrust upon indigenous peoples everywhere by European colonization.

This fine collection of essays provides evidence of the sanctifying work of the *Wairua Tapu* (Holy Spirit) in the lives of some memorable *Hunga Tapu* (Saints), who also often found very good reasons and proper ways to resist the very corrosive acids of secular modernity. The Māori Latter-day Saint historical narrative should not be constricted by secular religious studies explanations and categories. I am therefore pleased that Māori, who are not in thrall to such explanations, are now striving to recover available sources and thereby add to and also amend portions of the truly remarkable Māori Latter-day Saint historical narrative.

Despite the death we all face, those determined to be genuinely Saints by seeking sanctification can now thereby enjoy the hope for a truly glorious life after life with their loved ones in the highest heaven, without the disappointments and debilities we all face as we endure our mortal probation.

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 once famous 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.*