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## **In New Zealand: Even More Faithful Latter-day Saints**

Louis Midgley

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## IN NEW ZEALAND: EVEN MORE FAITHFUL LATTER-DAY SAINTS

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Louis Midgley

Review of Selwyn Kātene, ed., *Let Their Light So Shine: Mormon Leaders in New Zealand* (Wellington, NZ: Huia Publishers, 2021). “Foreword” by Charles A. Rudd (pp. vii–viii); “Preface” by Peter Lineham (p. ix–x); “Introduction” by Selwyn Kātene (pp. 1–3); “Contributors” (pp. 215–18); “Glossary” (and “Mormon Terms”) (pp. 219–21); “Index” (pp. 222–30). NZ \$30.00 Hardbound.

**Abstract:** *This is a review of the third in the series of books of essays on what Selwyn Kātene again calls “Mormon Leaders in New Zealand.” This volume as at least as excellent, if not even better, than the other two volumes, which received very favorable reviews. Every effort must be made to preserve and publish an accurate history of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in New Zealand/Aotearoa. Such effort is to be praised, especially when it is set out in such a handsome and exceptionally well-edited and published version as one finds in this entire valuable series. Despite this and the two other previous volumes in this series, there are yet more Latter-day Saints whose stories of faith and dedicated service in building the Kingdom of God in this beautiful land must be told in future volumes of this truly remarkable series.*

*Let Their Light So Shine* is the third in an excellent series of books edited by Selwyn Kātene, each of which has featured twelve faithful Latter-day Saints in New Zealand. The first volume in this series was entitled *Turning the Hearts of the Children*<sup>1</sup> and the second was *By Their*

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1. *Turning the Hearts of the Children: Early Maori Leaders in the Mormon Church* (Wellington, NZ: Steele Roberts, 2014). For my review of this volume, see Louis Midgley, “Remembering and Honoring Māori Latter-day Saints,”

*Fruits You Will Know Them.*<sup>2</sup> Even though the first two volumes were published by Steele Roberts, and this most recent volume is published by Huia Publishers,<sup>3</sup> all three volumes have exactly the same format and first-rate book binding.<sup>4</sup> Interested individuals and also especially libraries in both New Zealand and the United States should be very pleased with the high quality of the volumes in this exceptional series.<sup>5</sup>

Selwyn Kātene draws the title for this volume from the true story of how Elder William Gardner, a Latter-day Saint missionary from Utah, was for two days alone and lost in thick brush in the Coromandel. On 13 July 1886, “he saw a light shining in the window of a Māori home. The people there fed him and dried him off and then listened to his gospel teachings” (p. 1). This was possible because Mita and Katariana Watene always had a light in their window for just such an occasion. And the previously wet, cold, tired, and hungry Elder Gardner would soon respond to the generosity of this wonderful couple with his own truly life-giving *koha* (gift) by bringing to them, and then their *whanau* (extended family), the restored gospel of Jesus Christ. This true story is typical of the twelve accounts found in this volume.

In his fine “Preface” to *Let Their Light So Shine*, Peter Lineham<sup>6</sup> indicates that, among other things, this book contains “the authentic

*Interpreter: A Journal of Mormon Scripture* 21 (2016): 275–90, <https://journal.interpreterfoundation.org/rememering-and-honoring-maori-latter-day-saints/>.

2. *By Their Fruits You Will Know Them: Early Maori Leaders in the Mormon Church* (Wellington, NZ: Steele Roberts, 2017). For my review, see Louis Midgley, “The Māori Latter-day Saint Historical Narrative: Additions and Amendments,” *Interpreter: A Journal of Latter-day Saint Faith and Scholarship* 32 (2019): 199–228, <https://journal.interpreterfoundation.org/the-maori-latter-day-saint-historical-narrative-additions-and-amendments/>.

3. Huia Publishers is a distinct publisher but has been both willing and able to match exactly the format and other features provided by Steele Roberts, which is impressive.

4. Each of these three hardcover volumes is built to last, since they can be opened at any place and they will almost lay flat without stress on the binding.

5. Currently, Huia Publishers has all three volumes for sale in hardcover. Hula has an ISBN number for a paperback for this volume, but it does not have this available for sale. Huia Publishers (and Steele Roberts) and/or Selwyn Kātene might also consider making this series of books available through an inexpensive print on demand service in the United States and Canada, and, when the original print run has been exhausted, also in New Zealand and Australia.

6. Peter Lineham, who is Emeritus Professor of History at Massey University, is by far the world’s authority on various churches and religious movements in New Zealand. I highly recommend his “Preface” to this volume (see pp. ix–x).

voice of the converts and the role of dreams and prayer.” The fact is that there are faithful Latter-day Saints everywhere who take prayer very seriously, since we are a community of faith that began with a prayer that soon led to the truly remarkable recovery of the Book of Mormon. Faithful Saints also believe there are priesthood keys, the proper use of which necessarily depends upon answers to genuine prayer, which is clearly not merely a kind of “religious” routine for genuine Latter-day Saints.

Lineham also calls attention to the “striking blend of Māori and Mormon respect for their forbears.” It is true that Māori Saints, who are not, as many Māori unfortunately now are, caught up in crime, are also often mindful of even their very ancient ancestors. However, this concern, which is often stressed by Māori Saints, is also found among Latter-day Saints everywhere, who are aware of and concerned about finding their own roots, since this is one of the crucial reasons for Latter-day Saint temples.

Lineham also indicates “that the outsider is bound to be impressed by the dynamics of the Mormon family, of the high level of interweaving of Maori and *Pākehā* [white people] within the Mormon community, of the ways in which sport played such a dominant role in the reshaped Maori community, and the ways in which hard work, especially manual labour, shaped people’s ethics and qualities” (p. ix). Selwyn Kātene has provided, in his “Introduction” (pp. 1–3), a chart indicating, among other things, the leadership roles held by the twelve Latter-day Saint leaders featured in this new volume (p. 2). I am also aware of *Pākehā* Latter-day Saints in New Zealand who were raised by faithful Latter-day Saint mothers, despite indifference of their fathers towards the Church of Jesus Christ — mothers who saw to it that their children became genuinely faithful Latter-day Saints. These stories should also be told.

This “interweaving of *Pākehā* and Māori” among the Saints in New Zealand has, from my own perspective, been essential for the continued growth of the Latter-day Saint community of faith, and also for its stability, given the sea of sin that has steadily eroded genuine faith in God in New Zealand. There are good indications that this mixing and blending among Latter-day Saints will also continue in New Zealand. There is now much ethnic diversity within the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in New Zealand, partly as a result of the large influx of Latter-day Saints from the islands of the Pacific, which should continue.

*Let Their Light So Shine* has again provided twelve essays in which the lives of twelve faithful Latter-day Saints are carefully examined.

One learns much about how and why each became a genuinely faithful Saint. These wonderful biographical accounts often include selected accounts of their loving parents, and sometimes their own children, and their extended families, as well as friends, and associates in the larger community of faithful Saints. Some of those whose stories are told in this volume have served in important callings in the Church of Jesus Christ in both New Zealand and elsewhere, as well as service in government at both the local and national levels. Woven here and there into these accounts are also sketches of the truly remarkable history of the Church of Jesus Christ in New Zealand.

### **Some Crucial Changes in the Latter-day Saint Community of Faith**

My own first missionary endeavors in New Zealand took place in 1950–52, which was just at the beginning of a major transformation of the Church of Jesus Christ in New Zealand. Māori Latter-day Saints were then beginning to move into provincial centers and also into large urban centers such as Auckland and Wellington, and hence away from the direct influence of their home *marae* (meeting grounds).<sup>7</sup> They did this for employment, and then eventually also for training in universities. This was also at the beginning of the surge of Samoans and other Pacific islanders into urban areas in New Zealand, many of whom were then, or would soon become, faithful Latter-day Saints.

I was fortunate to befriend Nitama Paewai (see pp. 121–40), who was one of the first two Māori Latter-day Saints to receive university training. The story of how he came to be trained to deal with both health conditions and other problems faced by human beings is amazing. For three decades, Dr. Paewai’s medical practice covered the entire area near Kaikohe in the far north of New Zealand, where he had his “surgery,” as it is known in New Zealand. He was a huge influence for good. With his wife, he was also of subsequent service in and for the Church of Jesus Christ. This and more are nicely set out in this volume by Api Te Rina Paewai.

Contrasting with Dr. Paewai’s time, it is now routine for Māori Latter-day Saints, and Pacific Islanders whose parents have moved to New Zealand, to be trained in university, often focusing on medicine and law. This improves both their employment opportunities and their

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7. The influx of Latter-day Saints from islands in the Pacific, especially Samoa, was then just beginning to take place.

capacity for service in the Church of Jesus Christ and in the communities in which they choose to live.

In addition to Dr. Paewai, in *Let Their Light So Shine*, Selwyn Kātene has once again featured eleven other truly remarkable Latter-day Saints. I must also stress the point made regarding the amazing blending of peoples in and through the marriages that have taken place in New Zealand. These true stories also call attention to many others who were essential parts of the life journeys of those whose lives are now very carefully and lovingly set out.

### Some Additional Details

Like the first two volumes in this series, the essays in this volume are organized chronologically by the date when the featured Saints were born. *Let Their Light So Shine* differs somewhat from the first two volumes in this series by including essays on five Pākehā faithful Saints,<sup>8</sup> each of whom also saw and recognized the light of the restored gospel of Jesus Christ.

These are the featured Saints, with additional useful information about their associates and, of course, their extended families:

- Matene Rutatenga (1802–1899), pp. 5–16
- James Rongotoa Elkington (1898–1985), pp. 19–33
- William Roberts\* (1907–1994), pp. 35–56
- Puti Tipene (Steve) Watene (1910–1967), pp. 57–76
- Pateriki Te Rei (1912–1995), pp. 77–88
- Ian Garry\* (1915–1997), pp. 89–100
- Kenneth Molony Palmer\* (1918–1988), pp. 101–20
- Nitama Paewai (1920–1990), pp. 121–40
- Geoffrey R. Garlick\* (1924–2010), pp. 141–55
- Ben Couch (1925–1996), pp. 157–72
- Douglas J. Martin Jr.\* (1927–2010), pp. 173–94
- Te Puoho Kātene (1927–2010), pp. 195–213

The first volume in this series also featured one Pākehā – Percy Going, from Maromaku. There are, of course, many other truly faithful Saints in or from Maromaku, whose faith journeys might also be set out in some future volumes in this series. This truly remarkably faithful Latter-day Saint community in Maromaku is not all that far from Kawakawa, which provides two ways to reach the wonderful Bay of

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8. Those who are identified as Pākehā Latter-day Saints are identified with an asterisk (\*) after their name.

Islands, where the Māori first became Christians. This is my favorite place in New Zealand.<sup>9</sup> More of the story of some of the faithful Saints from Maromaku might be told in a future volume in this series.

### Why New Zealand?

After its beginning in 1814, Anglican missionary endeavors among the Māori declined toward the end of that century. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in New Zealand, commencing on Christmas Day 1882, rapidly became essentially a Māori community of faith. After World War II, there was some growth among the Pākehā in the Church of Jesus Christ in New Zealand, which was just beginning during my first life-changing missionary endeavors in New Zealand in 1950–52.<sup>10</sup> At this time, the Brethren authorized the construction of the Church College of New Zealand (aka CCNZ), which was the equivalent of an American high school. The Brethren also authorized a community established in the 1950s that came to be known as Temple View,<sup>11</sup> where the service missionaries lived who constructed the CCNZ and the Hamilton New Zealand Temple.

In addition, perhaps fifty places of worship were constructed in New Zealand. The Saints in New Zealand had previously worshiped at what might have been available at a Māori *marae*, in homes, or in often very unsatisfactory rented facilities. Construction began with a modern Latter-day Saint meeting house at Scotia Place on Queen Street in Auckland. Huge changes have subsequently taken place in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in New Zealand. For example, in Auckland, in 1950–52, one branch met on Sundays in the very dismal Druids Hall on upper Queen Street. There are now thirteen stakes in the Auckland area. In Wellington, the Saints met on Sundays on the second floor of the Farmers Dominion Bank and also to the north of Wellington at the Tukapuwhahia Māori *marae* in Porirua. Now in this area there are three stakes. A temple has recently been announced for

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9. Kawakawa has recently become famous because Friedrich Hundertwasser, a truly eccentric Austrian visual artist, created for it some now world famous and very strange toilets, which are located at 60 Gillies Street — the main street in Kawakawa. Hundertwasser was buried somewhere near Kawakawa. I strongly urge those at all curious about Hundertwasser's toilets to do a little Google search.

10. The Church College of New Zealand (CCNZ) was a blessing for all the Saints in New Zealand. However, among other things, the cost of CCNZ and the excellent quality of other schools in New Zealand eventually led to it being closed.

11. See "Temple View," Wikipedia, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Temple\\_View](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Temple_View).



Wellington, which will be constructed at a glorious site on the hillside opposite Porirua.

One must keep in mind that the first temple outside the United States and Canada was dedicated on 11–15 September 1955 in Zollikofen, which is just a few miles outside of Bern, Switzerland.<sup>12</sup> In 1952, the temple near Hamilton, New Zealand, the second one outside the United States and Canada, was at least in the planning stages. The Hamilton Temple was dedicated in 1958. Temple View, in the area nearby, has become a remarkable Latter-day Saint gathering place. A second temple in New Zealand is now being built next to the Missionary Training Center and the Manukau Heights Stake Center on the right (south side) of Redoubt Road in Auckland. This temple will be visible to everyone who travels on the major highway south of the older center of Auckland.

My summary of the Church's growth is inadequate, but in the twelve accounts of faithful Saints in *Let Their Light So Shine*, we see evidence of the frequent and easy mixing of Māori and Pākehā Latter-day Saints in worship and marriages.

It is not possible to fully explain the reasons I found each of these twelve stories exceptionally interesting. Most of these accounts were for me also emotionally moving.<sup>13</sup> I read this remarkable book in one sitting. I found myself tittering about some things.<sup>14</sup> I was also often deeply moved by some of the essays — I will also admit — even to tears by some of these accounts of truly exceptional Latter-day Saints. My academic friends and those in my home ward would be very much surprised to know of my emotional response while reading some of the accounts of Latter-day Saints in New Zealand in *Let Their Light So Shine*.

The most moving of these accounts, at least for me, was the one written by Douglas J. Martin Jr., the son of Douglas James Martin. Doug, as he was known, was the first Seventy to be called from New Zealand. I admit that this was for me just a bit annoying, since I wanted a Māori to have that privilege. But I have now changed my mind for several good reasons.<sup>15</sup> We learn that “Doug, as he would come to be

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12. I cannot resist mentioning that my wife and I were the first couple sealed in the Temple in Zollikofen.

13. Currently, all those who self-identify as Māori, as a result of intermarriage with Pākehā, are only partly Māori, at least according to a news item I noticed in on my last visit to New Zealand, which happened just as the Covid problem began. That was likely my last visit to a land I love.

14. My wife liked to say that it was a true joy to have a wholesome laugh.

15. One reason is that I was not at all disappointed when my dear friend Ian S. Ardern was called to be a Seventy.

known, was blessed with two sets of parents” (p. 173). The essay gives a detailed account of both his then-young unmarried birth parents, who wanted nothing to do with the child they brought into this world, and his adoptive parents — very strict Scots — who had no children and who immediately cared for and adopted him. We also learn more about his birth mother, who Doug eventually tracked down and sought to befriend.

We also discover that it was at the *hui tau*<sup>16</sup> held at Bridge Pa in 1953 (a conference I still very fondly remember) where Doug was baptized. Soon after his baptism, Doug very much wanted to marry Wati Crawford, the daughter of Syd Crawford, who had confirmed him a member of the Church of Jesus Christ. Doug had to seek the full approval of Syd to marry Wati, which he was finally able to secure from his future Māori father-in-law. This is a brief and inadequate sketch of the truly wonderful account of Elder Doug Martin, who subsequently became a very faithful, gifted Latter-day Saint and, as Selwyn Kātene has it, a great leader.

### The Future of this Book Series

I am hoping that my very favorable response to *Let Their Light So Shine* will encourage many Saints, in New Zealand and elsewhere, to purchase copies from the publisher — and then also pass this book along to their family and friends. When the initial print run for the three volumes in this series has been exhausted, additional copies could and should then be made available through a print-on-demand service in New Zealand and Australia, as well as the United States. I pity those Saints who have not somehow managed to serve as missionaries in that New Zealand, or to at least spend a full month on vacation in New Zealand.

In addition, I strongly urge Selwyn Kātene to soon make available a fourth volume in this series. I have some strong suggestions of those who *could and should* be included in the next volume in this important series of books. My own list includes Stephen Midgley (1945–2022),<sup>17</sup> Mic Stinson, Matt Chote, and Cleve Barlow, who was the last one to be initiated in a *Whare Wananga* (house of Maori tribal lore and history). In

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16. These were, beginning early in the history of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in New Zealand, wonderful annual five-day general conferences of the Church in New Zealand. Soon after I returned from my first mission to New Zealand, these came to an end when the first wards and stakes were created. They have recently been revived for Māori Latter-day Saints, some of whom remember or have heard about those truly wonderful five-day conferences.

17. I do not believe that I am related to Stephen Midgley.

1999–2000, I was able to spend many hours discussing many wonderful things with Dr. Barlow in his office at Auckland University.

After Cleve Barlow became a Latter-day Saint, he saw much in his earlier initiation in the *wananga* that conformed rather snugly to the Latter-day Saint temple endowment. His *wananga* was conducted somewhere in the Hokianga region of the Northland by the Anglican Reverend Māori Marsden. Reverend Marsden saw no relationship at all between his Anglican faith and his own Māori faith.

And, of course, there is also the truly remarkable Herewine Jones (1955–2021), who I encountered three times. The first was early in 1999 at one of his *wananga*<sup>18</sup> at a *marae* near Kaikohe in the Northland of New Zealand. The second time was at another of his *wananga* held at a location near Point Chevalier, where we lived. For days prior to that event, I was busy gathering the courage to ask Herewine if he had manuscripts that I could copy. Herewine and I were the first to arrive at the *marae*, and so I was able to speak with him for a few minutes prior to the beginning of that one-day *wananga*. At the very end, as he was cleaning a white board, he suddenly turned to me and said that the Spirit had indicated to him that I was someone interested in having copies of his notes and that I would also know what to do with them.

About six weeks later, both of us were again the first to arrive at a *marae* near Manukau Harbor south of Auckland. Herewine immediately indicated to me that I did not seem all that interested in his papers. However, the problem, as I saw it, was that I found it very difficult, if not impossible, to track him down, since he was here and there doing his thing. Herewine suddenly invited me to be his companion, and hence be ready to take over, if he needed a rest. He even gave me an opportunity to do just that. Herewine seemed pleased with what I had to say.

I have recently learned that while Herewine Jones was struggling with the cancer that eventually took his life, he had what he called “some unfinished business.” Among other things this included visiting Jack (Haki) McDonald, a former New Zealand missionary, who had befriended Herewine. Subsequently, when Herewine visited Salt Lake City, he would stay with Haki. I was delighted to have Haki turn up at

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18. These were, among other things, an adaptation and presentation of *tikanga* (the right way to live) and other sometimes esoteric Māori lore. He discussed how much of this fits rather snugly with the Restored Gospel of Jesus Christ. While my wife and I were serving as missionaries in New Zealand in 1999–2000, those remarkable lectures by Herewine Jones were the primary occasions for convert baptisms, as well as the renewal faith among the Saints in New Zealand.

my home in Provo to indicate that Herewine, over two decades later, remembered me and wanted me to know that he approved of the essays I have published in which I have both set out and defended the truly remarkable nineteenth-century Māori historical narrative. Most of these essays can be easily accessed under my name at the Interpreter Foundation web page.<sup>19</sup>

I also hope that the papers of Herewine Jones are now, or will soon be, properly preserved and available in an archive such as the facility found at the Matthew Cowley Pacific Church History Centre, near the Hamilton Temple, or in a university archive, or even both, since Herewine was widely known outside of the Church of Jesus Christ.

Even at my now advanced age — I will soon be 92 — I would be delighted to see Selwyn Kātene publish at least one more volume in this remarkable series of books on the history of Māori and Pākehā leaders in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

**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.

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19. See <https://journal.interpreterfoundation.org/author/louis/?journal>.