Between Covenant and Treaty: The LDS Future in New Zealand

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FOR THE EARLIEST NINETEENTH-CENTURY LDS missionaries in the Pacific, a strong appeal of the British Crown colony of New Zealand was the high concentration of English-speaking settlers among whom they could proselyte. Elder Addison Pratt, one of the first missionaries sent to Polynesia from Nauvoo, Illinois, in 1844, remarked that the New Zealand islands held the attraction of "large settlements of English on all of them." This situation presented "a great and delightful field for our Elders to occupy: some hundred thousands of English emigrants to preach to."[1] Yet any hope of the mass conversion of these settler populations was short-lived once New Zealand missionary work began in 1854. Until 1880, the resident LDS population never exceeded about one hundred people, almost entirely European. However, this situation would change dramatically after 1881, when the American elders turned to the *tangata whenua* (literally, people of the land), the indigenous Maori of New Zealand, with new intent and remarkable effect. By 1890, about 3,000 *tangata whenua* had been baptized, roughly 8 percent of the total Maori population. One hundred years later the New Zealand church would claim approximately 45,000 *tangata whenua*, or about 15 percent of the Maori population.[2]

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1. Addison Pratt's report in *Times and Seasons*, 15 Nov. 1844, as cited in Norman Douglas, "The Sons of Lehi and the Seed of Cain: Racial Myths in Mormon Scripture and Their Relevance to the Pacific Islands," *Journal of Religious History* 8 (June 1974): 96.

2. Ian Rewi Barker, "The Connexion: The Mormon Church and the Maori People," M.A. thesis, Victoria University of Wellington, 1967, 24-36, and "The Maori and Mormonism," *Te Kaunihera Maori*, Summer 1969, 13-21; R. Lanier Britsch, *Unto the Islands of the Sea: A History of the Latter-day Saints in the Pacific* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1986), 272-78; John L. Hart, "Early Maori stalwarts prepared way for growth," *Church News*, 18 Apr. 1992, 8; Peter Lineham, "The Mormon Message in the Context of Maori Culture," *The Journal of Mormon History* 17 (1991): 62-93.

In the twentieth-century LDS church Maori-European interaction has vacillated between the poles of biculturalism and assimilation.[3] Movement towards the latter has been facilitated by a new ethnic mix in the postwar church, as proportionately larger numbers of Pakeha (European settler descendants) have joined the Saints. Furthermore, in larger population centers high levels of postwar migration from West Polynesia have added to the Tongan and Samoan LDS membership, especially in Auckland. In New Zealand Mormonism this emerging pattern of ethnic diversity has challenged both the church's bicultural history and the most recent and potent legislative assertion of Maori rights. In this essay we argue that these cultural matters are crucial to any appreciation of the twenty-first-century course of the church in New Zealand. Consequently, to inform a future vision of the LDS tradition in our country, we explore the emerging cultural pluralism in the New Zealand church in historical, sociopolitical, and theological contexts.

Maori Conversions and a Bicultural History

To appreciate the cultural complexities of twentieth-century New Zealand Mormonism, one must consider the early bicultural history of the country. In 1840 most of the autonomous Maori *iwi* (tribes) of New Zealand ceded *kawanatanga* (government in New Zealand) to the Crown in the Treaty of Waitangi. In return, the Crown promised to recognize *tino rangatiratanga* (traditional authority) over Maori *taonga* (literally, treasures), as administered on a *hapu* (sub-tribal) basis. Such *taonga* were understood to include Maori land, forests, fisheries, and settlements. They were to be held inviolate in, and protected by, British law, with the Crown asserting only a first right of land purchase by consent.[4] However, as recent historical and legal research has confirmed, the settler government thereafter alienated land and resources from Maori without recourse to treaty provisions using such political stratagems as the promotion of land wars and the subsequent confiscation of large areas of land.[5] In a landmark legal case in 1877 (*Wi Parata v. the Bishop of Wellington*), the provisions of the treaty were declared a "nullity" regarding promissory

3. Ian G. Barber, "Between Biculturalism and Assimilation: The Changing Place of Maori Culture in the Twentieth Century New Zealand Mormon Church," *New Zealand Journal of History* 29 (Oct. 1995): 142-69.

4. The two most important scholarly treatments of the Treaty of Waitangi are Claudia Orange, *The Treaty of Waitangi* (Wellington: Allen & Unwin, with Port Nicholson Press, 1987), and Paul McHugh, *The Maori Magna Carta: New Zealand Law and the Treaty of Waitangi* (Auckland: Auckland University Press and Oxford University Press, 1991).

5. See texts in n4 as well as Alan Ward, *A Show of Justice: Racial "Amalgamation" in Nineteenth Century New Zealand* (Auckland: Auckland University Press and Oxford University Press, 1973), and Belich, *The New Zealand Wars*.

obligations of land use, a decision that would prove influential in converting the affected Maori to Mormonism thereafter.[6] Early British jurisprudence thus rendered *tino rangatiratanga* ineffectual where Crown interests or conflict was concerned.

For Maori, treaty grievances were not simply matters of resource control or land ownership. The Protestant missionaries who had helped draft the treaty in 1840 encouraged a perception of the document as a sacred bond, with "all the spiritual connotations of the biblical covenants." If not generally accepted among all of the original Maori signatories, this perspective was at least appreciated by some northern Maori from the region where the treaty was signed, and where, significantly, Mormon missionaries were to enjoy success in the 1880s.[7] Furthermore, as the struggle against colonialism deepened, the treaty came to be seen by the Maori as a *tapu* (sacred) covenant, with spiritual connotations and authority. As stated recently by E. T. J. Durie (chief judge of the Maori Land Court and Waitangi tribunal chair): "The Treaty became in the course of the struggle a sacred covenant, equating the promises of God, and a *taonga*, a treasure passed down from revered forebears."[8]

The Treaty of Waitangi thus became a sacred authorizing text in the Maori world, where Pakeha refusal to acknowledge its provisions was perceived as political hypocrisy and spiritual malaise. Maori began in greater numbers to be alienated from the Protestant missionaries and churches who were originally associated with the drafting of the treaty and yet who now appeared to assent to, or collaborate in, the abuse of its provisions. In this context many *tangata whenua* sought new political and spiritual solutions, including a Maori monarchy (the *kingitanga* movement, based in the Waikato) and Maori millenarian movements based on charismatic prophet figures and themes of resistance.[9] In the latter part of the nineteenth century, Maori from southern, eastern, and northern regions of the North Island (all areas where the Mormons had made the greatest impact) also supported a separate Maori parliament movement (*Kotahitanga*), calling for a measure of legislative autonomy and the re-

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6. On the legal and historical details of *Wi Parata*, see McHugh, *The Maori Magna Carta*, 113-17. On the subsequent LDS conversion of Maori involved, see Barker, "The Maori and Mormonism," 17, and Lineham, "The Mormon Message," 78.

7. Orange, *Treaty of Waitangi*, 56-57; see also 49, 65, 90-91.

8. E. T. J. Durie, "The Treaty in Maori History," in W. Renwick, ed., *Sovereignty & Indigenous Rights: The Treaty of Waitangi in International Contexts* (Wellington: Victoria University Press, 1991), 159; see also Orange, *Treaty of Waitangi*, 150, 156, 197, 200, 201; David V. Williams, "Te Tiriti O Waitangi—Unique Relationship between Crown and *Tangata Whenua*?" in I. H. Kawharu, ed., *Waitangi: Maori and Pakeha Perspectives of the Treaty of Waitangi* (Auckland: Oxford University Press, 1989), 79.

9. Two useful overviews of Maori prophet movements are Bronwyn Elsmore, *Like Them That Dream: The Maori and the Old Testament* (Tauranga: Moana Press, 1985), and Elsmore, *Mana from Heaven: A Century of Maori Prophets in New Zealand* (Tauranga: Moana Press, 1989).

dress of treaty grievances.[10]

This situation of sociopolitical disenchantment and religious fluidity finally delivered success to the LDS Maori ministry in the late nineteenth century. Like the first successful Protestant missionaries (who had now scaled down their operations among, or even deserted, many Maori communities in the wake of the land wars), the Mormons also lived among the people and learned their language.[11] In the 1880s the preaching of this non-British religion, with its prophetic claims and promise of imminent millennial redemption, tapped deep roots of Maori dissent and alienation. Some Maori converts to Mormonism were also influenced by predictions of nineteenth-century prophet-leaders anticipating the advent of new religious solutions—prophets that included even Tawhiao, the Maori king.[12] The application of such prophecies to the Mormon advent offers an important perspective on the hopes and perceptions of early Maori converts. As reported in a missionary letter in 1884, East Coast North Island Maori investigators told the elders: "When the white man came here first he brought the gun to shoot the Maori. Next he brought the gospel to shoot the Maori and his land. But the gospel which you bring shoots the kings, governors, ministers, churches and all."[13]

From the missionary perspective, the dramatic impact of the church among the *tangata whenua* after 1881 was influenced by the doctrine that Maori were descendants of Book of Mormon Israelites. Indeed, some missionaries suggested more ancient scriptural connections, such as Elder John Sorenson who recorded a dream in 1881 "that the Maories [sic] down near the Coromandel out toward Manaia had preserved the Language best since the Confusion of Tongues at Babylon."[14] Such perceptions encouraged a desire among missionaries and Maori converts to identify elements of Maori culture rooted in ancient scriptural precedent.

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10. On the *kotahitanga* movement and its importance and legacy in Maori political life, see Lindsay Cox, *Kotahitanga: The Search for Maori Political Unity* (Auckland: Oxford University Press, 1993), 66-70; Orange, *The Treaty of Waitangi*, 222-25; Ranginui Walker, *Ka Whawhai Tonu Matou, Struggle without End* (Auckland: University of Auckland Press, 1990), 165-72; John A. Williams, *Politics of the New Zealand Maori: Protest and Cooperation 1891-1909* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1969).

11. C. Lesley Andrews, "Aspects of Development, 1870-1890," in I. H. Kawharu, ed., *Conflict and Compromise: Essays on the Maori since Colonisation* (Wellington: Reed, 1975), 90; Lineham, "The Mormon Message," 68-72.

12. Barker, "The Connexion," 4-6; "The Maori and Mormonism," 13; Britsch, *Unto the Islands of the Sea*, 272-76; Elsmore, *Mana from Heaven*, 278-88; Brian W. Hunt, *Zion in New Zealand: A History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints 1854-1977* (Temple View, New Zealand: Church College of New Zealand, 1977), 9-11; Lineham, "The Mormon Message," 87-88.

13. Letter of Alma Greenwood, 11 Apr. 1884, published in *Deseret News* and cited in Lineham, "The Mormon Message," 76.

14. John P. Sorenson, Journal, 17 July 1881, holograph, Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah, and microfiche copy Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington.

For both parties, these elements reinforced the power and truth of the LDS Maori ministry.[15] Although conversion and interaction also encouraged some level of cultural conflict, especially where traditional healing by *tohunga* (ritual specialists) was concerned, a varying but important level of respect for Maori custom was sustained by the Mormon Maori ministry throughout the early twentieth century.[16]

Yet as Peter Lineham has argued, the earliest LDS missionaries appear to have appreciated neither the depth of feeling about land and treaty grievances among Maori converts nor the perception that the restored gospel would be instrumental in the amelioration of such.[17] However, a far more sympathetic mission perspective developed after, and perhaps because of, the temporary defection of about 2,000 Maori Saints to the church of Maori prophet-leader (and proponent of treaty justice) Wiremu Ratana in the 1920s. The New Zealand mission leadership of President Matthew Cowley during World War II marked the zenith of twentieth-century support for Maori aspirations. Cowley supported a revival of Maori culture (especially in the area of traditional carving) and language, to which end he cooperated with government and Maori leaders.[18]

A Postwar Policy of Assimilation

The bicultural sympathies and policies of the early twentieth-century church were substantially challenged by the postwar mission administration. At a fundamental level this may be related to universalizing and standardizing processes in the international church.[19] Thus in New Zealand LDS mission authorities indicated that traditional funerary customs and the informal (and potentially flexible) practice of "Maori marriage" impeded stake organization and temple patronage.[20] Before the

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15. "Are the Maoris of Israelitish Origin[?]" *Te Karere* 1 (31 Oct. 1907): 146; Cole and Jensen, *Israel in the Pacific.*

16. Barber, "Between Biculturalism and Assimilation."

17. Lineham, "The Mormon Message," 77-78.

18. Barber, "Between Biculturalism and Assimilation."

19. James B. Allen and Glen M. Leonard, *The Story of the Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1976), 561-622; Leonard J. Arrington and Davis Bitton, *The Mormon Experience: A History of the Latter-day Saints* (New York: Knopf, 1979), 284-307; Britsch, *Unto the Islands of the Sea*, 358-59.

20. On (post-European) "Maori marriage," and the opposition of mission authorities to this and traditional funerary practices between the 1950s and 1960s, see Barber, "Between Biculturalism and Assimilation," Barker, "The Connexion," 101-102, and Schwimmer, "The Cognitive Aspect of Culture Change." The most important historical influence in this regard was Gordon C. Young (mission president, 1948-51), who recalled that the need "to press and have stakes and a temple there [in New Zealand] meant that these practices had to stop." See Gordon C. Young, Oral History Interview by Lauritz G. Petersen, Murray, Utah, 1972 (MS 200/24, archives, Historical Department, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City (hereafter LDS archives]), 21.

1970s at least this assimilationist emphasis was not at odds with official government policy in New Zealand, nor with the emergence of an Urban Maori identity (relocated and newly industrialized) which emphasized "progressive" values and the attainment of English language proficiency and integration, often at the expense of tradition.[21] As Barker observed of this era, "Maori [LDS] members were told never to refer to the Church as a 'Maori Church', nor to greet their brethren in the Church in Maori when Pakeha [whites] were present."[22] At the same time there are also indications that the new emphasis on acculturation was resisted by many Maori Saints, for traditional world views and even ritual (including *tangihanga*, or traditional funerals) were maintained by some of them in spite of official discouragement.[23]

Within the postwar New Zealand LDS church a policy shift in the direction of explicit assimilation was also reinforced by a changing ethnic mix. A renewed proselyting emphasis on Pakeha communities characterized the administration of mission president M. Charles Wood after 1936.[24] However, it was the determined efforts of President Gordon C. Young after 1948 that were to bear fruit in this regard. Young taught that the European mission was of "equal importance" to the Maori ministry[25] and remarked that "the mission . . . needed the stimulation of new converts."[26] With this emphasis, he positioned the church in the 1950s to accept an unprecedented number of Pakeha converts. As Barker observed, "The proportion of Pakeha church members increased from 18.6 percent in 1951 to 32.3 percent in 1961."[27] The ethnic mix of the postwar New

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21. Joan Metge, *A New Maori Migration: Rural and Urban Relations in Northern New Zealand* (London: University of London, Athlone Press, and Melbourne University Press, 1964); Ian Pool, *Te Iwi Maori: A New Zealand Population Past, Present & Projected* (Auckland: University of Auckland Press, 1991), chaps. 6 and 7; Walker, *Ka Whawhai Tonu Matou*, 196, 197-98.

22. Ian R. Barker, "The Maori and Mormonism: Part 2—Retreat from *Maoritanga*," *Te Kunihera Maori*, Autumn 1969, 57, and larger discussion, 57-65. Schwimmer ("Mormonism in a Maori Village," 114) and Barker ("The Connexion," 110n1) also document the promotion of the assimilationist perspective in the 1960s by a prominent Maori Saint and community leader.

23. Pieter H. de Bres, *Religion in Atene: Religious Associations and the Urban Maori*, Polynesian Society Memoir 37 (Wellington: Polynesian Society, 1971), 47; Ian G. Barber, "Social Change and Cultural Identity in the Maori-Mormon Tradition," paper read to the Canadian Mormon Studies Association Conference, University of Lethbridge, Alberta, Canada, 21 June 1990.

24. Britsch, *Unto the Islands of the Sea*, 310-11. See also Barker, "The Connexion," 85, and "The Maori and Mormonism: Part 2," 59.

25. Young to David O. McKay, 12 May 1950, holograph, Gordon C. Young Papers (GCYP), LDS archives; see also Young, Oral History, 17-18, and Britsch, *Unto the Islands of the Sea*, 320.

26. Young, Oral History, 17-18.

27. Barker, "The Maori and Mormonism: Part 2," 59.

Zealand church was also affected by an unprecedented migrant stream from Western Polynesia, especially Tonga and Samoa, including significant numbers of Polynesian Saints.[28]

These demographic trends were welcomed by Young, whose assimilationist perspective was set out in a 1951 letter to the LDS First Presidency. Here, Young promoted the vision of a New Zealand Mormon community who were "not Maoris and Samoans and Tongans and Europeans, just LATTER DAY SAINTS."[29] From a theological perspective, such a move undermined the primacy and uniqueness of the *tangata whenua* (indigenous people) as a covenant people in a promised land to whom the gospel had been especially directed. New Zealand was now a land where other Polynesian Book of Mormon descendants had gathered, along with northern European settlers with their own claims to Israelite ancestry, all of whom were to hear the gospel without preference or prejudice. This shift was further facilitated by the 1958 dedication of the New Zealand temple, offering participation in a covenant-centered ceremony that transcended the claims or necessity of kin-association with God's ancient chosen people. At a conceptual level the temple had been important to twentieth-century Maori as a fulfillment of the prophecies of visionary, nineteenth-century Maori leaders and, for some *tangata whenua*, as the ultimate expression of the traditional and sacred school of learning, or *whare wananga*.[30] Such expectations had helped to bridge the gap between the traditional and temple community concepts in New Zealand. Consequently, and with some irony, *Maoritanga* became increasingly marginalized in a church retaining a predominantly Maori membership and whose visibility in later twentieth-century New Zealand was the direct consequence of an earlier LDS biculturalism.

Language and Cultural Tensions

If an assimilationist perspective largely determined the policy direction of the postwar New Zealand church, the process did not proceed without tension or tempering. As indicated above, many traditional

28. K. D. Gibson, "Political Economy and International Labour Migration: The Case of Polynesians in New Zealand," *New Zealand Geographer* 39 (1983): 29-42; David Pitt and Cluny Macpherson, *Emerging Pluralism: The Samoan Community in New Zealand* (Auckland: Longman Paul, 1974). On the LDS context of Pacific Islander migration in the twentieth century, see Max E. Stanton, "A Gathering of Saints: The Role of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Pacific Islander Migration," in G. McCall and J. Connell, eds., *A World Perspective on Pacific Islander Migration* (Pacific Studies Monograph 6, Centre for South Pacific Studies, The University of New South Wales, 1993), 23-37.

29. Young to First Presidency, 23 Jan. 1951, GCYP.

30. Rangi Davis, "The Mormon Temple, or Whare Wananga," *Te Karere* 47 (Aug. 1953): 275-77; Hunt, 9-11.

Maori Saints passively resisted the official challenge to their important customs, and in some regions of New Zealand Mormon *tangihanga* continued in an (effectively) unaltered form. This persistent assimilationism has received its greatest challenge in the post-1960s Maori cultural renaissance, potentially, the most significant national movement of its kind in New Zealand since 1840. Contemporaneous with the struggle for civil rights and equality for African Americans in the 1960s, this Maori movement constituted a call both for redress of land grievances and for legal recognition and enforcement of the Treaty of Waitangi. The 1970s witnessed mass protests among a broad section of the Maori community, including conservative and radical elements and a number of both older but especially younger LDS Maori. While tension characterized the uniting of diverse tribes and political interests, such protest contributed to a broad consensus that the treaty could no longer be considered a nullity nor Maori grievances sidelined.[31] In response, the Crown (represented by the New Zealand parliamentary government) appointed the Waitangi Tribunal under the provisions of the Treaty of Waitangi Act (1975) to consider Maori grievances. By 1985 the tribunal had been given a retrospective mandate to consider claims back to 1840.[32]

The involvement of Maori Saints in protest marches for land rights from the 1970s into the 1980s drew a generally negative response from LDS leaders in New Zealand, including some visiting general authorities. As the struggle for redress and recognition intensified throughout the 1980s, the issue of Maori language (*te reo*) came to the fore. This issue has had a more immediate and polarizing impact on the church than land rights militancy. In both Mormon church policy and the national politics of early twentieth-century assimilationist New Zealand, the Maori language had been effectively viewed as a cultural fossil inappropriate in the modern world (or the international church). As indicated above, its use was discouraged if not forbidden in most official contexts (other than in superficial "tourist" or ceremonial forms); but for traditional and recently politicized Maori, the maintenance of *te reo* as a living language against such opposition was a fundamental expression of cultural resistance. However, in the postwar LDS community the strength of official government discouragement meant that Pakeha Saints did not have to confront Maori language or cultural forms in any substantive way, notwithstanding their membership in a Maori-dominated church. By contrast, Maori Saints concerned about the preservation and perpetuation of *te reo* as a sacred *taonga* (treasure) have had to accommodate the withdrawal and even reversal of the church's once-proud historical support,

31. Ranginui Walker, *Nga Tau Tohetohe: Years of Anger* (Auckland: Penguin, 1987).
32. McHugh, *The Maori Magna Carta*; Orange, *The Treaty of Waitangi*.

along with a lack of understanding or sympathy from many newly converted Pakeha.

While the growing Maori membership has continued to be represented in the leadership, these have generally been young, recently affluent urban men without an active commitment to *te reo* or to the maintenance of traditional customs. By contrast, church members committed to more traditional lifeways, and/or demonstrating any militancy over the use of the Maori language in worshipful contexts, have been passed over and even sanctioned. Indeed, Maori members in one North Island stake were disciplined for speaking *te reo* in a priesthood meeting as recently as 1992. Of similar cultural significance, the planned official opening of the Otara (South Auckland) Stake Centre by Tainui Maori as regional *tangata whenua* following traditional protocol was stopped in 1991 by a local Pakeha church authority.

Here it is relevant to consider the parallel, but by no means convergent, development of policy towards the rest of the growing LDS Polynesian population in New Zealand. From around 1980 the movement by stakes in Wellington and Auckland (with the encouragement of the Pacific Area presidency) to integrate Polynesian language church units into large English-speaking congregations produced unprecedented levels of concern and resistance in the Samoan and Tongan communities. As the most dramatic consequence of this policy, hundreds of Samoan Saints abandoned the official church system and formed their own Samoan-speaking branches in Newtown, Wellington, and Westmere, Auckland, under the direction of prominent *Matai* (Chiefs). Leaders among these Samoan Saints petitioned church leaders in Salt Lake City for support, but in 1981 some were excommunicated.[33]

In 1982 stake leaders in New Zealand signalled a policy change in response to this situation. Thus in a letter addressed "To all leaders of ethnic groups" from the presidency of the Auckland Mount Roskill Stake, approval was extended for such groups to meet on the evening of the first Sunday of each month "to worship in their own language." Such meetings were to be conducted "in conjunction with Sacrament meeting procedure" and in consultation with a high council adviser. Leaders were also to "organise an activation programme to help members of your group who are inactive."[34] As Max Stanton has noted, by the beginning of the 1990s the New Zealand church had eight Samoan units (including seven wards), six Tongan units (including five wards), and a Niuean

33. This discussion is based on our personal experiences at the time in Auckland (Barber) and Wellington (Gilgen), respectively. See also Ruby Welch, "Ethnicity among Auckland Mormons," M.A. thesis, University of Auckland, 1989.

34. Auckland New Zealand Mount Roskill Stake Presidency [s/P. Syddall, first counsellor] to All Leaders of Ethnic Groups, 28 Feb. 1982. Copy in our possession.

ward.[35] These groups have been largely successful in encouraging the return to the formal church structure of those Polynesian families who had earlier formed separate congregations. By the early 1990s ethnic meetings had also been organized for new Asian immigrants in at least one Auckland stake.

However, in spite of this new authorization for *other* Polynesians to have separate church units in New Zealand (in contrast to the church's contemporary *Maori* policy), there is no evidence that the assimilationist fundamentals of the postwar church had changed. One of the primary intentions of the ethnic meetings organized by the Mount Roskill Stake in 1982 was to make possible speaking assignments for those "not receiving an opportunity to speak in Ward Sacrament meetings because of language problems." The names of assigned speakers in ethnic groups were still to be submitted to the assignee's bishop for approval to ensure that those participating "are worthy to carry out the assignments."[36] The monthly ethnic group meetings thus justified and linked church involvement in the framework of an assimilationist and English-language stake organization. Here it is especially revealing that "the LDS Church does not maintain separate units for Maoris in New Zealand or for Hawai'ians in Hawai'i."[37] This would seem to support Pieter de Bres's statement that LDS policy toward the Maori "has always been one of 'full integration,' which, in fact, means complete 'assimilation,' placing a strong emphasis on the unity and uniformity of all believers irrespective of ethnic origin." For de Bres, this is demonstrated by the fact that in spite of some promotion of "Maori cultural activities," "actual services in the Maori language, a prominent feature of the Maori sections of the major denominations, do not receive official [LDS] approval."[38]

A New Climate of Change

As indicated earlier, post-1985 New Zealand governments have finally begun to deal with Maori issues at both *iwi* and national levels. Given recent and current church policy (and the discussion above), it is especially relevant to note that Section 3 of the *Maori Language Act 1987* provides that Maori is an official language of New Zealand. The Maori Language Commission created from the act has functions and powers to promote *te reo*, and in particular its use as a living language.

In this climate of change and empowerment Maori members of the

35. Stanton, "A Gathering of Saints," 33.

36. See n34.

37. Stanton, "A Gathering of Saints," 33.

38. Pieter H. de Bres, "Maori Religious Affiliation in a City Suburb," in Kawharu, *Conflict and Compromise*, 146.

church have turned both to the historical precedent of biculturalism and to new possibilities for the future recognition of their *mana* (spiritual authority, esteem) in the land. A return to Maori community had even been anticipated by Ben Couch, a conservative and influential Maori Saint and member of parliament responsible for the portfolios of Police and Maori Affairs in the National government of the late 1970s and early 1980s. With respect to the problem of disaffected youth, Couch remarked: "There is still a strong allegiance to tribal roots. Now there is a strong bias by some sectors of the community against tribalism. Some people don't believe in it. But it is really another form of provincial loyalty. People are proud to belong to one particular place. Look at the Scots. We have to take this tribal sense of identification, and we must develop it."[39]

More significantly and recently, (the late) Cleo Smith, temple sealer, stake patriarch, and *kaumatua* (respected Maori leader), has spoken of the church in early New Zealand as "about the only institution that encouraged the development and growth of our culture . . . others took a long time to realise that we, as Maoris, had something to give."[40] If the actual historical situation is more complex than this perception suggests,[41] it is at least significant that once again a respected Maori Saint and leader has commended the church for its historical support of *Maoritanga* in the church press. The new sociopolitical situation has also rekindled an interest among Maori Saints both in the status of the *tangata whenua* as a covenant people in a chosen land and in traditional cultural forms as necessary expressions of spiritual authority and community. A recent publication by Maori Saint Cleve Barlow, lecturer in Maori Studies at the University of Auckland, explores and validates *tikanga* (traditional custom) in its traditional setting and as a living, vibrant, spiritual form.[42]

There are even indications that the New Zealand church has begun to respond at an official level to an inexorable tide of culture change. In 1989 the church republished the 1918 Maori language edition of the Book of Mormon (*Ko Te Pukapuka a Mormona*). In 1990 the sesquicentennial anniversary of the signing of the Treaty of Waitanga was recognized nationally, promoting vigorous discussion on partnership and the recognition of the *mana* of the *tangata whenua*. During this year a *hui* (ceremonial Maori gathering) was convened in a Mangere, South Auckland, LDS meeting house as a *Hui Parīha* (the name for the once regular quarterly conferences of the New Zealand church). Former American missionaries

39. "Ben Couch: Hardliner with a Soft Touch," *Te Maori*, Oct./Nov. 1980), 8.

40. Hart, "Early Maori Stalwarts," 8.

41. Barber, "Between Biculturalism and Assimilation"; Lineham, "The Mormon Message."

42. Cleve Barlow, *Tikanga Whakaaro: Key Concepts in Maori Culture* (Auckland: Oxford University Press, 1991).

attended along with Maori Saints, and a testimony meeting, much of which was expressed in Maori, continued for eight and a half hours. At this meeting a regional representative (soon thereafter released) promised in Maori that he would do all he could to see the restoration of annual church *hui* (formally called *Hui Tau* but abandoned by the church in the 1950s).

If formal church *hui* are yet to be convened, it is at least appropriate to note that *Te Rau Aroha,* the first LDS *marae* (traditional Maori community center) of recent decades, was dedicated on 4 March 1994 in Temple View, the LDS community built around the temple and Church College of New Zealand (actually a Mormon high school). *Te Rau Aroha* is constituted around the traditionally carved George R. Biesinger Hall (named after the temple and Church College construction supervisor), which has been maintained by the Maori labour missionaries association in Temple View for over thirty years.[43] At present the *Kaumatua* Council (composed of respected older Maori leaders of high mana), formed in association with the *marae,* represents the interests of these former labour missionaries. Since the Biesinger Hall and associated Kai Hall (which also now operates as part of the *marae* concept) are owned by the Church College, the official renovation of the latter and the incorporation of the former into *Te Rau Aroha* effectively involves the church in this initiative. This is especially notable when one considers that the Temple View community and the Church College continue to represent the "flagship" and "focal point" of the church in New Zealand.[44] Church support is also evident in the dedication of *Te Rau Aroha* by President Rulon G. Craven of the Pacific Area presidency in 1994. At this time President Craven proclaimed his belief that Maori "should cling onto" *Maoritanga.* "I recently attended a Tangi here, a marvellous occasion, great spirit," he added and concluded that "the occasions and things that will be held here will be a great tribute to this land and the area on which it stands."[45]

In perhaps the most significant recent policy adjustment, an important memorandum was issued by the Pacific Area presidency in 1992 regarding "language and cultural values in New Zealand." Intended to help priesthood leaders and others "understand and respect language

43. See aims of the Church Builders Association (of labour missionaries) in *He Mahi Aroha,* 1964-65, 103, as cited in Hunt, *Zion in New Zealand,* 92, and discussion of the New Zealand labour missionaries in Britsch, *Unto the Islands of the Sea,* 322-26, 336-37, and Hunt, 91-92.

44. R. Lanier Britsch, "Latter-day Saint Education in the Pacific Islands," in D. Bitton and M. U. Beecher, eds., *New Views of Mormon History: A Collection of Essays in Honor of Leonard J. Arrington* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1987), 209.

45. Transcript of address given by area president Rulon Craven at the opening of "Te Rau Aroha" (Temple View, Hamilton), 4 Mar. 1994. Typescript in our possession.

and cultural values in meetings of the Church,"[46] this communique was in direct response to the disciplining of members for speaking Maori in a priesthood meeting, reported above. Although the subtext of the memorandum does not stray from a primarily assimilationist view where the formal church organization is concerned, there are several significant qualifiers on earlier practices. The primary assumption of the document remains that "English is generally understood by native born New Zealanders," but the memorandum allows that "for a few" now elderly people Maori was their first language and is the tongue they speak more comfortably. After stipulating that public prayers should be given in a language understood by the majority, the document allows that Maori prayers "may be appropriate" in funeral services and in specially designated Maori meetings. Even in other public meetings allowance is made for "a brief introduction or Mihi in Maori when prompted by the Spirit." For testimony meetings, and with respect to elderly members who wish to express testimonies in Maori (or any other language), "no one should forbid such expression." Furthermore, in the context of home and visiting teaching or meetings on *marae*, the document affirms that "there are many occasions when the Maori language is most appropriate."

If such counsel extends qualified support to some Maori expression in Mormon congregational life, and (with less constraint) to the use of Maori in other "appropriate" situations, the memorandum offers even clearer direction on the important matter of funerary customs. Here it is important to note that the earlier postwar mission opposition to *tangihanga* was especially crucial and telling as an expression of intent, since this interactive community ritual, and its associated *hui* (gatherings), are understood as being central to the cultural identity and *mana* of *tangata whenua*. Thus in a study of the largely LDS Maori population of Whangaruru in northern New Zealand in the early 1960s, anthropologist Eric Schwimmer documented the divisive effect of mission opposition to customary expressions of mortuary grief and especially the LDS insistence that the funeral cask be covered, restricting customary physical interaction with the deceased.[47] Bitterness over the rigid imposition of such policies in those days is still expressed by non-LDS (and even some LDS) Maori from northern New Zealand. It is therefore significant that the 1992 memorandum signals a crucial change in direction. While it affirms that the bishop presides over the content of funeral services in consulta-

46. Memorandum from the Pacific Area presidency (Douglas J. Martin, Robert E. Sackley, and Rulon G. Craven) to regional representatives, stake, mission, and district presidents, bishops and branch presidents in New Zealand (on) "Language and Cultural Values in New Zealand," 25 May 1992. Copy in our possession.

47. Schwimmer, "The Cognitive Aspect of Culture Change," 156-63.

tion with the family, it adds that "when a funeral service is to be held on a Marae, Priesthood leaders should always respect Maori customs and protocol." Where priesthood leaders do not understand such protocol, "a Maori spokesman should be called to assist." Most significantly the memorandum affirms that "the casket may remain open or closed during the viewing." Nevertheless, we believe that the church's unwillingness to move further in the accommodation of *te reo* in worshipful contexts retains the greatest potential for continued cultural tension in the LDS community, especially in light of government support for the Maori language and LDS authorization of other Polynesian-speaking units in New Zealand.

A Partnership Future?

At the approach of the twenty-first century, New Zealand is a country in transformation due to an unprecedented assertion of postcolonial Maori identity and activism, and a new treaty-based judicial-political environment. Perhaps most significantly for the church, the credibility of an "assimilationist" postwar urban Maori identity has been damaged beyond repair, as even conservative leaders among the *tangata whenua* now recognize the need to nurture and promote *tikanga Maori*. As a community of faith with an estimated 60 percent of its 76,000 members claiming Maori ancestry, the New Zealand Mormon church will continue to be under pressure from the debate and struggle over Maori treaty rights, especially the growing desire to express and recognize *te reo* and other cultural forms as sacred *taonga*. We see this as a crucial defining issue for the New Zealand church in the next century. In this regard the church confronts not only the problem of reconciling its Maori and its growing Pakeha membership, but also the aspirations of large Samoan and Tongan LDS communities, especially in Wellington and Auckland.

We believe that the church's persisting postwar assimilationism in New Zealand will continue to be modified at the community (if not policy) level and perhaps finally be abandoned. Certainly, given the legal recognition of Maori as an official language of New Zealand, and the protection of indigenous languages under international treaty, it is hard to imagine that well-informed church leaders will initiate new measures to discourage the expression of *te reo* in church settings. However, the more interesting question is whether the church will seek to adopt a proactive role in the forging of a new partnership environment. For all the historical difficulties, the *Church News*'s 1992 juxtaposition of the statement that the church "played a major role in preserving Maori culture in the earlier part of this century" with the fact that "now, public schools teach Maori

culture and language"[48] is at least sympathetic to the concept of church support for *Maoritanga*. We see the official 1994 establishment of a *marae* at Temple View as an even more positive statement of this support. With suggestions for further development of the Temple View *marae*, including the building of a formal *wharenui* (large ceremonial house), the direction taken by the *Kaumatua* Council of *Te Rau Aroha* might signal the emergence of a twenty-first-century Mormon *Maoritanga*. Since (as discussed above) Temple View retains a central place in the religion and affections of New Zealand Mormons, such a movement will influence the attitudes of the larger LDS community and leadership. Indeed, with its prominent minority representation of Pakeha and various Polynesian populations, the New Zealand church may be uniquely placed to offer new models for social justice and cultural understanding in the Pacific. If so, it can be expected that the popular image of the New Zealand church as an important multicultural institution will be enhanced into the next century in spite of the cultural tensions of recent decades.

Appendix: Glossary

(Note: The Maori noun does not show a plural form.)

hapu	Maori sub-tribe
hui	ceremonial gathering or formal meeting
iwi	Maori tribe
kaumatua	older respected Maori leader of recognized *mana*
kawanatanga	Pakeha government under British Crown authority in New Zealand (lit. hybrid English-Maori term, rendering governor as *kawana*)
kotahitanga	unity (trad.); Maori Parliament movement (post-European)
marae	place of ceremonial greeting and gathering; community centre (esp. recently)
Maori	common/ordinary person; descendant of pre-European Polynesian settlers of New Zealand, or *tangata whenua* (generic and recent)
Maoritanga	Maori culture (generic and recent)
mana	spiritual authority/power
Pakeha	European (esp. British) settler of New Zealand
tangata whenua	People of the land (lit.); original or first inhabitants
tangi; tangihanga	funeral ceremony
taonga	treasure (lit.); prized resource, including subsistence and settlement

48. Hart, "Early Maori Stalwarts," 8.

te reo	the language (lit.); *Maori* language
tikanga	traditional custom or lifeway
tino rangatiratanga	traditional authority; *Maori* government
tohunga	ritual specialist; healer (esp. late nineteenth/twentieth centuries)
Waitangi	location (North Island Bay of Islands) where 1840 treaty of partnership was signed between Maori and British Crown
wharenui	large ceremonial house