

'They Pretend to Have Remarkable Revelations':

**The Reception and Representation of Mormonism in Australia
and New Zealand, 1840 to Present**

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For Niamh and Eilidh

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Abstract

This dissertation examines two distinct but interrelated streams in the study of religion. First, it explores the development of Mormonism within Australia and New Zealand, from its introduction into the Antipodean British colonies in 1840, to the present. The chapters trace various flashpoints in Australian and New Zealand Mormon history, particularly how the actions or events in the Latter-day Saint metropole affected the outposts of the religion in these nations. It examines how Latter-day Saints in Australia and New Zealand, who faced geographic and numerical isolation, have developed a unique identity as a localised religious minority. Second, this dissertation will look at how the Church and its members have been represented and received by broader Australian and New Zealand society. Race, sexuality, gender, migration, and transnational interconnectedness are at the core of this dissertation.

Though Mormonism has been a feature of both Australian and New Zealand society since the 1840s, the Church struggled to gain a more solid footing for almost a century. Despite this, its representation by the non-Mormon community has shown hostility and promoted the Church's marginalisation from Australian and New Zealand. This is seen in a hostile or bemused press, government reactions, responses from more mainstream religions, and broader society. This dissertation closely examines modern-day Mormonism's representation within these nations, and how a contemporary, multi-cultural Latter-day Saint community has adapted to an increasingly connected, global religion.

Since the turn into the twenty-first century, it is argued that a more localised, syncretised Mormonism, anchored by the construction of sacred temples, has meant the Church has come under increased scrutiny. This has been both due to perceptions of an overreach of the institutional Church power in political, economic, and societal spheres, as well as the existence of individual Latter-day Saints in the political sphere of both Australia and New Zealand. Moreover, though Mormonism has remained marginal in terms of the number of adherents, there has been an overrepresentation of the Church in the popular culture

of these nations. This dissertation asserts that though Mormonism has remained marginal, due to both small numbers, a distant hierarchy, and perceived peculiarities, it has become more entrenched within both Australia and New Zealand. As discussed throughout this thesis, the representation and reception of Mormonism has morphed significantly since its introduction in the colonial era as the religion has become more entangled and localised, though the status of Mormonism remains marginal. This dissertation traces not only this phenomenon, but also how Australian and New Zealand Latter-day Saints have asserted their own unique identity.

Declaration

I certify that this thesis:

1. does not incorporate without acknowledgment any material previously submitted for a degree or diploma in any university
2. and the research within will not be submitted for any other future degree or diploma without the permission of Flinders University; and
3. to the best of my knowledge and belief, does not contain any material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the text.

Signed.....  ..

Date.....31/01/2024.....

Acknowledgements

This thesis was written on the lands of the Kurna and Ngarrindjeri people, whose sovereignty was never ceded.

This thesis would not have been completed without the love and encouragement of my wonderful partner Jordan, my daughters Niamh and Eilidh, my parents, Shaughan and Joanne, my grandmothers, Sandy and Kay, and brothers, Samuel and Thomas. Each have helped me to keep pushing when I have needed it. Their overwhelming support has gotten me here. This dissertation was written in memory to my deceased grandfathers, Douglas Thompson and Douglas Griffin, both of whom helped to instill my love of history.

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Prologue: Positionality and Personal Experience

It is important to here articulate my own positionality and personal experience before commencing this dissertation. Having grown up as a faithful Mormon in the working-class suburbs of South Adelaide, my experience of Australian Mormonism was an intersection of cultures, ethnicities, and classes. Though I am no longer a believer, I was raised in a Latter-day Saint family with proud multi-generational links to the religion in Australia – two of my great grandmothers joined the religion in 1950s Adelaide, and their children were raised as Mormons. Another of my ancestors, Glasgow-born great-grandmother Alexandra Eastwood (nee MacMillan), joined the Church when living in England before migrating to Melbourne and then Adelaide. When she died at the age of 93 in 2014, she was one of the oldest Latter-day Saints in South Australia. My paternal grandmother was one of the first woman missionaries to be called from Australia, proselyting in Tasmania and Melbourne in the early 1960s. My paternal grandfather was a missionary under later Apostle Bruce R. McConkie, and served in Victoria and Perth at the same time as my grandmother. My father was a missionary in Brisbane and Papua New Guinea. I was a missionary in Southwest Sydney, and my younger brother was a missionary in New Zealand. As a missionary, I proselyted to, was watched over, and bonded with Latter-day Saints from all over the world, with a variety of intersecting and often contradictory identities. My own personal history, informed by stories told, as well as my own lived experiences, has been greatly shaped by narratives of hostility, derision, and dismissal of sacred beliefs.

My mother was the first in our family to grow disaffected with the religion. She critiqued the Church's stance on various social issues and was disgruntled by the history of the religion that had been obfuscated in official Church teachings. My youngest brother left the religion in his late teenage years. My own disaffection began when I was on my mission and was completed once I had started university; I left Mormonism due its history, stances on social issues, and personal concerns. My father, after an almost decades long struggle to reconcile his doubts, left at the same time. My younger brother is still a faithful Latter-day Saint with his wife and children, and I have many friends and family that are still in the religion, including one of my grandmothers. Although introducing the subject of my dissertation project was an uncomfortable conversation with faithful Latter-day Saint family and friends, and remains a delicate subject, they have been immensely supportive of this dissertation. These are the people I have sought to represent within this dissertation, to tell their stories. Though I was unable to directly utilise the narratives of individual Latter-day Saints, due to not receiving permission from the Church (as required in my ethics approval), I have told the stories of diverse peoples to pay homage to the complex melting pot that is Mormonism in Australia and New Zealand. These are the stories that are not seen in existing studies of religion in Australia, nor do they exist in the histories of Australian Mormonism, though the literature surrounding New Zealand Mormonism, pioneered by a predominantly Māori scholars, is a great model of a more varied, holistic study of the religion. These are the lived narratives that show the complexity of this religion, as both institution and adherents, and their representation in a largely hostile society.

It is here that the greatest difficulty of the insider-outsider scholar is most evident: my own experiences and position have undoubtedly influenced the writing of this thesis. As such, I have sought to be respectful of the firmly held beliefs of Latter-day Saints in these nations, beliefs for which they have been largely mocked and derided by broader society, whilst also being critical of the real-life influence of the institutional Church in the politics and economies of Australia and New Zealand. As someone who was raised in a marginal religion, and has since lost that faith, I am intimate with the history, cosmologies, and experiences of the Latter-day Saints, both within Australia and New Zealand and more broadly. Yet, whilst I made the conscientious decision to write respectfully, there are case studies and discussions within this thesis that would be uncomfortable for most faithful Latter-day Saints to read. Whilst I have attempted to write the history of their faith and experiences, few dedicated Mormons would be content with the account provided. Contrarily, for those outside of the faith, it may appear that this dissertation has tread too cautiously, and would have greater appeal if was more critical or revealed sacred/secret aspects of the religion. However, it is because, as well as seeking to make a scholarly contribution, I have written this for Latter-day Saints, people I know and love and respect but who are not likely to read it, that this is not the approach I have taken. This is not to say that there has been no catharsis; this project has helped me to understand my own identity, my own history, and to contextualise my own experiences as a former Mormon. But there is value in erring on the side of caution when one is intimately connected to what is written about, especially when that is something so personal and fundamental as a spiritual belief and worldview.

Introduction

Religion and the public space have become an increasingly contested issue all over the world; not even the ostensibly secular nations of Australia and New Zealand have been immune to the complicated debates surrounding religious freedoms and the growing ethnic, sexual, and gender diversity of its population. Although official census records indicate the decrease of both New Zealanders and Australians who identify as religious, contemporary events within these nations, such as the Israel Folau saga in Australia and the 2019 mass shooting of a Mosque in Christchurch, New Zealand, show that religion has not dissipated from public consciousness.¹ Within the context of increased tensions surrounding public religiosity and secularisation, Mormonism has, over recent decades, been a contested spirituality within Australian and New Zealand public consciousness. On the one hand, the religion has increased in prominence in both nations. This is due to several key factors, including population growth, the construction of Temples in major cities, the Church and its adherents' interactions with the Australian and New Zealand 'State', and the way in which Mormonism has been portrayed in popular culture in these

¹ 'Israel Falou Slammed For 'Greed' Over \$3m Legal Fundraiser', *SBS News Website*, 21/06/2019, viewed 05/09/2019, <http://theconversation.com/why-christians-disagree-over-the-israel-folau-saga-118773>; 'Rebels, Reds Players Huddle for Prayer as Folau Case Rumbles', *SBS News Website*, 11/05/2019, viewed 05/09/2019, <https://www.sbs.com.au/news/article/rebels-reds-players-huddle-for-prayer-as-folau-case-rumbles/cr5iyq8z2>; Adam Dudding and John Hartevelt, 'The End of Our Innocence', *Stuff NZ*, viewed 05/09/2019, <https://interactives.stuff.co.nz/2019/03/end-of-our-innocence/>; Leith Haddadine and Isra'a Emhail, 'NZ Together: 'Evil Must Not Take Root and Flourish in Our Land Again'', *Radio New Zealand*, 29 March 2019, viewed 05/09/2019, <https://www.rnz.co.nz/news/chch-terror/385920/nz-stands-together-evil-must-not-take-root-and-flourish-in-our-land-again>; Geoff Thompson, 'Why Christians Disagree Over the Israel Falou Saga', *The Conversation Online*, 25 June 2019, viewed 05/09/2019 <http://theconversation.com/why-christians-disagree-over-the-israel-folau-saga-118773>

nations. On the other, Mormonism and its adherents are still somewhat placed under the spectre of 'the Other', as a marginalised religious community.

This dissertation aims to contribute to new ways of viewing religious diaspora and place-making, including the curation of sacred spaces within host(ile) culture(s). More importantly, this thesis will further explore the regionalisation, visibility, and evolving representations of the Church in Australia and New Zealand. This project is, centrally, an exploration of the development, identity, and perception of a minority religious tradition, Mormonism (specifically, members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints), within the multicultural, supposedly secular, nations of Australia and New Zealand. It explores how the construction of local 'sacred spaces', in the form of Temples, throughout the twentieth and twenty-first century in Australia and New Zealand has transformed the Antipodean Mormon community. Through a cross-disciplinary approach, including methodologies from History, Religious Studies, and Diaspora and Migration Studies, this research will seek to understand not only the Latter-day Saint experiences in these nations, but how Mormonism has been received and represented from broader society. As a disclaimer, this thesis has focussed on the largest of the groups attributed to Mormonism's founder, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. It has not delved into the history of the Community of Christ (formerly the Reorganised Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints), which has its own storied existence within these nations.²

² Mark A. Scherer, The Future of the Past Under the Southern Cross. *John Whitmer Historical Association Journal*. Fall/Winter 2012, Vol. 32 Issue 2, p188-196.

The central line of inquiry into this localisation and syncretisation of Latter-day Saint communities is the analysis of local, non-Mormon responses. I ask, how have the reception and representation of Latter-day Saints in 'mainstream' Australian and New Zealander societies changed from the religion's introduction in the 1840s to the modern-day? Recent popular culture representations abound, and the Latter-day Saints feature in productions such as the SBS series' *Stairway to Heaven* in 2017 and *Christians like us* in 2019, as well as the internationally acclaimed *The Book of Mormon Musical*.³ Research indicates, however, that a more thorough localisation, indicative through population growth of adherents and chapel and Temple construction within Australia and New Zealand, has generated responses from government agencies, community groups, and media outlets. A general finding of this research is that, paradoxically, a greater local presence of the Latter-day Saints has resulted in a polarisation of public opinions, ranging from open hostility, to ridicule, and begrudging tolerance.

This dissertation provides two significant contributions to scholarship. These contributions lie in the fields of Mormon Studies and Religious Studies:

- 1) This study will be the first Australian Mormon history that has not been written by a believing Latter-day Saint or published through a Church-affiliated organ. It will contribute to an expanding literature surrounding Mormonism in New Zealand and the Pacific. It will join the growing effort to 'globalise' Mormon Studies, with a contribution of narratives that are not centred on the experiences

³ Shaun Micallef (host), *Stairway To Heaven (Documentary Series)*, SBS Online, November 2017, viewed 5/09/2019, <https://www.sbs.com.au/ondemand/video/847588931862/shaun-micallef-stairway-to-heaven-mormons>; *Christians Like Us (Documentary Series)*, SBS Online, April 2019, viewed 5/09/2019, <https://www.sbs.com.au/ondemand/video/1461716547860/christians-like-us>

of American Latter-day Saints, nor solely for the purpose of providing hagiographic or ecclesiastical histories.

2) As the literature review observes, religious histories of Australia and, to a lesser extent, New Zealand, largely do not discuss Mormonism, or it is mentioned in passing. This dissertation thus seeks to broaden the field of Religious Studies in these nations to include discussions of the experiences, identity, and reception of Mormonism.

This dissertation will further seek to bridge the divide between secular and religious histories that is common in both Australian and New Zealand scholarship, and adds to approaches that explore the development of religious minorities within these nations. This will include the Church's interactions with local, state, and national governments. It will further examine how Latter-day Saints have been viewed and received by various religions, whether these interactions are inclusive, hostile, or tolerant. However, before a more thorough discussion of methodology and literature, this introduction will outline the structure of the thesis and provide a brief history of early Mormonism, as well as a discussion of a few key doctrines and rituals, in order to better ground the growth of this religious minority within Australia and New Zealand.

This dissertation will be structured to chronologically chart the changing ways in which Mormonism has been perceived within Australia and New Zealand, but also how Latter-day Saints have become more entwined within the public consciousness of these societies. This research will explore how the development of the Australian and New Zealand Mormon Church has been influenced by the currents of both the global faith and these individual nations. It seeks to understand the unique

identity, experiences, and community of these Antipodean Latter-day Saints, and how this has been represented and received by the broader societies in which it has grown. An overview of these chapters are as follows:

Chapter I will explore the birth of Mormonism within the colonies of Australia and New Zealand, beginning in 1840 until the turn of the twentieth century. The tensions surrounding Britain's colonial endeavours will situate the difficulties in which Latter-day Saint proselytes attempted to convert souls and bring them to Zion. As will be discussed below, the Mormon concept of 'the Gathering' is fundamental to this period and is frequently alluded to in both Australian and New Zealand press. This chapter will similarly examine the responses of more mainstream Christian denominations within these colonies, and the way in which Latter-day Saints were viewed by both government and media. Though the missionaries originally only taught European colonists, in New Zealand attention quickly turned to the Māori. Through a reflexive and adaptive cosmology, the Latter-day Saints were able to link the Māori peoples to Mormon scriptures, and created a biblical-ethnic link between the Māori and the House of Israel. As this was during the time of the violent *Te Ririhi Pakeha*/'Land Wars' in New Zealand, this association led to suspicion towards the Latter-day Saints by broader New Zealand colonists. As will be discussed, a similar cosmological pivot was not made for First Nation Australians. Yet, at the forefront of this chapter will be the way in which the broader colonial Australian and New Zealand society, press, government, and other religions represented and perceived the Latter-day Saints, focussing on historical flashpoints.

Chapter II will investigate the way in which the Church continued to develop in the twentieth century in both Australia and New Zealand. Though no longer British colonies, both of these independent nations remained suspicious of outside influence, aware of their position as a 'white outpost' within the Asia-Pacific. In particular, the White Australia Policy, which dictated who could migrate to Australia based on race, was the driving cultural-political discourse that governed the new federation, as did similar legislation in New Zealand. Though the Latter-day Saint missionaries at the time were predominantly white Americans, tensions nonetheless lingered surrounding the emigration of Australian Mormons to the United States, in particular women. Although the practical elements of both the Gathering and polygamy had officially been disavowed by the Church hierarchy in Salt Lake City, the perception of the Mormon missionaries as pariahs in Australian and New Zealand society remained. In New Zealand, this was heightened with the Church's continued proselyting emphasis on the Māori, including the construction of the Māori Agricultural College in Hastings. , Due to Mormonism's unique position within New Zealand, though it remained a marginal religion it began to be infused within public consciousness in a more nuanced way when compared with Australia. This perception of the Church being more embedded within New Zealand would become solidified with the building of the Hamilton, North Island Temple in 1958.

Chapter III examines the construction of the first Temples within these two nations, and the influence this had on not only the development of Mormonism, but, more importantly, the reception and representation of both the sacred buildings and the religion. Fundamentally, this chapter explores the way in which the first Temples within these nations, built in Hamilton, New Zealand in 1958 and

Sydney, Australia in 1984, symbolise a pivot in antipodean Latter-day Saint history. As these buildings are sacred sites within Mormon cosmology, their construction denotes a localisation of the religion within these nations, yet with strong transnational and theological links to Church headquarters in Salt Lake City. Nonetheless, as will be explored, in the host societies, the reception and representation of the Temples ranged from curious to outright hostility. This chapter will similarly discuss the controversial demolition of the 'Temple View Village' in the early twenty-first century, and the reaction from the broader New Zealand community regarding this decision.

Chapter IV, following similar themes, discusses the construction of the so-called 'mini-Temples' within both Australia and, more recently, New Zealand. This chapter begins with the building of Temples in the Australian major cities of Adelaide, Melbourne, Perth, and Brisbane, each completed between the years 2000 and 2003. These Temples did not receive as much attention as the Hamilton and Sydney Temples but in their own way, became broader media spectacles. This chapter will continue themes established in the previous chapter and seek to understand how these 'mini-Temples' were represented by broader Australian society. Moreover, this chapter examines the announcement of both the Auckland and Wellington, New Zealand Temples, which are yet to be completed. As will be argued, though there has only been relatively little media surrounding these later Temples in New Zealand; this itself symbolises a further localisation of the religion. Two core contentions are presented in this chapter: the first is that the Church has become more visible, syncretised, and entangled within these nations due to the construction of the Temples. Conversely, the Temples arguably represent an attempt by the Church to more forcefully insert itself into the

increasingly secularised, religiously pluralistic nations of Australia and New Zealand. As well as being a symbol of localisation, the construction of Temples is also one of continued marginalisation.

Chapter V will explore the way in which the Church and its adherents have, since the construction of the Temples and a more noticeable localisation, become more interactive with the 'State' within these two countries. This chapter will examine several case studies that show both the institutional Church as well as individual Latter-day Saints becoming more involved with politics, court cases, and government reports. The complicated way in which religion in general has continued to have a relationship with the ostensibly secular nations of Australia and New Zealand will provide context in this chapter. These countries have, in the last half-century, actively promoted a type of secularism, yet we can see this secularism is contestable. Religious institutions and individuals, including Mormonism and Latter-day Saints, are still entangled with the politics, economics, and public consciousness of both Australia and New Zealand. However, the increased visibility of the Church and its members within Australian and New Zealand politics has been controversial, as will be discussed.

Chapter VI, pursues themes introduced in the previous chapter, examining the role that Mormons and the Church have had in the realm of sexual politics within both Australia and New Zealand. This chapter will contain examples including, but not limited to, the Church's involvement in the marriage equality postal survey in Australia, the representation of New Zealand's former Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern's disaffection from Mormonism, based on her pro-LGBTQIA+ ideology, and the controversial sacking of Israel Folau after his public displays of homophobia.

This chapter will discuss the ways in which both the institutional Church and individual politically active Latter-day Saints have forged a fraught alliance with the 'Christian-right' in regards to sexual politics in Australia. The overarching themes of this dissertation, that is the representation and reception of the Latter-day Saints within Australia and New Zealand, will be interrogated within the framework of the increased visibility and localisation of Mormonism and its adherents in the sexual politics of these nations.

Chapter VII will finish this dissertation with an examination of the Church's reception and representation in various popular culture creations and mass media in the last two decades, though this media interest and visibility has not necessarily represented a decreased marginalisation. This chapter will explore numerous ways in which Mormonism has become an ingrained feature of the Australian and New Zealand public consciousness due to these portrayals. A key feature of this chapter will be the international phenomenon of the *Book of Mormon Musical*, and how this was represented in broader Australian and New Zealand media. Other case studies include reference to Mormonism in the lyricism of popular 'drill' collectives and the associated violent criminality of current and former Mormons, and the analysis of three documentaries. The first two of these documentaries, *Shaun Micallef's Stairway To Heaven* (2017) and *Christians Like Us* (2019) were made by Australian public broadcaster *SBS*; though these offer two distinct narratives, they symbolise an important way in which Mormonism has been portrayed for mass consumption in an era of popular culture. The third documentary contrasts the former, as it was created by the Church in 2022; titled *Building for Eternity*, this film polemicises the construction of the Temple and Church College in Hamilton, New Zealand. This is an important cultural text, as it

shows the Church's efforts in narrating its own story, establishing its own representation, within a world of external popular culture portrayals. These case studies will be examined in line with the overarching theme of this chapter, that is the way in which the Church and its acolytes have been viewed within broader Australian and New Zealand popular culture within the last decade.

As will be seen throughout this dissertation, the representation and reception of Mormonism within Australia and New Zealand has shifted significantly from its introduction to these nations in the mid-nineteenth century. It has ebbed and flowed with the development of the religion in Australia and New Zealand, and interactions with the host societies' changing attitudes to race, immigration, and multiculturalism. Just as importantly, the dictates of the Church hierarchy in Salt Lake City have reverberated out to these spiritual outposts. The intersection of these two streams thus creates the uniqueness of Mormonism within Australia and New Zealand, its representation and reception.

In scholarship that analyses religious minority cultures, in recent years there has been an increase in mainstream and academic discussion focussed on immigrant ethno-Christianities and non-Christian religions within Australia and New Zealand.⁴ In

⁴ Saeed Abdullah, *Islam in Australia*, Allen and Unwin Publishing, Crows Nest, New South Wales, 2003; Raymond Apple, *The Jewish Way: Jews and Judaism in Australia*, The Great Synagogue, Sydney, New South Wales, 2002; Verne A. Dusenbery, 'Sikh Positionings in Australia and the "Diaspora" Concept', in Melvin Ember, Carol R. Ember, and Ian Skoggard (eds.), *Encyclopedias of Diasporas*, Springer Publishing, Boston, Massachusetts, pp. 285-91; H. Kemp, 'How the Dharma Landed: Interpreting the Arrival of Buddhism in New Zealand', *Journal of Global Buddhism*, Volume 7, February 2015, pp. 107-31; Douglas Pratt, 'Antipodean Ummah: Islam and Muslims in Australia and New Zealand', *Religion Compass*, Volume 5, Issue 12, December 2011, pp. 743-52; Martin Wood, 'Divine Appetites: Food Miracles, Authority and Religious Identities in the Gujarati Hindu Diaspora', *Journal of Contemporary Religion*, Volume 23, Issue 3, 2008, pp. 337-353; Karen Agutter, 'Fated to be Orphans: The Consequences of Australia's Post-War Resettlement Policy on Refugee Children', *Children Australia*, Volume 41, Issue 3, 2016, pp. 228; Miltiades Chryssavgis, 'Orthodoxy in Australia', *The*

contrast, this study will focus on a home-grown Christian minority and their transnational and local roots and identities. It will bring out relationships between minority and majority cultures in new ways, and put the tension between self-proclaimed and externally prescribed religious identity at the centre of inquiry. It further asks how Australian and New Zealand Mormon culture is in transition due to regional and immigrant ethnic minorities joining the church. For example, it will examine the fusion of Māori culture with the Latter-day Saint Church within and without New Zealand since the 1890s and, similarly, the influence of migrating Pasifika members on the Church in Australia from the 1970s onward.

Brief History of Mormonism

Before presenting the literature review, it is important here to provide a very brief history of Mormonism. As there are literal volumes that have been written about Mormonism's development in the United States, this will only provide an overview of this history as it relates to this dissertation so that the representation and reception of this religious group within Australia and New Zealand can be better understood.

Although significant debate rages as to the actual beginnings of Mormonism, the institution that is now known as the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was

Australasian Catholic Record, Volume 73, Issue 1, January 1996, pp. 23-37; Nicholas Ganzis, 'Hellenism in South Australia: Decline or Survival?' *Journal of the Historical Society of South Australia*, Issue 27, 1999, pp. 78; Tim Leslie, 'Copts Living in Fear After Egyptian Bloodbath', *ABC News* website, 5 January 2011, viewed 29/10/2018, <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2011-01-04/copts-living-in-fear-after-egyptian-bloodbath/1894610>

formally begun on the 6th of April 1830.⁵ The founder, Joseph Smith, Jr., was a farmer whose family lived in upstate New York. An integral part of Latter-day Saint belief is that Smith had supposedly struggled to determine which denomination was the correct one to bring about salvation. Smith claimed that in 1820 (the date is disputed in various sources), he had knelt to pray in the woods by his home about which Church he should join.⁶ Seized by what he described as a dark power, Smith called out to God after which two personages appeared to him, God the Father and Jesus Christ; this is referred to as 'the First Vision' in official Latter-day Saint theology.⁷ James Allen has argued, however, that many early converts to the Church were unaware of this Vision, as Smith wrote numerous, at times conflicting, versions of the event; however, as Allen explores, the First Vision did not assume importance in Latter-day Saint thought until the turn of the twentieth century, long after Smith's death.⁸ As part of this call to prophethood, in March 1830, Smith produced *The Book of Mormon*, which was heralded as new scripture of ancient origin.⁹ According to official Latter-day Saint history, *The Book of Mormon* was translated from Reformed Egyptian to English from gold-plates Joseph Smith had found buried near his family's farm.¹⁰ Smith was instructed to unearth this record, said to be a history of ancient American civilisation founded by ancient Israelite migrants who fled before the capture of Jerusalem by the Babylonians around 600 BCE.¹¹ According to official Latter-day Saint belief, Smith had been instructed to the location of the gold

⁵ Richard Bushman, *Mormonism: A Very Short Introduction*, Oxford University Press, 2008, pp. 19

⁶ Bushman, *Mormonism: A Very Short History*, pp. 19

⁷ Bushman, *Mormonism: A Very Short History*, pp. 29

⁸ James B. Allen, 'The Significance of Joseph Smith's 'First Vision' in Mormon Thought', *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Volume 1, Issue 3, 1966, pp. 29-46

⁹ Terryl Givens, *By the Hand of Mormon: The American Scripture that Launched a New World Religion*, Oxford University Press, 2002, pp. 6

¹⁰ William Davis, *Visions in a Seer Stone: Joseph Smith and the Making of the Book of Mormon*, University of North Carolina Press, 2020, pp. 1

¹¹ Davis, *Visions in a Seer Stone*, pp. 7

plates from the resurrected Angel Moroni, the last prophet of the ‘Nephites’, one of the civilisations in the scripture. Up until recently, the Church claimed that Smith had found these plates and utilised a ‘Urim and Thummim’, described as two stones bound by silver bows in a set of spectacles.¹² However, more recent Church narratives, which have been postulated by Church critiques for the last four decades and only ceded by the Church in the last few years, accept the use of ‘seer stones’ as well as, or instead of, the Urim and Thummim.¹³ As foregrounded by D. Michael Quinn in *Early Mormonism and the Magic World View*, Smith’s emphasis on the use of the Urim and Thummim, which does not appear in the earliest Latter-day Saint records, appeared in the 1830s as Smith attempted to distance himself from folk magic.¹⁴

Following the publication of *The Book of Mormon*, Smith sought to establish himself as a ‘modern-day prophet’ charged with ‘restoring’ the original Church created by Jesus Christ in the Bible; it was with this in mind that Smith founded his Church in April 1830. However, due to hostilities against the new religion, both cultural and legal, in the more Western States, Smith declared a prophecy in which God commanded the Mormons to ‘Gather’ in Ohio.¹⁵ At the same time, Smith received a revelation that the New Jerusalem, or Zion, was to be built on the American continent, in Jackson County, Missouri; following this, Latter-day Saints began migrating to both of these epicentres of Mormonism.¹⁶ This central experience, of persecution, revelation, migration, and

¹² Davis, *Visions in a Seer Stone*, pp. 7-8

¹³ ‘Urim and Thummim’, *The Joseph Smith Papers*, viewed 20/08/2023
<https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/topic/urim-and-thummim>

¹⁴ D. Michael Quinn, *Early Mormonism and the Magic World View*, Salt Lake City, Utah: Signature Books, 1998, pp. 40-44

¹⁵ Bushman, *Mormonism: A Very Short History*, pp. 24

¹⁶ Bushman, *Mormonism: A Very Short History*, pp. 24-25

Gathering appears frequently in Latter-day Saint history, and is important to the broader explorations of this dissertation.

By 1833, citizens of Missouri had become discontented with the growing Mormon population, and violently expelled the religious colonists; though Smith and his followers attempted to forcefully recover their lands, this was unsuccessful.¹⁷ As a result, Kirtland, Ohio burgeoned into a thriving capital of the new religion, and the Mormons constructed their first Temple there, completed in 1836.¹⁸ The following year, the first missionaries were called by Smith to preach Mormonism internationally; the field of their labour was Great Britain.¹⁹ Soon, thousands of international immigrants were arriving in Kirtland. By 1838, however, the Church was essentially split in half, after a scandal involving the Kirtland Safety Society, a quasi-bank established by Smith and other Church leaders.²⁰ After the Kirtland Safety Society became bankrupt in 1837, many disaffected Mormons left the religion; even many of the ecclesiastical leaders felt Smith to be a fallen prophet, and sought to overrule his leadership.²¹ Tensions reached a boiling point, and Smith and his faithful adherents again relocated, in 1838, to Far West, Missouri.²² However, the Missouri citizens still resented the influx of permanent Mormon residents, resulting in numerous violent confrontations, instigated by both the Mormons and Missourians. It was at this time that rumours emerged of roving Mormon

¹⁷ Bushman, *Mormonism: A Very Short History*, pp. 25

¹⁸ Bushman, *Mormonism: A Very Short History*, pp. 55

¹⁹ Malcolm Thorp, 'The Religious Backgrounds of Mormon Converts in Britain', *Journal of Mormon History*, Volume 4, 1977, pp. 53

²⁰ Scott Partridge, 'The Failure of the Kirtland Safety Society', *BYU Studies*, Volume 12, Issue 4, 1972, pp. 439-441

²¹ Partridge, 'The Failure of the Kirtland Safety Society', *BYU Studies*, Volume 12, Issue 4, 1972, pp. 439-441

²² Bushman, *Mormonism: A Very Short History*, pp. 25

fanatics under the direct order of Joseph Smith, called the Danites, or Destroying Angels.²³ Historians disagree about the extent of the Church leaderships involvement with the Danites, yet the violence of the vigilante group ignited a mass hysteria in Missouri and abroad.²⁴ In response to the violence, Governor of Missouri, Lilburn W. Boggs, issued an edict that 'Mormons must be treated as enemies, and must be exterminated or driven from the State if necessary for the public peace – their outrages are beyond all description.'²⁵ In actioning this order, Missouri militias and paramilitaries participated in the murder, rape, and forced dispossession of thousands of Mormons; Joseph Smith was also arrested as a result.²⁶

Following his release from prison, Smith and the remaining Mormons established a new home in Nauvoo, Illinois. It was in Nauvoo that Smith officially, albeit clandestinely, introduced the order of polygamy, though historians and contemporary Church members claim that Smith had suggested polygamy was to be instituted into the Church as early as 1831.²⁷ Todd Compton has argued that Smith had taken plural wives almost a decade before the official commencement.²⁸ In Nauvoo, polygamy was kept a secret from the majority of Church members, as well as the broader community of non-Latter-day Saints, though rumours about the practice began to swirl.²⁹ As such, Smith publicly

²³ Alexander Baugh, "We Have A Company of Danites In These Times": The Danites, Joseph Smith, and the 1838 Missouri-Mormon Conflict', *Journal of Mormon History*, Volume 45, Issue 3, 2019, pp. 1-3

²⁴ Baugh, "We Have A Company of Danites In These Times": The Danites, Joseph Smith, and the 1838 Missouri-Mormon Conflict', *Journal of Mormon History*, Volume 45, Issue 3, 2019, pp. 1-3

²⁵ 'The Missouri-Mormon War', *Missouri State Archives*, viewed 22/08/2023

<https://www.sos.mo.gov/archives/resources/mormon>

²⁶ 'The Missouri-Mormon War', *Missouri State Archives*

²⁷ Orson Pratt, 'Celestial Marriage, 7 October 1869', *Journal of Discourses*, Volume 13, 1871, pp. 192-193

²⁸ Todd Compton, 'Fanny Alger Smith Custer, Mormonism's First Plural Wife', *Journal of Mormon History*, Volume 22, Issue 1, 1996, pp. 174-205; Todd Compton, *In Sacred Loneliness: The Plural Wives of Joseph Smith*, Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1997

²⁹ Merina Smith, *Revelation, Resistance, and Mormon Polygamy: The Introduction and Implementation of the Principle, 1830-1853*, Utah State University Press, 2013, pp. 58-63

denied that he was a polygamist, despite the fact he and some of his associates were already involved in the practice.³⁰ Once again, Smith faced dissent from disaffected Latter-day Saints, who accused the prophet of excess and overstepping his religious calling. As a result, dissident Mormons established, in Nauvoo, a printing press entitled *The Nauvoo Expositor*.³¹ This press only had one run, on 6 June 1844, in which Smith was accused of practicing polygamy, and teaching that human beings could become deities. Both accusations were accurate. However, Smith, as mayor of Nauvoo, declared the press a 'public nuisance', and ordered the destruction of the printed papers; however, overzealous Mormons destroyed the actual printing press itself. In response, Illinois' government arrested Smith for inciting riot and treason against the state. Held at Carthage Jail, Illinois, Joseph Smith and his brother Hyrum were assassinated by a mob on the 30th of June 1844.³²

Following the death of the Smith brothers, the Church splintered into competing succession movements. Most of the members remained in Nauvoo, and, under the direction of Brigham Young and the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, made plans to head west. In 1847, after years of continued violence between the Mormons and Nauvoo citizens, Young and his fellow ecclesiastical leaders led the Saints west, first to Nebraska and then on to Utah, where a distinct theocratic polity was created.³³ In 1852, the Church officially pronounced polygamy as a Church practice and doctrine, and emphasised its

³⁰ Smith, *Revelation, Resistance, and Mormon Polygamy*, pp. 134-148

³¹ Smith, *Revelation, Resistance, and Mormon Polygamy*, pp. 180-183

³² Smith, *Revelation, Resistance, and Mormon Polygamy*, pp. 183

³³ David Bigler, *The Forgotten Kingdom: The Mormon Theocracy in the American West, 1847-1896*, University of Oklahoma Press, 1998

centrality in Mormon theology.³⁴ It was during this time that the Church doctrine that denied people of African descent the priesthood, and claimed these people were under a divine curse, became more entrenched in Mormon cosmology.³⁵ There were numerous reasons for this, including the argument that the Latter-day Saints sought to be viewed more favourably by more mainstream American culture, as well as the schism created by African-American convert William McCary.³⁶ In 1857, tensions between the United States government and the Mormon polity erupted into the so-called 'Mormon War'; though the United States army marched into Salt Lake City, there were relatively few casualties.³⁷ One of the most prominent encounters in this war was the 'Mountain Meadows Massacre', in which Mormons and their Native American allies massacred a pioneer train enroute to Oregon.³⁸ This was concealed by the Church; yet, when it was revealed, mass media condemnation of the massacre appeared in newspapers, not only in the United States, but also internationally.³⁹ It is important to note here that missionary work continued extensively under Brigham Young after the Mormons settled in Utah. During this period, many international Latter-day Saint converts were involved in the practice of 'the Gathering;' full faith in Mormonism required their migration to Utah in order to physically build Zion before the Second Coming of Jesus Christ.⁴⁰ This millenarianism contributed to the growth of the so-called 'Mormon

³⁴ Christine Talbot, *A Foreign Kingdom: Mormons and Polygamy in American Political Culture, 1852-1890*, University of Illinois Press, 2013

³⁵ W. Paul Reeve, *religion of a Different Color: Race and the Struggle for Mormon Whiteness*, University of Oxford Press, 2015

³⁶ Russell Stevenson, "'A Negro Preacher': The Worlds of Elijah Ables", *Journal of Mormon History*, Summer 2009, pp. 222-235

³⁷ David Bigler, *The Mormon Rebellion: America's First Civil War, 1857-1858*, University of Oklahoma Press, 2012

³⁸ Ronald Walker, Glen Leonard, and Richard Turley, *Massacre at Mountain Meadows: An American Tragedy*, Oxford University Press, 2008

³⁹ Sarah Gordon and Jan Shipp, 'Fatal Convergence in the Kingdom of God: The Mountain Meadows Massacre in American History', *Journal of the Early Republic*, Volume 37, Issue 2, 2017, pp. 3017-347

⁴⁰ Teryl Givens and Reid Nelson (eds.), *The Columbia Sourcebook of Mormons in the United States*, New York: Columbia University Press, 2014, pp. 149

Corridor', which stretched from Utah to Arizona, Nevada, Oregon, and into California; from the 1860s, Mormon colonies also appeared in Canada and Mexico.⁴¹

Though condemnation of polygamy remained high, Brigham Young never repealed the practice. However, following Young's death in 1890, prophet John Taylor received a revelation which banned the practice. This was entitled the 'Manifesto', and was put into effect immediately, although clandestine polygamist marriages still occurred.⁴² After the disavowal of polygamy, Utah was granted statehood; this allowed Latter-day Saints to elect politicians to American governance. This proved controversial, particularly with the election of Reed Smoot in 1907, and the vastly publicised hearings surrounding his election.⁴³ Following statehood, the Church has retained immense power in Utah, although not in the same way as Brigham Young's Mormon polity. By the turn of the twentieth century, the official 'Gathering' to Utah had ceased; as a result, the Church has grown into an international religion with congregations in most nations across the globe.⁴⁴ However, the Church has remained controversial for a number of reasons, particularly surrounding their doctrinal, political, and economic influence throughout the world. For example, it was not until 1978 that the Church repealed its ban on people of African descent.⁴⁵ Moreover, the Church has become politically involved in twentieth

⁴¹ Leonard Arrington and Davis Bitton, *The Mormon Experience: A History of the Latter-day Saints (Second Edition)*, Knopf Publishers, University of Illinois Press, 1992

⁴² Thomas Alexander, 'The Odyssey of a Latter-day Prophet: Wilford Woodruff and the Manifesto of 1890', *Journal of Mormon History*, Volume 17, 1881, pp. 169-206; D. Michael Quinn, 'LDS Church Authority and New Plural Marriages, 1890-1904', *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Volume 18, Issue 1, 1985, pp. 9-105

⁴³ Harvard Heath, 'Smoot Hearings', in *Encyclopaedia of Mormonism*, New York; Macmillan Publishing, 1992, pp. 1363-1364

⁴⁴ Gordon Shepherd, Gary Shepherd, and Ryan Cragun, *The Palgrave Handbook of Global Mormonism*, Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan Publishing, 2020

⁴⁵ Armand Mauss, 'The Fading of Pharaohs' Curse :The Decline and Fall of the Priesthood Bans Against Blacks in the Mormon Church', *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Volume 14, Issue 3, 1981, pp. 10-45

and twenty-first century political struggles, opposing the Equal Rights Amendment, same-sex marriage, and voluntary euthanasia.⁴⁶ In particular, the Church's involvement in the economic and political realms of various nations has become a source of unrest, as will be more thoroughly explored in this dissertation.

Methodology

Primarily, the methodology of this dissertation is historical textual analysis, is an examination of newspapers, pamphlets, official government policy, and archival documents written about Mormons within Australia and New Zealand. This will provide a proper context within which to place the experiences of Latter-day Saints, told from their own perspective. As well, expressions of religious identity will be used as primary sources, including pamphlets, hymns, poems, scripture, Church newspapers, prayers, and sermons. Moreover, local narratives written by faithful Latter-day Saint historians, as well as academic secondary sources written about Mormonism in Australia and New Zealand, will be consulted to provide a deeper analysis of the regional Church. There is also an element of Oral History, in which former Latter-day Saints, as well as a religious

⁴⁶ 'Euthanasia and Prolonging Life', *The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* website, last update 2023, viewed 23/08/2023, <https://newsroom.churchofjesuschrist.org/official-statement/euthanasia-and-prolonging-life>; Robert Morris, "What Though Our Rights Have Been Assailed?" Mormons, Politics, Same-Sex Marriage, and Cultural Abuse in the Sandwich Islands, *Women's Rights Law Reporter*, Volume 18, Issue 2, 1997, pp. 129-203; D. Michael Quinn, 'The LDS Church's Campaign Against the Equal Rights Amendment', *Journal of Mormon History*, Volume 20, Issue 2, 1994, pp. 85-155; David Scot and Boyd Petersen, 'Defending the Family, Defending the Faith: An Analysis of The Family: A Proclamation to the World, Religious Identity, and the Politics of Same-Sex Marriage in a Mormon Community', *Journal of GLBT Family Studies*, Volume 14, Issue 3, 2018, pp. 175-195; Neil Young, "'The ERA Is a Moral Issue": The Mormon Church, LDS Women, and the Defeat of the Equal Right Amendment', *American Quarterly*, Volume 59, Issue 3, 2007, pp. 623-644

historian and journalist, have been interviewed about their views on the Church's reception and representation within these nations. The original plans for this dissertation were to interview both faithful and dissident Mormons about their experiences as a religious minority in Australia and New Zealand. However, I was unable to gain permission from the Church to interview members; it was a condition of my Ethics Approval that I received such permission. As such, my interview participants were limited to dissident Latter-day Saints and non-members. Though these provide an invaluable perspective, this does leave gaps in the research that would be better understood if the perspective of Australian and New Zealand Latter-day Saints were able to be included.

Theories of Syncretism and Entanglement

Two interconnected theories that this dissertation uses to contextualise the Latter-day Saints' experience within Australia and New Zealand are 'religious syncretism' and 'entanglement.' The former is a term utilised by scholars to describe the process by which beliefs, worldviews, cosmologies, values, and ritual, can change, adapt, blend, and/or assimilate, when distinct ideologies, cultures, or religions come into contact.⁴⁷ The process by which this happens is almost universally through the collision of a more aggressive or dominant cultural and/or religious entity, and a more localised or Indigenous one. It is important to note here that whilst many scholars still attest to the

⁴⁷ See, for example:

Bezklubaya, Svetlana A. "Religious Syncretism: To the Origins of Culture-Creative Potential." *Nova Prishtnost* 19, no. 3 (2021): 491–508; William H Harrison, *In Praise of Mixed Religion: The Syncretism Solution in a Multifaith World*. 1st ed. Montreal [Quebec: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2014; Anita M. Leopold, and Jeppe S. Jensen, eds. *Syncretism in Religion: A Reader*. London: Routledge, 2014; Carl F Starkloff, *A Theology of the In-between the Value of Syncretic Process*. 1st ed. Milwaukee, WI: Marquette University Press, 2002;

process of syncretisation, there is a clear articulation that the idea of ‘pure’ or ‘uncorrupted’ spiritualities and/or cultures, of which syncretism was originally theorised, has largely been dismissed.⁴⁸ However, the core concept of syncretism, namely the way in which religions, identities, rituals, and beliefs change or adapt, and the human creativity and agency involved in this process, is nonetheless foundational to religious studies, and indeed to this thesis.

In the Australian and New Zealand context, syncretism has usually, though not exclusively, been deployed in discussions surrounding how Indigenous peoples of these nations have interacted with, adopted, and blended Indigenous worldviews and cosmologies with those of the colonisers.⁴⁹ This has been done both by religious studies scholars, as well as historians and anthropologists. Though historical scholarship has at times been charged with Social Darwinist thought, more recent literature has attempted to bring the subaltern voices to the fore and articulate the nuanced, complicated way in which individuals and communities react and respond to the imposition of a foreign and colonial religion and culture. Other scholarship that uses the concept of syncretism within Australia and New Zealand has focused on immigrant populations, and their

⁴⁸ Patrik Fridlund and Mika Vähäkangas, eds. *Theological and Philosophical Responses to Syncretism : Beyond the Mirage of Pure Religion*. Leiden, The Netherlands ; Brill, 2018;

⁴⁹ See, for example:

John Gordon and Fiona Magowan, “Beyond Syncretism: Indigenous Expressions of World Religions.” *The Australian Journal of Anthropology* 12, no. 3 (2001); Martin George Holmes. "Between God and a Hard Place: A Re-examination of Church Missionary Society Evangelisation of Māori, 1814–1840 by Michael Corboy." *New Zealand Journal of History* 56, no. 2 (2022): 118-119; Anne Keary, “Colonial Constructs and Cross-Cultural Interaction: Comparing Missionary/Indigenous Encounters in Northwestern America and Eastern Australia.” In *Beyond Conversion and Syncretism*, 1st ed., 243–98. New York: Berghahn Books, 2011; Byron William Rangiwai, “Atuatanga and Syncretism: A View of Māori Theology.” *Te Kaharoa*, 2018; Byron William Rangiwai. “Maori Theology and Syncretism.” *AlterNative : An International Journal of Indigenous Peoples* 17, no. 3 (2021): 425–32; David S Trigger and Wendy Asche. "Christianity, cultural change and the negotiation of rights in land and sea." *The Australian Journal of Anthropology* 21, no. 1 (2010): 90-109

assimilation into broader society, whether during or after restrictive immigration policies.⁵⁰ Of particular interest, scholars have examined how both ethnic and religious minorities have adapted, maintained, and inserted relocated cultures into the new dominant host culture.

This dissertation utilises this theory in order to explore the push and pull of Mormonism's unique religious beliefs, rituals, and culture as it was transplanted within both Australia and New Zealand, and how it morphed as it collided with the newly formed antipodean colonies and developed to its contemporary position. As will be argued, the hybrid, or syncretised, spirituality that emerged from this transplant and subsequent collision was unique from the development of the Church within the religions' metropole in the United States. Moreover, both Australian and New Zealander converts' interaction with the religion, based upon a more rooted existence, particularly after the turn of the century, created new strains of the religion. This interaction, which led to a localisation and syncretism, has been a fluid and complex reality, in which the development of Mormonism in these nations has been influenced by the reception and representation of it and its adherents by the broader society.

⁵⁰ See, for example:

Ibrahim Wade Ata, *Us & Them: Muslim-Christian Relations and Cultural Harmony in Australia*. Bowen Hills, Qld: Australian Academic Press, 2009; Yaghoob Foroutan. "Ethnic or Religious Identities?: Multicultural Analysis in Australia from Socio-Demographic Perspective." *Journal of Ethnic and Cultural Studies* 7, no. 1 (2020): 1–19; Norman Habel, "Theoretical Framework for Multiculturalism and Religion." *Australian Association for the Study of Religions Book Series* (2022): 62-62; Ruud Koopmans. "Multiculturalism and Immigration: A Contested Field in Cross-National Comparison." *Annual Review of Sociology* 39, no. 1 (2013): 147–69; Sally McAra., *Land of Beautiful Vision : Making a Buddhist Sacred Place in New Zealand*. 1st ed. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2007;

A related theme that will be explored within this thesis is the theory and reality of 'entanglement.' This term has been utilised by scholars to describe the messy, complicated process by which religions become entwined with politics, economics, and public consciousness. What, then, can be said of minority religions, such as Mormonism, that attempt to exert political, cultural, and economic control on nations, even if unsuccessful? How is this measured, represented, and dissected by politicians and media? How is this viewed by more mainstream religious institutions?

Important here is a brief theoretical charting of what 'entanglement' means within the context of religion and broader society. Scholars of this theory stress the importance of religion in both the historical and contemporary processes of nation-building. This is evidenced both in the sanction of state religions, for example, or conversely, when religion or spirituality has been repressed by the state, after which religious observance becomes a form of protest. More recent entanglement has appeared, however, in the past century and has accompanied greater globalisation. For example, Xuefei Shi and Hangwei Li explore the phenomenon of diasporic Chinese Buddhist communities in Africa, and their 'entanglement with politics and the contemporary Chinese transnationalism.'⁵¹ Scholars such as Josias Tembo and Anya Topolski have examined the entanglement of race and religion in Africa, whilst a collection of essays edited by Elżbieta Goździak and Izabella Main has explored the way in which religion is deeply entwined within both the rhetoric and lived experience of forced migration.⁵² Similarly,

⁵¹ Xuefei Shi and Hangwei Li, 'Chinese Buddhism in Africa: The Entanglement of Religion, Politics, and Diaspora', *Contemporary Buddhism*, Volume 23, Issue 1-2, 2022, pp. 108

⁵² Elżbieta Goździak and Izabella Main, *Debating Religion and Forced Migration Entanglements*, Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2023; Josias Tembo and Anya Topolski, 'Exploring the Entanglement of Race and Religion in Africa', *Social Dynamics*, Volume 48, Issue 3, 2022, pp. 377-388

Heiko Beyer and Annette Schnabel have argued that religion is often a flashpoint for individuals, communities, and nations during crises, and argue that countries with greater economic inequality are more hostile to perceived 'others', including religious minorities.⁵³ More theoretically, legal and religious historian Rabiya Akande, in her book *Entangled Domains: Empire, Religion, and Law in Northern Nigeria*, argued:

tension arising from the tenacity of religion and the ineluctability of claims of separation has heightened the need to understand how the modern state regulates religion and religious difference through its enactment of secular governmentality, to unveil the ambivalence that mode of governance entails, to identify the forms of empowerment and disempowerment it fosters, and to scrutinise how subjects contest its consequences.⁵⁴

This astute observation helps to ground the theoretical foundations of this thesis. Akande articulates that the overt claims by nations of secularisation, and their efforts to legally regulate spiritual systems, complicates the role of religions throughout the world. When a minority religion such as Mormonism appears to exert a perceptible influence in the politics, economics, and social milieu of nations such as Australia and New Zealand, there is evident pushback from some segments of society. Nevertheless, this influence and its criticisms represents a form of entanglement that is important to observe.

When discussing this theme of the 'entanglement' of Mormonism and broader Australian and New Zealand society, there are two key elements that must be dissected. The first is the existence of the institutional Church, anchored in Salt Lake City, and its

⁵³ Heiko Beyer and Annette Schnabel, 'The Entanglement of Religion and Politics in Europe: How and Why Religious and Political Worldviews Merge in Times of Uncertainty', *Interdisciplinary Journal of Research on Religion*, Volume 15, 2019

⁵⁴ Rabiya Akande, *Entangled Domains: Empire, Law, and Religion in Northern Nigeria*, Cambridge University Press, 2023, pp. 1

existence as a religious entity with influence in the economic, political, and public sphere of various nations around the world. As will be discussed, though the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints began as a small religion, it has blossomed into a powerful, wealthy religion with real-world influence. With this increase in wealth and standing, the Church has been criticised for its efforts to influence various nations; for example, this has occurred through the funding of religiously-motivated political activism, in particular against same sex marriage. This theme is articulated in detail in anthropologist Jason Palmer's 'Be Careful, Ye Catholics: The Entanglement of Mormonism and Money in Peru'; here, Palmer argues that Mormonism's global influence, in this case looking at Peru, has been negatively received for numerous reasons.⁵⁵ Importantly, Palmer argues that the perceived wealth of the Church, and its attempts to solidify itself within the Catholic-majority country with the construction of Temples, has led to both begrudging acceptance and anti-Mormonism from swathes of Peruvian society. Palmer articulates, however, that the influence of a religion, in this case Mormonism, can exist beyond actual realities: the *perception* of Mormonism, and its ties to wealth and globalisation in Peru is just as important as its actual entanglement. This is essential for this thesis. As will be seen in the first half of this dissertation, throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the perception of Mormonism's influence within and threat it posed to both Australia and New Zealand, compounded by a small, migratory Latter-day Saint community and broader anti-Mormonism, marginalised the religion and its adherents. Yet, this marginalisation was also a form of entanglement, as though Mormonism remained peripheral, it became prominent in public consciousness.

⁵⁵ Jason Palmer, 'Be Careful, Ye Catholics: The Entanglement of Mormonism and Money in Peru', *Religions*, Volume 12, 2021, pp. 246

In relation to this dissertation, this overt entanglement by the institutional Church in the public, political, and economic realm of Australia and New Zealand has been criticised by media, other religious leaders, and some politicians. As this dissertation will explore, there has been a dramatic shift in the perception of the Church in these nations, and the way its entanglement in broader society has been represented. As the development of Mormonism in Australia and New Zealand has been starkly different, this dissertation argues the way in which the religion has become entwined has followed different routes.

Yet, more permanent presence, and thus entanglement, of the religion has been reinforced with the construction of Temples. This dissertation argues the building of these sacred places is pivotal in the more thorough entanglement of the Church in the public, political, and economic realms of Australia and New Zealand that has occurred within the last half-century. As the Church has become more stable and less peripheral, it has become more thoroughly entwined within the societies of these nations. The theorisation by Julie Allen, in her book *Danish but not Lutheran: The Impact of Mormonism on Danish Cultural Identity, 1850-1920* helps to ground this theme. Though Allen discusses the specifics of Mormonism in Denmark, her argument is applicable globally, and has been utilised throughout this thesis. Allen stated that:

This history of Mormonism's gradual, contested incorporation into Danish culture illuminates how religious belief and cultural identity... inform each other in an era of global migration and ethnic diversity, as well as what role popular media can and should play in such discussions...⁵⁶

⁵⁶ Julie Allen, *Danish but not Lutheran: The Impact of Mormonism on Danish Cultural Identity, 1850-1920*, Salt Lake City: The University of Utah Press, 2017, pp. 3

This idea that identity is informed by the perceived and articulated 'other', whether this perception is accurate or not, is central to the broader theories discussed. As will be seen throughout this thesis, this process is complicated. In some regards it shows assimilation, yet it also retains a distinction from this host(ile) culture, and maintains a transnational interconnectedness with strong hierarchical roots to the Church's metropole, Salt Lake City. Thus, there is an ebb and flow of identities, ideologies, and experiences that become complexly intersected with the actions of the institutional Church and its repercussions within Australia and New Zealand.

This complexity becomes more evident when individuals, rather than the institutional Church, is the focus of inquiry. For example, this dissertation will examine the lives, words, and actions of individuals who have become prominent in the public realm of both Australia and New Zealand, and who are Latter-day Saints. For some of these individuals, their religion is the motivation for their foray into the public realm. Here, it is important to note that the Church has actively encouraged its members to become involved in the broader societies, including politics, that its members live in across the world. This has made the localisation of Mormonism within Australia and New Zealand complicated; the actions and prominence of individual Latter-day Saints, are distinct and separate from the institutional Church, but nonetheless represents this uneasy integration.

Thus, this dissertation explores the way in which Mormonism, as both an implanted and localised spirituality, has become entangled within Australia and New Zealand's broader society. Throughout this thesis, terms such as 'entangle', 'entwine' and 'enmesh', in

conjunction with 'syncretism' and 'localisation', will also be utilised in order show Mormonism's gradual incorporation within Australia and New Zealand, through both the actions of the institutional Church and individual Latter-day Saints.

Literature Review

This dissertation draws from a wide range of disciplines, theories, and methodologies. As such, this literature review is structured thematically and chronologically: it will first examine the broader theories and methodologies of religious studies, secularisation, migration and diaspora studies. Following this, a review of international Mormon Studies will be presented, before an examination of literature in relation to Australian and New Zealand Mormonism. This will be done chronologically so that the gradual developments in these fields of research are presented. However, as there are troves of scholarship in these fields, only the most influential literature will be explored in depth.

Religious Studies

Religious Studies has an immense scholarship, with literature seeking to understand aspects such as, but not limited to, the process of 'othering' that occurs towards those external to a belief system; religious conflict as the collision of 'powerful stories and possible worlds'; religion in an increasingly 'global village'; and the curation of identity through sacred ritual, texts, and architecture.⁵⁷ Within both Australian and New Zealand

⁵⁷ See, for example:

John Chitakure, *The Pursuit of the Sacred: An Introduction to Religious Studies*, Oregon: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2016, pp. 10; Jennifer Eyl and Erin Roberts (eds.), *Christian Tourist Attractions, Mythmaking, and Identity Formation*, New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2018; R. Ruuard Ganzevoort, 'Introduction' in R. Ruuard Ganzevoort, Maaïke de Hardt, and Michael Scherer-Rath (eds.) *Religious Stories We Live By:*

studies of religion, the literature has focussed on a number of key themes that builds upon existent and emergent scholarship.⁵⁸ There is common consensus, however, that emphasises the complex nature of religion, individualism, and group identity, particularly when these spiritualities are imported to settler-colonial nations, such as Australia and New Zealand. Along a similar theme, scholars such as Hilary Carey, Michael Gladwin, Rowan Strong, Colin Brown, Marie Peters, and Jane Teal, have argued that in the colonial era, Church of England clergy were active in promoting British culture in the new imperial outposts in Australia and New Zealand.⁵⁹ As such, though the existence of minor Christian

Narrative Approaches in Theology and Religious Studies, Leiden and Boston: Brill Publishing, 2014, pp. 1-2; ; Mark Juergensmeyer, Kathleen Moore, and Dominic Sachsenmeir, 'Introduction: "Thank God We're Not Like Them"', in ⁵⁷ Mark Juergensmeyer, Kathleen Moore, and Dominic Sachsenmeir (eds.), *Religious Othering: Global Dimensions*, London and New York: Routledge Publishing, 2023, pp. 1-13; Alex Norman, *Spiritual Tourism: Travel and Religious Practice in Western Society*, London, New York: Continuum, 2011; ⁵⁸ These include, but are not limited to, the role of particular denominations, for example, the Church of England or Catholicism, in the colonisation enterprise; the experiences of minority Christianity adherent, such as the Quakers or Baptists; the uneasy separation of Church and State in these colonies, and later, nations; and the histories of ethnic-entwined minority Christianities, such as Irish Catholicism, German Moravians, and Greek Orthodox. See, for example:

Hilary Carey (ed.), *Empires of Religion*, London: Palgrave, MacMillan, 2008; Charlotte Baines and Marian Quartly, 'Sites of Contention; Interreligious Relations in Colonial Australia', *Studies in Religion*, Volume 42, Issue 2, 2013, pp. 158-172; Leigh Beaton, 'Scottish Settlement and Identity in Western Australia: Arrivals 1829-1850', *Journal of Australian Colonial History*, Volume 4, Issue 2, 2003, pp. 71-; Stephanie Burley, 'Engagement with Empires: Irish Catholic Female Religious Teachers in Colonial South Australia, 1868-1901', *Irish Educational Studies*, Volume 31, Issue 2, 2012, pp. 175-190; Zoel Laidlaw, *Protecting the Empire's Humanity: Thomas Hodgkin and British Colonial Activism 1830-1870*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021; Meredith Lake, 'Protestant Christianity and the Colonial Environment: Australia as a Wilderness in the 1830s and 1840s', *Journal of Australian Colonial History*, Volume 11, 2009, pp. 21-44; Howard Le Couter, 'Upholding Protestantism: The Fear of Tractarianism in the Anglican Church in Early Colonial Queensland', *The Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, Volume 62, Issue 2, 2011, pp. 297-317; Felicity Jenz, *German Moravian Missionaries in the British Colony of Victoria, 1848-1908: Influential Strangers*, Boston and Leiden: Brill Publishing, 2010;

Kevin Molloy, 'Devotion and Acculturation: Irish Print Culture and the Ethnic-Religious Interface in Colonial New Zealand, 1873-1914', *Script and Print*, Volume 29, Issues 1-4, pp. 205-220; Peter Monteath, *German Travellers, Settlers, and their Descendants in South Australia*, Kent Town: Wakefield Press, 2011; Hugh Myers, 'Irish Convicts and Sectarian Conflict in Colonial Australia', *Journal of the Australian Catholic Historical Society*, Volume 43, 2022, pp. 25; Michael Sutherland (ed.), *Baptists in Colonial New Zealand Documents Illustrating Baptist Life and Development*, Auckland: New Zealand Baptist Research and Historical Society, 2002; Valerie Wallace, *Scottish Presbyterianism and Settler Colonial Politics: Empire of Dissent*, Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2018; Pamela Welch, 'Constructing Colonial Christianities: With Particular Reference to Anglicanism in Australia, ca 1850-1940', *Journal of Religious History*, Volume 32, Issue 2, 2008, pp. 234

⁵⁹ Hilary Carey, *God's Empire: Religion and Colonialism in the British World, c. 1801-1908*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011; Colin Brown, Marie Peters, and Jane Teal, *Shaping a Colonial Church: Bishop Harper and the Anglican Diocese of Christchurch, 1856-1890*, Canterbury: University of Canterbury Press, 2006; Michael Gladwin, *Anglican Clergy in Australia, 1788-1850: Building a British World*, Boydell

denominations are an integral aspect of the religious development during the colonial period, the primacy of the Church of England as a quasi-official arm of the British Crown helps to contextualise the way in which Mormonism was viewed and represented by the populations of the Antipodean colonies. Yet, it was not just Anglicans that had disdain for the Mormons, as will be seen, but broader swathes of the colonial population.

Literature surrounding how religions adapt to their colonial environments has also informed the theoretical underpinnings of this dissertation. For example, Pamela Welch, writing of the Anglican Church in colonial Australia, wrote:

Colonial Christianities are commonly regarded as transplants, as re-located versions of their churches of origin... however, settler churches ought to be regarded not as transplants, but as variants – and highly distinctive variants – of their parent churches.⁶⁰

Utilising this astute observation, this dissertation argues that whilst Mormonism in Australia and New Zealand had strong transnational links to Church headquarters, it has become its own variance. The natural evolution of these variant Mormonism(s) in these nations is fuelled by the collisions of representation, tensions, and adaptations Latter-day Saints have experienced in Australia and New Zealand.

and Brewer, 2015; Joseph Hardwick, 'Anglican Church Expansion and the Recruitment of Colonial Clergy for New South Wales and the Cape Colony, c. 1790-1850', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, Volume 37, Issue 3, 2009, pp. 361-381; Paul Richardson, 'Religions and Missionaries around the Pacific, 1500-1900.' *Anglican and Episcopal History* 76, no. 4 (2007): 562; Rowan Strong, 'The Reverend John Wollaston and Colonial Christianity in Western Australia, 1840-1863', *Journal of Religious History*, Volume 25, Issue 3, 2001, pp. 261-285

⁶⁰ Welch, 'Constructing Colonial Christianities: With Particular Reference to Anglicanism in Australia, ca 1850-1940', *Journal of Religious History*, Volume 32, Issue 2, 2008, pp. 234

Secularisation

Critical to understanding the experiences and existence of Mormons and their religion in Australia and New Zealand is the conflicts and tensions surrounding secularisation within these nations. Though there is significant academic discussion about what secularisation is, and how deeply embedded it is within both Australia and New Zealand, a useful definition is that it is the gradual removal of religiosity and sectarianism from official government actions and the public life of a nation.⁶¹ Though secularisation is posited as a necessity in the guaranteeing of freedom of belief and association for religious minorities, especially when there has historically been a dominant religion, the success of this is heavily debated.⁶² In both nineteenth-century Australia and New Zealand, the Church of England served as both an official and de facto state religion,

⁶¹ Stephen A Chavura, John Gascoigne, and Ian Tregenza. *Reason, Religion, and the Australian Polity: A Secular State?* Abingdon, Oxon ; Routledge, 2019. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429467059>. Adam Possamai and David Tittensor. *Religion and Change in Australia*. Milton: Taylor & Francis Group, 2022.

Adam Possamai, "Australia's 'shy' de-Secularisation Process." In *Religion, Spirituality and the Social Sciences: Challenging Marginalisation*, 23–36. Bristol, UK: Policy Press, 2008. <https://doi.org/10.51952/9781847423634.ch002>.

Douglas Pratt, "Secular New Zealand and Religious Diversity: From Cultural Evolution to Societal Affirmation." *Social Inclusion* 4, no. 2 (2016): 52–64. <https://doi.org/10.17645/si.v4i2.463>.

Timothy Stanley (ed.), *Religion after Secularization in Australia*. 1st ed. New York: Palgrave Macmillan US, 2015. <https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137551382>.

Troughton, Geoff. "Anti-Churchianity, Discursive Christianity, and Religious Change in the Twentieth-Century." *Journal of New Zealand Studies*, no. 17 (2014): 93–106. <https://doi.org/10.26686/jnzs.v0i17.2092>.

Kevin Ward, "Religion in New Zealand since the 1960s: Some Sociological Perspectives." *New Zealand Sociology* 31, no. 3 (2016): 186–206.

⁶² Steve Bruce. *Secularization in Defence of an Unfashionable Theory*. Oxford, England: Oxford University Press, 2011.

Kostanca Dhima and Matt Golder. "Secularization Theory and Religion." *Politics and Religion* 14, no. 1 (2021): 37–53. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1755048319000464>.

Shai M Dromi and Samuel D Stabler. "Good on Paper: Sociological Critique, Pragmatism, and Secularization Theory." *Theory and Society* 48, no. 2 (2019): 325–50. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11186-019-09341-9>.

Peter E. Gordon, *Migrants in the Profane: Critical Theory and the Question of Secularization*. 1st ed. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2020. <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv18sqz23>.

Charles Turner, *Secularization*. 1st ed. Abingdon, Oxon ; Routledge, 2019.

Warner, Rob. *Secularization and Its Discontents*. 1st ed. London ; Continuum, 2010. <https://doi.org/10.5040/9781472549341>.

enforcing the morals, beliefs, and religiosity of the British Empire on its far-flung subjects.⁶³ Simultaneously, there was a certain amount of religious freedom in the antipodean colonies, born out of the unique era of so-called ‘dissenting denominations’ from the United Kingdom and Germany, Protestant sects that pushed for legislation that did not repress their activities.⁶⁴ Despite this push and pull, the Church of England still dominated as the mainstream religion throughout the majority of the antipodean colonies of Australia and New Zealand.

In the early twentieth century, sectarian tensions in both Australia and New Zealand arose around theological, ritual, and cultural differences of Protestantism (mostly, but not exclusively, Anglican) and Catholicism. The latter had largely been brought to these colonies through the migration of Irish-Catholic convicts or free colonials.⁶⁵ In both Australia and New Zealand after the turn of the century, Catholicism was largely, though certainly not universally, the religion of the working class, and was eventually associated with unionism and anti-communist political activism.⁶⁶ These sectarian tensions, broadly

⁶³ Andrew Butcher, “From Settlement to Super-Diversity: The Anglican Church and New Zealand’s Diversifying Population.” *Journal of Anglican Studies* 15, no. 1 (2017): 108–29. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1740355316000267>; Carey and Gascoigne. *Church and State in Old and New Worlds*, 1st ed. Leiden; Brill, 2011; Gladwin, *Anglican Clergy in Australia, 1788–1850: Building a British World*. NED-New edition. Vol. 91. United Kingdom: Boydell & Brewer, 2015; Christopher Honoré, “The Anglican Church in Aotearoa, New Zealand, and Polynesia” In Justyn Terry, Leslie Steffensen, Barney Hawkins, and Ian Markjam (eds), *The Wiley-Blackwell Companion to the Anglican Communion*, Chichester, UK: John Wiley & Sons, Ltd, 2013, pp. 373–386. <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118320815.ch34>; Meredith Lake, “Provincialising God: Anglicanism, Place, and the Colonisation of Australian Land.” *Journal of Religious History* 35, no. 1 (2011): 72–90. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9809.2010.00972.x>.

⁶⁴ Eva Bishcoff, *Benevolent Colonizers in Nineteenth-Century Australia: Quaker Lives and Ideals*, Cham: Springer International Publishing, 20205

⁶⁵ Hall, Dianne, and Elizabeth Malcolm. “‘English Institutions and the Irish Race’: Race and Politics in Late Nineteenth-Century Australia.” *The Australian Journal of Politics and History* 62, no. 1 (2016): 1–15. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ajph.12204>; Anne McMahon, *Convicts at Sea: The Voyages of the Irish Convict Transports to Van Diemen’s Land, 1840–1853*. Hobart, Tas: Anne McMahon, 2011; Jim McAloon. “Irish Immigrants And The Middle Class In Colonial New Zealand, 1890–1910.” In *Bridging Boundaries in British Migration History*, 177–. Anthem Press, 2020. <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv20pxz0t.15>.

⁶⁶ Reid, Nicholas. “Struggle for Souls: Catholicism and Communism in Twentieth-Century New Zealand.” *Australian Historical Studies* 37, no. 128 (2006): 72–88. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10314610608601220>;

speaking, lasted until the 1970s. Religious historian Timothy Jones argues that fear of the counterculture, including women's liberation and the sexual revolution, created a fracture in Australian culture, and helped to loosely unify these disparate religious threads in the emergence of the politically active New Christian Right.⁶⁷ Informed by similar activities in the United States, the Australian New Christian Right movement was, arguably, more concerned with the radical shifts in culture and society than it was theological differences that had occupied denominational interactions in the century or so previously. Since the 1970s, as there have been bipartisan socio-political efforts to pivot both Australia and New Zealand into a more secular, multicultural, and religiously pluralistic society, governments have faced numerous challenges.

Perhaps most evident are the challenges governments face in protecting the rights of individuals with vastly differing worldviews and identities, based on religion, gender, or sexuality. For example, what role does the government have in ensuring the rights of LGBTQIA+ people and those who belong to various religions are protected, even if these seem contrary? What role does the law play? What role do religious institutions, activist organisations, pressure groups, politicians, commissions, and other bodies have in promoting a secular society that allows an uneasy truce between conflicting beliefs and worldviews? How does this extend beyond Christianity and into a multicultural society where Islam, Hinduism, Judaism, and a host of other world religions exist? How do issues of class, gender, sexuality, and race play into these overarching questions around

Malcolm Saunders. "The Origins and Early Years of 'The Movement' in South Australia: 1932-48." *Journal of the Historical Society of South Australia*, no. 40 (2012): 81-95.

⁶⁷ Timothy Willem Jones, "Australian Secularism, the Sexual Revolution and the Making of the New Christian Right." *Australian Historical Studies* 52, no. 3 (2021), pp. 317-30. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1031461X.2021.1898652>.

secularisation in the nations of Australia and New Zealand? Finally, where does Mormonism fit into these questions of secularisation? Sociologist Adam Possamai has articulated that rather than religion retreating from contemporary Australian public life, as had been predicted by earlier scholars, that there has instead been an ‘increased decentralisation, pluralism, and voluntarism of religious life... and that these are not signs of religion’s demise, but of its vitality.’⁶⁸ As shall be explored throughout this thesis, Mormonism sits rather uncomfortably within the ebbs and flows of secularisation in Australia and New Zealand, as it is a minority religion that occupies a rather visible, localised presence, but is also marginalised in terms of real influence. Despite this marginalisation, it has sought to insert itself more forcefully into the public realms of Australia and New Zealand as both an institution, and through its members.

Multiculturalism and Social Cohesion

Closely related to the idea and reality of secularisation is the underpinning legislative shifts that have enforced multiculturalism within the last half-decade in both Australia and New Zealand. Arguably, both Australia and New Zealand have struggled to develop from British colonies built upon the invasion of Indigenous lands to advocating and enforcing multicultural societies. In particular, Australia has struggled due to the promotion of its overtly racist immigration policies that coalesced into the ‘White Australia Policy’, which dictated the societal makeup of the nation until its gradual dismantling by the late 1970s.⁶⁹ New Zealand, too, had similar migration laws that sought

⁶⁸ Possamai, “Australia’s ‘shy’ de-Secularisation Process.” In *Religion, Spirituality and the Social Sciences: Challenging Marginalisation*, pp. 25

⁶⁹ Riccardo Armillei and Bruno Mascitelli. “From ‘White Australia Policy’ to ‘Multicultural’ Australia: Italian and Other Migrant Settlement in Australia.” In *Living in Two Homes*, 113–34. Emerald Publishing Limited, 2017. <https://doi.org/10.1108/978-1-78635-781-620171005>; Phil Griffiths. (2023). ‘White Australia and the

white immigrants to the nation in the twentieth century.⁷⁰ However, labour shortages and economic determinants have sought to create multicultural societies out of the overtly racialised polities that were curated during the early twentieth century.⁷¹

It is within multicultural societies that difficulties and questions arise in the balancing of rights of those of competing worldviews. With this, the role of governments, legislation, and the courts needs to be considered when discussing multiculturalism, and the guaranteeing of rights of religious and cultural minorities.⁷² Scholars such as Gary Bouma, Peter Beyer, Anna Halafoff, and Lori Beaman have articulated the challenges of multiculturalism within contemporary settler-colonial nations, including Australia, New Zealand, and Canada, and the uneasy growing pains associated with this shift in societal attitudes, legislation, and demographics.⁷³ The theorisations articulated by these authors will be more thoroughly integrated in later chapters. In Australia, this is perhaps best articulated in the attempted passing of the Religious Freedom Bill in 2019 by then-Prime Minister Scott Morrison. This controversial bill, that sought to protect the right of people

labour movement', *The Queensland Journal of Labour History*, 37, pp. 16–44; Matthew Jordan, "'Not on Your Life': Cabinet and Liberalisation of the White Australia Policy, 1964–67." *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 46, no. 1 (2018): 169–201. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03086534.2017.1391485>.

⁷⁰ A. Bashford, 'Immigration restriction: rethinking period and place from settler colonies to postcolonial nations', *Journal of Global History*, 9(1), 26–48. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S174002281300048X>

⁷¹ Banivanua Mar, T. (2016). *Decolonisation and the Pacific: Indigenous Globalisation and the Ends of Empire* (1st ed.). Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781139794688>

⁷² James T. Richardson, "Managing Minority Religious and Ethnic Groups in Australia: Implications for Social Cohesion." *Social Compass* 60, no. 4 (2013): 579–90. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0037768613508056>

⁷³ Lori Beaman, *Defining harm: religious freedom and the limits of the law* (1st ed.). UBC Press. <https://doi.org/10.59962/9780774855488>; zLori Beaman, *Reasonable accommodation: managing religious diversity*. UBC Press, 2012; Peter Beyer and Lori Beaman, *Religion, globalization and culture*. Brill, 2007; Lori Beaman and Peter Beyer, *Religion and diversity in Canada* (1st ed.). Brill, 2008; Gary Bouma, *Australian soul: religion and spirituality in the twenty-first century*. Cambridge University Press, 2006; Gary Bouma, 'The role of demographic and socio-cultural factors in Australia's successful multicultural society: How Australia is not Europe. *Journal of Sociology (Melbourne, Vic.)*, 52(4), 2016, pp. 759–771. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1440783315584210>; Gary Bouma and Anna Halafoff, *Australia's Changing Religious Profile—Rising Nones and Pentecostals, Declining British Protestants in Superdiversity: Views from the 2016 Census*. *Journal for the Academic Study of Religion*, Volume 30, Issue 2, 2017, pp. 129–143, <https://doi.org/10.1558/jasr.34826>

to voice their religious views without fear of retaliation even if it is to the detriment of their fellow citizens.⁷⁴ Though unsuccessful, this attempt to pass this piece of legislation is evidence of the continued difficulties that governments have in maintaining a secularised, multicultural nation. Page | 47

It is within this context that the experiences of Latter-day Saints and their religion should be inserted within the academic literature. As will be seen, Mormonism has traditionally been seen outside of the mainstream Christian tradition. Though this view is rejected by Latter-day Saints, the Church represents an interesting case study of a religious minority that has existed since the colonies but has come under legislative and societal scrutiny. The representation and experiences of the Mormons is an early example of how a pluralistic religious society within both Australia and New Zealand, even in its nascent stages, has struggled to account for diverse religious traditions. It is crucial here to state that the Latter-day Saints are not the only religious minority to have experienced such hostility, especially with the pivot towards multiculturalism in the late twentieth century. In particular, the construction of Islamic mosques, Jewish synagogues, and Hindu temples have all generated significant pushback from broader public; this will be explored in more detail in the chapters about the Latter-day Saint Temples.⁷⁵

⁷⁴ Luke Beck, 'Why are Religious Discrimination Laws Back in the News? And Where Did They Come From in the First Place?', *The Conversation*, 20 March 2024, <https://theconversation.com/why-are-religious-discrimination-laws-back-in-the-news-and-where-did-they-come-from-in-the-first-place-226220>

⁷⁵ Laura Beth Bugg, "Citizenship and Belonging in the Rural Fringe: A Case Study of a Hindu Temple in Sydney, Australia." *Antipode* 45, no. 5 (2013): pp. 1148–66. <https://doi.org/10.1111/anti.12007>; Jennifer Creese, *Jewish Identity in Multicultural Australia* (1st ed.). Springer International Publishing AG., 2023, <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-36347-4>; E. Kolig, *New Zealand's Muslims and multiculturalism*. Brill, 2010; E. Kolig and M. Voyce (Eds.), *Muslim Integration : pluralism and multiculturalism in New Zealand and Australia*. Lexington Books, 2016; Y. Vahed and G. Vahed, 'The Development Impact of Mosque Location on Land Use in Australia: A Case Study of Masjid al Farooq in Brisbane. *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs*, 34(1) 2014, 66–81, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13602004.2014.888284>; N. Nasser, 'Patronage and territoriality: Islamizing space in the Western city', *Contemporary Islam*, 9(3), 2015, pp. 291–319.

Closely related to the above scholarly work, there are additional theories with which to ground this dissertation. The most important amongst these are the idea, critique of, and attempted mandate of 'social cohesion' in multicultural nations, in particular those that have had/have a majoritarian ethnic and/or religious identity that is now being challenged and changed through globalisation, decolonisation, and migration.⁷⁶ Building on the work of other scholars, in 2020, Ezzy et al. articulated the challenge for governments, citizens (both more settled and newly immigrated), and scholars in discussing 'social cohesion', as related to religiosity, in the Australian context.⁷⁷ These scholars argue, after the official end of the White Australia Policy in the 1970s and the subsequent immigration of ethnically and religiously diverse populations, state and federal governments have wrestled with absorbing and assimilating these diverse beliefs and practices within the broader majoritarian Australian society.⁷⁸ Ezzy et al. indicated that governments have attempted to pursue a policy of 'social cohesion', though have been vague and unclear as to what this actually entails or how it can be properly implemented.⁷⁹ These scholars argue that this is problematic, as ideas such as

<https://doi.org/10.1007/s11562-015-0344-0>; M. Riedel, 'The difference a wire makes: planning law, public Orthodox Judaism and urban space in Australia. *International Journal of Law in Context*, 16(4), 2020, pp. 403–421. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1744552320000415>; Livia Kathe Wittmann, *Interactive Identities : Jewish Women in New Zealand*. Palmerston North, N.Z: Dunmore Press, 1998;

⁷⁶ See, for example: Bujar Aruqaj, *Social Cohesion in European Societies : Conceptualising and Assessing Togetherness*. Abingdon, Oxon, England ; Routledge, 2023; Vincent Kaufmann, Ander Audikana, and Guillaume Drevon. *Europe beyond Mobility : Mobilities, Social Cohesion and Political Integration*. 1st ed. New York, New York: Routledge, 2022; Maurizio Franzini and Felice R. Pizzuti, eds. *Globalization, Institutions and Social Cohesion*. 1st ed. 2001. Berlin, Heidelberg: Springer Berlin Heidelberg, 2001;

⁷⁷ Douglas Ezzy, Gary Bouma, Greg Barton, Anna Halafoff, Rebecca Banham, Robert Jackson, and Lori Beaman, 'Religious Diversity in Australia: Rethinking Social Cohesion', *Religions*, Volume 11, Issue 2, pp. 92-108

⁷⁸ Douglas Ezzy, Gary Bouma, Greg Barton, Anna Halafoff, Rebecca Banham, Robert Jackson, and Lori Beaman, 'Religious Diversity in Australia: Rethinking Social Cohesion', *Religions*, Volume 11, Issue 2, pp. 92-93

⁷⁹ Ezzy, Bouma, Barton, Halafoff, Banham, Jackson, and Beaman, 'Religious Diversity in Australia', *Religions*, Volume 11, Issue 2, pp. 94-95

'accommodation' or 'tolerance' denote positions of power, in which the new or otherwise marginal cosmologies, worldviews, and beliefs of individuals and communities are seen as needing to be compatible with the majoritarian beliefs of the host society, even if these are themselves diverse.⁸⁰ Moreover, what are the implications of postcolonial governments, seeking to provide 'social cohesion', whether altruistically or in order to maintain their status and power, in mandating religious respect? What does this say about the push and pull of institutions of power, and the dictating of religious 'tolerance'? Can tolerance truly be mandated? Though these authors utilise the examples of, non-Christian faith communities within Australia, such as Islam, Buddhism, Sikhism, and Hinduism, the theory neatly applies to Mormonism, as a marginal, oftentimes unaccepted Christian religion within both Australia and New Zealand.

When examined through the lens of 'social cohesion', Mormonism makes an interesting case study in both these nations; it is within this broader literature that this thesis is inserted. As shall be examined more closely throughout this dissertation, the Latter-day Saint communities and individuals within these antipodean colonies and later nations have an uneasy and complicated experience in the realm of 'social cohesion.' At the start of their existence, in the thrust of a millenarian zeal and a mandate to immigrate to build up Zion in modern-day Utah, the missionaries and sporadic communities were largely uninterested in being a part of the broader Australian or New Zealand societies. By the turn of the century, and with a radical change in doctrine and practice from the Mormon metropole, small, established Latter-day Saint communities within these nations now

⁸⁰ Ezzy, Bouma, Barton, Halafoff, Banham, Jackson, and Beaman, 'Religious Diversity in Australia', *Religions*, Volume 11, Issue 2, pp. 96

depended upon at least some governmental and legal protection in order to proselytise amongst a largely hostile populace. As these nascent Australian and New Zealand Mormon communities became more concrete, and as evangelical efforts equalled a more grounded faith population (rather than migratory), the desire for 'social cohesion' with broader society was essential for ecclesiastical leaders. As will be explored, particularly in Chapter 2, this minority religion struggled to develop, experiencing pushback from more established religions, government repression (though this began to subside by the 1920s), and larger societal hostility. However, by the 1980s, with the end of the White Australia Policy and a more dedicated government commitment to multiculturalism and social cohesion, the Church of the Latter-day Saints, was able to enjoy a greater level of acceptance, though to what extent will be thoroughly examined. New Zealand was experiencing a similar shift in policy and societal change at this time, though there the Church had always been more ethnically diverse than its Australian counterpart. This idea and critique of social cohesion is an important lens with which to view the development of the Mormon religion in these nations.

Similarly, Lori Beaman's theorisation of 'deep equality' is useful for contextualising this work. Beaman has articulated that within multicultural nations, especially settler-colonial states that have long-standing majoritarian religions the discourse surrounding religious 'tolerance' and 'accommodation' requires critique.⁸¹ Beaman has argued that these terms and practices enforce power hierarchies; she states that those who promote and endorse 'accommodation' do so from a position of power, with those who are

⁸¹ Lori Beaman, *Deep Equality in an Era of Religious Diversity*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017; Lori Beaman, 'Religious Diversity in the Public Sphere: The Canadian Case', *Religions*, Volume 8, Issue 12, pp. 259-277

inserting their religiosity into the broader fabric of a host(ile) society needing to bend to existent structures, norms, and representations. Beaman strongly argues that there needs to be a pivot away from viewing religious diversity as a 'problem' faced by bureaucracies and multi-cultural societies to a focus on finding 'similarities' between religious communities, individuals, and broader cultures in the ever-changing face of globalised religious identities.⁸² As shall be examined in the later chapters, the Church and its adherents have consistently pushed for a more 'equal' standing with their fellow Australians. As well as calls for protections of religious beliefs enshrined in law, Latter-day Saints have also sought to be seen as citizens of their respective nations in good-standing, and have been involved within the civic and political aspects of Australia and New Zealand. As shall be explored in the later chapters, this has proven to be precarious; thus, though Beaman's concept is a useful lens with which to view the efforts of the Latter-day Saints in their efforts to become more accepted by broader Australian and New Zealand society, whether this has been successful is debatable.

Migration and Diaspora Studies

Contextualised by these discussions of secularisation, social cohesion, and multiculturalism, an important theme of this research is migration and diaspora. This dissertation is not only focussed on the migration of Latter-day Saints from Australia and New Zealand, and how this has affected the Church in these countries. This research also seeks to understand how, beginning in the 1970s, waves of immigrant Latter-day Saints, whether from Oceania, Latin America, Asia, or elsewhere, have been received by

⁸² Lori G Beaman, "A Focus on Getting along: Respect, Caring and Diversity." *Argument (Kraków. 2011)* VI, no. 1 (2016): 81–91.

the largely Euro-Australian Mormon Church. Furthermore, how were these same people received by the New Zealand Church, which already had a large Māori and Western Polynesian membership? Theories of migration have developed over recent decades, as previously hegemonic states evolve into complex multicultural nations through the immigration of ethnic and religious minorities. Within the Australian context, Eric Richards' seminal 2008 work, *Destination Australia*, encapsulates broad theoretical concepts, in which he places various case studies. Beginning with the federation of Australia in 1901, Richards traces the various policies and structures that maintained the 'White Australia Policy.'⁸³ However, he complicates generally accepted histories by presenting various narratives of ethnic and religious minorities who lived under the social engineering of a race-obsessed nation.⁸⁴ Richards then discusses the mass immigration of people from Britain and Europe following the Second World War, and how these people were received by mid-twentieth century Australian society.⁸⁵ Richards' book provides an appropriate backdrop to the experiences of immigrant Latter-day Saints and their diasporic roots. This dissertation will question to what extent Australian Mormonism mirrors mainstream society in its treatment of perceived 'others', or whether theology and community make it a more or less welcoming culture.

More recently, academic scholarship has attempted to not only show the political and ideological mechanisms of multicultural states that dictate the experiences of immigrants, but to also explore the agency of immigrants within the push and pull of uncontrollable situations. This idea is interrogated by Catherine Kevin and Karen Agutter

⁸³ Eric Richards, *Destination Australia: Migration to Australia Since 1901*, Sydney: University of New South Wales, 2008

⁸⁴ Richards, *Destination Australia*, pp. 34

⁸⁵ Richards, *Destination Australia*, pp. 167-168

in their article ‘The ‘Unwanted’ and ‘Non-Compliant’’. They argue that while assimilation to the ‘Australian Way of Life’, as both official government policies and ideological goals, was a major feature in the intake and management of Post-World War II immigrants,⁸⁶ even the most marginalised migrants (in this case widowed and unwed mothers) showed both resistance and adaptation to the demands of their new host country.⁸⁷ This particular aspect of migration and diaspora is important for understanding the history of immigrant-Mormons. Similar examples of resistance and adaptation are explored in this thesis.

Whilst there is an extensive scholarship on diasporic communities and individuals, this literature review is focussed on the trends in Diaspora Studies, explored in various guides to methodology. This dissertation will use these methodologies to demonstrate Australian and New Zealand Mormons’ diasporic ties to geographically distant “Homelands.” Furthermore, it will argue that Latter-day Saints within Australia and New Zealand in general are in a state of diaspora, as they have theological, economic, and sometimes familial ties to various sacred places in the United States, even if they have personally never been there. The edited collection *Local Lives* explores ‘the contrasting of rootlessness... [with] the push and pulls that motivate and propel the migrant experience.’⁸⁸ It provides theoretical concepts of diaspora that I use to assert that Australian and New Zealand Latter-day Saints, like other diasporic groups, balance numerous ideological, theological, and ethnic identities with local and transnational

⁸⁶ Catherine Kevin and Karen Agutter, ‘The ‘Unwanted’ and ‘Non-Compliant’’: ‘Unsupported Mothers’ as ‘Failures’ and Agents in Australia’s Migrant Holding Centres’, *The History of the Family*, Volume 22, Issue 4, 2017, pp. 554

⁸⁷ Kevin and Agutter, ‘The ‘Unwanted’ and ‘Non-Compliant’’, pp. 566-567

⁸⁸ Brigitte Bonisch and Catherine Trundle (eds.), *Local Lives: Migration and the Politics of Place*, London, England: Routledge, 2016, pp. xi

roots. As the migration of non-European Mormons has at-times brought about both integrative and contentious interactions with white non-Mormon and Mormon Australians, Migration and Diaspora Studies offer an important framework for conceptualisation.⁸⁹ Furthermore, histories of Australian Mormonism have largely excluded narratives of ethnic minorities, and have largely focussed on European-Australian Latter-day Saints, which this dissertation seeks to challenge.

Global Mormon Studies

Within the context of the overarching literature described above, this dissertation will primarily draw upon the burgeoning discipline of Mormon Studies, which has undergone significant historiographical change within the last four decades. Like Religious Studies, Mormon Studies has grown into a large field of research that encompasses localised and broader histories, theology, identity theory, and the racialised, sexualised, and gendered experiences of current and former Latter-day Saints.⁹⁰ As such, this literature review

⁸⁹ In particular, as will be more thoroughly examined, Polynesians as an ethnic group have a unique place in Latter-day Saint theology, as they are believed to be the literal descendants of the Biblical Israelites. Scholars such as Epeli Hau'ofa, Teresia Teaiwa, and Konae Hely Thaman explored the complexity of Oceania in academic literature and international relations. Their discourses are focused on Indigenous cultures, colonial and postcolonial external interference, familial relationships, religious experiences, international migration and diaspora, and artistic endeavours.

See, for example:

Epeli Hau'ofa, 'Our Sea of Islands', *The Contemporary Pacific*, Volume 6, Issue 1, 1994, pp. 147-161; Epeli Hau'ofa, 'The Ocean in Us', in Stewart Firth (ed.), *Understanding Oceania*, Canberra: Australian National University, 2019, pp. 341-360; Teresia Teaiwa, 'On Antologies: Rethinking the Pacific in a Global Context', *The Contemporary Pacific*, Volume 18, Issue 1, 2006, pp. 71-87; Konai Helu Thaman, 'Decolonising Pacific Studies: Indigenous Perspectives, Knowledge and Wisdom in Higher Education', *The Contemporary Pacific*, Volume 15, Issue 1, 2003, pp. 1-17

⁹⁰ See, for example:

Newell Bringhurst and Darron Smith, *Black and Mormon*, University of Illinois Press, 2004; Joanna Brooks, *Mormonism and White Supremacy: American Religion and the Problem of Racial Innocence*, Oxford University Press, 2020; Joanna Brooks and Gina Colvin, *Decolonizing Mormonism: Approaching a Postcolonial Zion*, Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2018; Keith Burns and Lewis Linwood, 'Transcending Mormonism: Transgender Experiences in the LDS Church', *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Volume 56, Issue 1, 2023, pp. 27-72; Hongmeng Cheng, 'A Review of Mormon Studies in China', *Religious*, Volume 12, Issue 6, 2021, pp. 375; Rachel Cope (ed.), *Mormon Women's History: Beyond*

will only discuss the sources that are central to this dissertation. Within recent decades there has been a conscientious globalised pivot, with wider interesting global, rather than American, Latter-day Saint narratives.⁹¹ Whilst some scholars have started to explore the implications of doctrinal and administrative change on the inner workings of international Mormon communities, perceptions of Mormons and the dialogical interplay between mainstream and Latter-day Saint communities within Australasia has gone largely unexplored. The recent shift in scholarship parallels the globalisation of the Church since World War Two, and has provoked a shift in the way in which Mormonism is studied.

At the forefront of this pivot in scholarship was Leonard Arrington and David Bitton, and their source *The Mormon Experience*. A seminal work on the changing identity and history of the Latter-day Saints, it chronicles the beginnings of the Mormon community

Biography, Madison, Wisconsin and Teaneck, New Jersey: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2017; Peter Coviello, *Make Yourselves Gods: Mormons and the Unfinished Business of American Secularism*, University of Chicago Press, 2019; Douglas Davis (ed.), *Mormon Identities in Transition*, London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 1996; Jason Dormady and Jared Tamez, *Just South of Zion: The Mormons in Mexico and its Borderlands*, Albuquerque, New Mexico: University of New Mexico Press, 2015; Ignacio Garcia, *Chicano While Mormon: Activism, War, and Keeping the Faith*, Madison, Wisconsin and Teaneck, New Jersey: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2015 ; Alexandria Griffin, 'Queer Mormon Histories and the Politics of a Usable Past', *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Volume 54, Issue 1, 2021, pp. 1-16; Lacey Harris, 'To Be Native American – And Mormon', *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Volume 54, Issue 2, 2021, pp. 87-100; Matthew Harris, 'Joseph Fielding Smith's Evolving Views on Race: The Odyssey of a Mormon Apostle-President', *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Volume 55, Issue 3, 2022, pp. 1-41; Taylor Petrey, 'After a Post-Heterosexual Mormon Theology: A Ten Year Retrospective', *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Volume 54, Issue 4, 2021, pp. 111-137; Robert Rees, 'Truth and Reconciliation: Reflections on the Fortieth Anniversary of the LDS Church's Lifting the Priesthood and Temple Restriction for Black Mormons of African Descent', *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Volume 56, Issue 2, pp. 55-83; Brian Shirts, 'Genetics and Gathering the House of Israel', *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Volume 56, Issue 1, 2023, pp. 127-137

⁹¹ Hokulani Aikau 'Resisting Exile in the Homeland (*He Mo'olenō No La'ie*), *American Indian Quarterly*, Volume 32, Issue 1, Winter 2008, pp. 377-500; Jennifer Basquiat, 'Embodied Mormonism: Performance, Vodou, and the LDS Faith in Haiti', *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Volume 37, Issue 4, 2004, pp. 1-34; Chiung Hwang Chen, 'In Taiwan but not of Taiwan: Challenges of the LDS Church in the Wake of the Indigenous Movement', *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, 2008, Volume 41, Issue 2, pp. 3-34; Catherine Freeman, 'Drum Rhythms and Golden Scriptures: Reasons For Mormon Conversion Within Haiti's Culture of Vodou', *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Volume 55, Issue 3, pp. 43-73

and identity, which first was solidified with the exodus to Kirtland, Ohio in 1831. Whilst the book is forty years old, many of its observations are still relevant and applicable to contemporary Mormon Studies. Most importantly, these authors were among the first to acknowledge how a more constant presence of a global Church, outside of the Utah-centric 'Mormon Culture Region', has developed unique local variations of the faith. This conclusion has led a significant number of Mormon Studies scholars – myself included – to argue that, academically speaking, we should seek to understand the existence of localised, specific *Mormonisms*. These variations, whilst in constant communication with the centre at Salt Lake City, are actually distinct, and should be examined in this way.

A further contributor to this historiographical shift was non-Mormon author Jan Shipps, who published *Mormonism: The Story of a New Religious Tradition* in 1985. Weaving an accessible narrative, Shipps delves into intricacies of the community and identity of this growing religious movement, and how we should examine the competing and conflicting identities that have emerged in Mormonism's existence. Similarly, Thomas Alexander's 1986 book *Mormonism in Transition* discusses the changing theology, structure, and experiences of the Church, as it went from theological dynasty with metaphysical ties to the physical landscape of New England, Missouri, and Utah to a worldwide Church. This book further details the way in which the Church hierarchy began a gradual but firm ban on the practical elements of 'The Gathering', which included barring international converts from migration to Utah. Instead, Church leaders began to concentrate on building the Church in its various outposts throughout the world, including Australia and New Zealand, which was reflected in official dogma and policy.

Further informing the theoretical basis of this dissertation are eminent Religious Studies scholar Douglas Davies.⁹² As a non-Mormon, Davies has written extensively on the ‘worldview’ aspects of Mormonism, and articulates a crucial element of Mormon cosmology that scarcely receives scholarly attention, ancestral attachment and veneration:

Of all groups emerging within Christianity’s broad flow, [Mormonism] possesses the strongest and most distinctive ancestral dimension... Mormons conduct extensive genealogical research that identifies ancestors and follows this up with ‘temple work’, including vicarious baptism and other initiatory rites for these identified dead...⁹³

This central connection between individual, ancestor, and progeny occurs in Temple rituals performed to ensure the salvation of an individual and their ancestors. This cosmological underpinning is crucial to this dissertation, as hostility towards the construction of Temples in Australia, and to a lesser extent, New Zealand, should be understood from this perspective.

One of the most important sources for framing this dissertation comes from editors Joanna Brooks and Gina Colvin. Their edited volume, *Decolonising Mormonism: Approaching a Postcolonial Zion* seeks to explore, understand, and pivot the gaze of Mormon Studies away from the Euro-American centre to the experiences of the global Latter-day Saint community. Featuring the voices and observations of Indigenous,

⁹² See, for example:

Douglas Davies, *Joseph Smith, Jesus, and Satanic Opposition: Atonement, Evil, and the Mormon Vision*, Farnham: Taylor and Francis Group, 2010; Douglas Davies, ‘Mormon History, Text, Colour, and Rites’, *Journal of Religious History*, Volume 31, Issue 3, pp. 205-315; Douglas Davies (ed.) *Mormon Identities in Transition (Conference on Mormon Studies: 1995 University of Nottingham)*, London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2018; Douglas Davies, ‘Mormon Studies in a European Setting’, *Dialogue*, Volume 34, Issue 3-4, 2001, pp. 1-8

⁹³ Douglas Davies, *Worldview Religious Studies*, Milton: Taylor and Francis, 202281-82

African, and female Mormon Studies scholars, particularly in the Global South, this book argues that whilst over half of the Church's population lives outside of United States, it is still an inherently American religion.⁹⁴ Here, Brooks and Colvin encapsulate the difficulty of modern Mormon Studies. Though there have been strides to broaden research surrounding Mormon Studies, the emphasis has traditionally been on the Euro-North American experience, rather than that of the global. As this dissertation discusses two strains of Mormonism on the fringes of the mainstream Church, and includes an exploration into racial, gendered, and queer histories of the religion within Australia and New Zealand, this conceptual framework is essential.

Following this theme, some additional scholarship regarding Mormonism and race is important to insert here. Due to the Church's racialised doctrines, as discussed earlier in this introduction, there is a host of scholarship surrounding the construction of racialised identities within Mormon Studies literature.⁹⁵ There has been burgeoning academic

⁹⁴ Joanna Brooks and Gina Colvin, *Decolonising Mormonism: Approaching a Postcolonial Zion*, Salt Lake City; University of Utah Press, 2018, pp. 6-7

⁹⁵ See, for example:

Ryan Stuart Bingham, 'Curses and Marks: Racial Dispensations and Dispensations of Race in Joseph Smith's Bible Revision and the Book of Abraham', *Journal of Mormon History*, Volume 41, Issue 3, 2015, pp. 22-57; Marie Chntaram, 'Mauritians and Latter-day Saints: Multicultural and Latter-day Saint: Multicultural Oral Histories of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints within "The Rainbow Nation"', *Religions*, Volume 12, Issue 7, pp. 651; Gina Colvin, 'Introduction: Theorizing Mormon Race Scholarship', *Journal of Mormon History*, Volume 41, Issue 3, 2015, pp. 11-21; Gina Colvin, Laurie Maffly-Kipp, Melissa Inouye, Janan Graham-Russell, 'Roundtable Discussion: Challenging Mormon Race Scholarship', *Journal of Mormon History*, Volume 41, Issue 3, 2015, pp. 258-281; T. Ward Frampton, "'Some Savage Tribe": Race, Legal Violence, and the Mormon War of 1838', *Journal of Mormon History*, Volume 40, Issue 1, 2014, pp. 175-207; Matthew Harris, 'Mormons and Lineage: The Complicated History of Blacks and Patriarchal Blessings, 1830-2018', *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Volume 51, Issue 3, 2018, pp. 83-130; Matthew Harris and Newell Bringham, *The Mormon Church and Blacks: A Documentary History*, University of Illinois Press, 2015; Angela Hudson, 'William McCary, Lucy Stanton, and the Performance of Race at Winter Quarters and Beyond', *Journal of Mormon History*, Volume 41, Issue 3, 2015, pp. 97-130; Dmitri Hurlbut, 'The LDS Church and the Problem of Race: Mormonism in Nigeria, 1946-1978', *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, Volume 51, Issue 1, 2018, pp. 1-16; Christopher Jones, "'A Werry Poor Place for Our Doctrine": Religion and Race in the 1853 Mormon Mission to Jamaica', *Religion and American Culture*, Volume 31, Issue 2, 2021, pp. 262-295; Armand Mauss, 'In Search of Ephraim: Traditional Mormon Conceptions of Lineage and Race', *Journal of Mormon History*, Volume 25, Issue 1, 1999, pp. 131-173; Armand Mauss, 'Mormonism's Worldwide Aspirations and its

literature over the past few decades in relation to Mormonism's racialised theology and the effects it has had on the development of the worldwide Church. For example, Armand Mauss, in his 2003 book *All Abraham's Children*, explores the evolution of the Church's racialized doctrines, cosmology, and institutions over the last two centuries.⁹⁶ Mauss succinctly contextualises the religious milieu of the Church within the broader cultural environment in which it formed and developed. Similarly, W. Paul Reeve's 2015 book *Religion of a Different Color* notes the consistent tensions between Mormon and broader American identity. For instance, due to the Church's history of mass emigration, polygamy, and its cosmological view of Native Americans, Reeve argues that Mormons were seen by broader American society as a 'pariah race.'⁹⁷ He posits that as Mormonism grappled with this identity crisis, it began to expand and entrench the belief that Latter-day Saints were a theologically and racially "chosen people."⁹⁸ Likewise, Max Mueller's 2017 book *Race and the Making of the Mormon People* investigates the scriptural-based racial hierarchies that existed within Mormonism from its inception in 1830. As with Mauss and Reeve, Mueller argues that Latter-day Saint doctrines were not created within a vacuum but instead were the result of and reaction to an increasingly varied American culture.⁹⁹ However, along with these overarching histories of Mormonism, identity, and race, there is nuanced literature that examines unique aspects of these complicated themes. As an example of a more recent discussion of the complexities of Mormonism and race, Darron Smith, Brenda Harris, and Melissa Flores broached the subject of

Changing Conceptions of Race and Lineage', *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Volume 34, Issue 3-4, 2001, pp. 103-133; Max Mueller, 'History Lessons: Race and the LDS Church', *Journal of Mormon History*, Volume 41, Issue 1, 2015, pp. 139-155

⁹⁶ Armand Mauss, *All Abraham's Children: Changing Mormon Conceptions of Race and Lineage*, University of Illinois Press, 2003

⁹⁷ W. Paul Reeve's, *Religion of a Different Color: Race and the Mormon Struggle for Whiteness*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2015, pp. 23-24

⁹⁸ Reeve, *Religion of a Different Color*, pp. 40

⁹⁹ Max Mueller, *Race and the Making of the Mormon People*, University of North Carolina Press, 2017

contemporary and lingering racism in the Church, in particular around the strong Latter-day Saint support for controversial former U.S. President, Donald Trump.¹⁰⁰ Scholarship specific to Australia, New Zealand, and Pacific racial categorisations will be discussed below.¹⁰¹

Thus, when examining the depth of literature in global Mormon Studies, several key themes emerge. The experience of the Church and its adherents should be understood both as a unique, varied entity, as well as a religion created by the influences surrounding it. It was born out of hostility and marginalisation, and has a problematic history concerning race, gender, and sexuality; these histories are manifest in the present, and are a source of academic exploration. This dissertation thus seeks to insert itself into the broader discussion surrounding global Mormonism, arguing the distinct trajectories of the Church in Australia and New Zealand have been informed by the way in which the religion has been represented and received.

¹⁰⁰ Darron T. Smith, , Brenda G. Harris, and Melissa Flores. 'Black People and White Mormon Rage: Examining Race, Religion, and Politics in Zion.' In *The Religion of White Rage*, Edinburgh University Press, 2020

¹⁰¹ See, for example:

Hokulani Aikau, *A Chosen People, A Promised Land: Mormonism and Racism in Hawai'i*, University of Minnesota Press, 2012; Hokulani K. Aikau, "Indigeneity in the Diaspora: The Case of Native Hawaiians at Iosepa, Utah," *American Quarterly*, Volume 62, Issue 3, 2010, 477–500; Booker T. Alston, "The Cumorah Baseball Club: Mormon Missionaries and Baseball in South Africa," *Journal of Mormon History* 40, Issue, 3, 2014, : 93–126; Jennifer Huss Basquiat, "Embodied Mormonism: Performance, Vodou, and the LDS Faith in Haiti," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 37, Issue 4, 2004, 1–34; Chiung Hwang Chen, "In Taiwan But Not of Taiwan: Challenges of the LDS Church in the Wake of the Indigenous Movement," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 41, no. 2 (Summer 2008): 3–31; Mark L. Grover, "The Mormon Priesthood Revelation and the São Paulo, Brazil Temple," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 23, Issue 1, 1990 39–52; J. B. Haws, "The Freeze and the Thaw: The LDS Church and State of Ghana in the 1980s," in *The Worldwide Church: Mormonism as a Global Religion*, edited by Michael A. Goodman and Mauro Properzi, Provo: BYU Religious Studies Center, 2016, 21–41; Shinji Takagi, *The Trek East: Mormonism Meets Japan, 1901–1968*, Draper, Utah: Greg Kofford Books, 2016; Taunalyn Rutherford, Joe Chelladurai, and Vinna Chintaram, "Race and the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in India," *Mormon Studies Review* Volume 7, 2020, pp. 52–60

Temple Studies

In conjunction with the broad theories surrounding sacred spaces and ritual, there is a growing interest in what has been termed ‘Temple Studies’ within the study of Mormonism. This is a complicated area, however, as the Temple is considered both sacred and secret within Latter-day Saint theology; only those who are faithful members may experience the ceremonies and rites. Although the guarded knowledge of the Temple is readily available from numerous sources, none endorsed by the Church, this thesis will not detail the inner workings of the Temple. Rather, it will examine the Temple as a physical sacred space for Latter-day Saints, and how the construction of Temples has been received by mainstream societies within Australia and New Zealand. The growing literature surrounding the Latter-day Saint Temple, is written by faithful, dissident, and non-Mormon scholars. Each scholar is quick to emphasise that what they write, whilst perhaps more than most faithful members would be comfortable with, does not break any of the ‘covenants’ made in the Temple. That is, the most sacred of knowledge is not repeated, and most of the scholarship is largely documentary, rather than reflective of personal experiences. Mirroring the construction of Temples all over the world, Temple Studies has, as with Mormon Studies generally, evolved to include international perspectives. These primarily look at the reactions and reception of the building of Temples, both from faithful Mormons, as well as other religious and civil groups. As such, these sources are crucial in framing the way in which the Temples constructed in New Zealand and Australia have been represented and received by the broader publics of these nations; a more thorough investigation of these will appear in Chapter 4.

Australian Mormonism

Though literature surrounding Australian Mormonism is relatively scant, there are nonetheless sources that have helped to guide this dissertation. It is here important to make an important distinction in Australian Mormonism literature: the majority, if not all, of Australian Mormon history is written from the perspectives of avowed and acknowledged Latter-day Saints, some of whom are not writing as professional historians but rather as part of a broader apologist or polemic mechanism; most of these are published by various Church entities. Though the historical information contained within these sources is valuable, especially in regard to the internal workings of the Church, these are written with an overt hagiographic or ecclesiastical bent, and thus omit or obfuscate aspects of the Church that are more critical or not 'faith-promoting.' Ruth Goldthorpe's *Our Noble Inheritance*, was self-published in 1989.¹⁰² This apologist text chronicles the development of the Church in each State and Territory of Australia, which began with the arrival of scattered and isolated missionaries in 1840. This book frames the development of the Church within Australia as part of God's overarching plan for humanity. Despite the evident bias, Goldthorpe's book is a useful source as it pulls together various congregational histories, and presents a chronology of the Australian Church. The second book written about the Latter-day Saints in Australia is Marjorie Newton's *Southern Cross Saints: The Mormons in Australia*, a foundational source for this thesis.¹⁰³ Although published by the Institute of Polynesian Studies at Brigham Young University, the official university of the Church, Newton's work is far less hagiographical

¹⁰² Ruth Goldthorpe, *Our Noble Inheritance: The History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Australia*, Adelaide, 1989

¹⁰³ Marjorie Newton, *Southern Cross Saints: The Mormons in Australia*, Series: Mormons in the Pacific Series, Laie Hawai'i, Brigham Young University Press: Institute for Polynesian Studies, 1991

than *Our Noble Inheritance*, though Newton is writing as a faithful Latter-day Saint historian.

Newton's ground-breaking book explores the struggled existence of the Church from 1840 to the rapid increase of membership after World War II, which correlated with stronger missionary efforts and a more permanent presence. Newton does not focus on the reactions to Mormonism from either religious commentators or broader Australian society, rather the experiences and history of Latter-day Saints in Australia. One of the major themes of this book that this dissertation will expand upon is that Australian Mormons recognise their difference to mainstream Australia, based upon their religion, as well as tensions between themselves and the American-based Church hierarchy. Newton argues there is also strong tension, adaptation, and synthesis between the often contradictory identities that Australian Mormons have.

This is compounded for members of the Church who belong to any number of ethnic, economic and cultural backgrounds, though Newton does not delve into the influence that the emigration ethnic minorities to Australia had on the Church. In many ways, this dissertation will be an expansion of Newton's seminal contribution and discuss the way in which the Church in Australia has changed over the past thirty years. One major critique of this book is that Newton devotes almost no space in her book to Indigenous Australians, who were barred from the Church due to their race until 1964, although, she does mention the increase of First Nations' Mormons since this time. My own research, published in *Dialogue* under the title 'Racial Categories: Indigenous Australians and Mormonism, 1850s to Present', charts the unique existence of Indigenous Australians within Mormon cosmology; this will be more thoroughly

addressed within the dissertation.¹⁰⁴

Newton further contributed to the historical literature about Australian Mormonism with a number of articles published in Mormon Studies journals. Though these were once again written from a faithful Latter-day Saint historian, these help to ground this dissertation. For example, in her 1991 article titled “‘Almost Like Us’: The American Socialisation of Australian Converts’, Newton critiques the Americanness of the Church in Australia. She notes how from the 1950s, Australian Latter-day Saints sang hymns such as ‘Utah, I Love Thee’, children would express gratitude for snow they had never seen, and the belief that America is a God-favoured nation was reiterated by Australian members.¹⁰⁵ Newton further argues that the hierarchical, bureaucratic, and corporate structure of the Church was unappealing to many Australians.¹⁰⁶ However, this article notes the attempts of the Church to distance itself from its American-centricity, and to establish itself as a global religion. Despite this, many Latter-day Saints, ecclesiastical leaders, and academics, within and without Utah, still view non-American Mormons as ‘fringe dwellers in the Kingdom of God.’¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁴ Brenton Griffin, ‘Racial Categories: Indigenous Australians and Mormonism, 1850-Present’, *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Volume 54, Issue 2, 2021, pp. 1-31

¹⁰⁵ Marjorie Newton, “‘Almost Like Us’: The American Socialization of Australian Converts’, *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Volume 24, Issue 3, 1991, pp. 10-11

¹⁰⁶ Contradictorily, Newton notes that there are many Australian members who embrace the Americanness of the Church, celebrating Fourth of July and Thanksgiving, as well as or instead of Anzac and Australia Day.

Newton, “‘Almost Like Us’: The American Socialization of Australian Converts’, *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Volume 24, Issue 3, 1991, pp. 16-17

¹⁰⁷ Newton, “‘Almost Like Us’: The American Socialization of Australian Converts’, *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Volume 24, Issue 3, 1991, pp. 15

Also in 1991, Newton wrote in response to *Dialogue's* theme of the challenges the Church faced in becoming a 'mainline' religion throughout the world. Though Newton presented numerous problems to the Church becoming 'mainstream' within Australia, such as a relatively low membership and a lack of prominent Latter-day Saint individuals in politics, sports, or academia, and an 'American image', her greatest concern was that the Church's efforts to become 'respectable' had come at the cost of its true spirituality, alluding to classist and elitist issues.¹⁰⁸ To illustrate the point, Newton states that the Church in Australia had sought to be seen as 'middle-class', stating:

When an Apostle instructs missionaries in one Australian mission that they are not to seek and teach people such as prostitutes and drug addicts, when missionaries in Papua New Guinea [then apart of the Brisbane Mission] are instructed to baptise only middle-class nationals who will be self-supporting and provide leadership abilities, when a mission president in Australia promises a restaurant dinner to the first missionary to baptise a doctor, I am troubled.

This indictment represents a fundamental crisis of the Church within Australia. Interestingly, Newton also notes that the existence of language-units for immigrant communities, which at this time was mostly Tongan and Samoan, posed 'language problems' for supervising ecclesiastical leaders. Moreover, Newton notes that even in the 1990s, the 'stigma of polygamy' was still rampant in the nation.¹⁰⁹ Importantly, Newton's observations provide a useful framework for this dissertation, and help to ground the overarching theme of perception and representation of the Church within Australia.

In 1995, through the Church's journal *Brigham Young University Studies Quarterly*, Newton published 'Seduced Away: Early Mormon Documents in Australia.' Newton

¹⁰⁸ Marjorie Newton, 'Mormonism Becomes a Mainline Religion: The Challenges, An Australian Viewpoint', *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Volume 24, Issue 4, pp. 74-78

¹⁰⁹ Newton, 'Mormonism Becomes a Mainline Religion: The Challenges, An Australian Viewpoint', *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Volume 24, Issue 4, pp. 76

utilised 'the only handwritten documents concerning early Australian Latter-day Saints' found in Sydney's Mitchell Library to discuss the experiences of Martha Maria Bucknell Humphreys, who drowned on the sinking of the *Julia Ann*, discussed in the subsequent chapter. Humphreys left her husband with three of her children aboard the *Julia Ann* in 1855; only two of her children survived. Newton also discusses William Bucknell, Martha's brother, who sought to bring his 'servant' with him to Utah in order to marry her as a plural wife. When Bucknell was excommunicated for domestic violence, he petitioned the government to stop the immigration of the Latter-day Saints from New South Wales, including in prohibiting migrating Saints to sell their properties. This source is rich in primary source materials and is useful in contextualising the difficulties the Latter-day Saints experienced within Australia during this period, though there is a somewhat ecclesiastical bias, as in Newton's other writings.

More broadly, in 1996, Newton again addressed the major issues facing Mormonism within Australia, and predicted some of the barriers it faced going into the twenty-first century. Although similar points are raised as in her 1991 article, this source is particularly fascinating as Newton recounts a conference held by the Church in 1994 'designed to recruit influential members to work towards bringing the Church "out of obscurity"' within Australia.¹¹⁰ Here, the most crucial aspect is that 'members of the hierarchy tacitly [acknowledged] that the LDS Church is perceived as an obscure sect in Australia.'¹¹¹ This self-recognition of marginalisation is a critical dimension to the broader themes of this dissertation. This acknowledgement of marginalisation, according to

¹¹⁰ Marjorie Newton, 'Towards 2000: Mormonism in Australia', *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Volume 29, Issue 1, 1996, pp. 193

¹¹¹ Newton, 'Towards 2000: Mormonism in Australia', *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Volume 29, Issue 1, 1996, pp. 193

Newton, was confirmed in 1990 when the Church hired public relations specialists to survey the image of the Church in Australia.¹¹² The report indicated that ‘missionary tracting [door-knocking] was both the best known and most disliked feature of Mormonism in Australia.’¹¹³ Building on this, Newton suggests hindrances such as tensions between Australia and the United States, lack of religiosity amongst Australians, the Church’s perceived ‘Americanness’, lack of community outreach and charity, broader society’s disdain for the hierarchical nature of the religion, and the overzealous proselytisation efforts by missionaries.¹¹⁴ Although this article was written almost thirty years ago, the observations made by Newton are essential for this dissertation. These themes and beliefs have remained, whilst, as will be argued, the perception and representation of Mormonism has also shifted dramatically.

More recent sources have emerged that have detailed later experiences of Australian Mormons from a faithful Latter-day Saint perspective. Ross Geddes, in a 1996 edition of *Journal of Mormon History*, discussed the almost century of the Church’s existence as a Mission in Brisbane, Queensland before it had been formed into a Stake (diocese), noting the lack of growth, particularly stalwart members, and the challenges associated with the Church in Queensland.¹¹⁵ In 2010, faithful Latter-day Saint American scholar Sherrie Gavin, who currently lives in Australia, wrote a hagiographical retelling of Australia’s first

¹¹² Newton, ‘Towards 2000: Mormonism in Australia’, *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Volume 29, Issue 1, 1996, pp. 202

¹¹³ Newton, ‘Towards 2000: Mormonism in Australia’, *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Volume 29, Issue 1, 1996, pp. 202

¹¹⁴ Newton, ‘Towards 2000: Mormonism in Australia’, *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Volume 29, Issue 1, 1996, pp. 194-202

¹¹⁵ Ross Geddes, ‘Before Stakehood: The Mission Years in Brisbane, Australia’ *Journal of Mormon history* 22, no. 2 (1996): 92-119.

Relief Society President, Ethel Parson.¹¹⁶ A well-researched and historically important source for an expansion of Mormon feminist history in Australia through the explicit discussion of the women's auxiliary organisation, it does still have a particular hagiographical bias. In a similar vein, an article published by Steven and Alene Dinger for the *Journal of Mormon History*, recounts their experiences collecting and organising historical documents in Australia as part of their couple missionary work.¹¹⁷ It details the difficulties in collecting and digitising these sources for the Church history archives, but conveys the invaluable nature of these historical documents. These additional sources help to understand some of the inside mechanisms of the Church's history, structure, and organisation. In order to compliment this work, this dissertation seeks to understand the reception of and reaction to the Church in Australia.

New Zealand Mormonism

Although the Church arrived in New Zealand over a decade after missionaries reached Australia, Mormonism has had a much more permanent and visible presence within these islands. One of the earlier histories of the Church in New Zealand and the Pacific is Lanier Britsch, *Unto the Islands of the Sea*, published by the Church's official publisher, Deseret Books, in 1986.¹¹⁸ Britsch's large volume takes a hagiographical approach to examining the spread and development of Mormonism throughout Oceania. This book is apologist in nature, and Britsch predominantly, though not exclusively, uses sources created by

¹¹⁶ Sherrie L. M Gavin, 'An Independent Companion: Ethel Nash Parton and the Australian Relief Society', *Journal Of Mormon History*. Winter2010, Vol. 36 Issue 1, P145-177.

¹¹⁷ Steven C. and Alene Dinger, Collecting the History of the Church in Australia. *Journal of Mormon History*. Jul2022, Vol. 48 Issue 3, p64-70.

¹¹⁸ R. Lanier Britsch, *Unto the Islands of the Sea: A History of the Latter-day Saints in the Pacific*, Salt Lake City, Utah: Deseret Books, 1986

American and Euro-Australian and New Zealand missionaries and other ecclesiastical authorities. Importantly, it shows the currents of imperialism throughout the Pacific, and how different domains of European Oceanic colonies brought about different responses to Mormonism. However, Indigenous voices are largely silent, though certainly not absent, as most of the records left by missionaries were more concerned with the proclamation of the Gospel.

Following Britsch's history, in 2005 Grant Underwood, a New Zealand academic, edited a large volume for the Church's official college Brigham Young University, titled *Pioneers of the Pacific*. This anthology explores the introduction of Mormonism into the Pacific with some chapters that chart the history and development of the Church, while others are dedicated to the syncretism of Mormonism with the varied cultures of the Pacific. Underwood's work similarly discussed the tensions that existed with Mormonism's introduction and development in these nations, as well as the evolution of Mormon theology in relation to Pasifika peoples. The most significant aspect of this syncretism between Mormonism and Oceania was the belief that Polynesians are the descendants of the Biblical House of Israel and the Book of Mormon explorer Hagoth; this will be discussed in more detail below. Necessary for this thesis, the unique creation of an ethno-biblical identity amongst Pacific Mormons is an important feature of Underwood's research.¹¹⁹ Whilst not an expansive history of Mormonism in the Pacific, this anthology nevertheless provides a much-needed overview.

¹¹⁹ In a rare form of self-criticism, scattered throughout this anthology are sermonic instructions from various Pasifika and non-Oceanic scholars on how to best incorporate traditional culture into the culture of the Church, with some scholars warning of tribalism both within the Church itself, as well as externally.

As well as publishing on Australian Mormon history, Marjorie Newton also wrote two books on the New Zealand Church. *Tiki and Temple* examines the first century of the Church in New Zealand.¹²⁰ This history follows the development of Mormonism within New Zealand, beginning with the exclusive proselytisation amongst *pakeha* (European) colonists before a pivot in the 1880s saw a concentrated effort amongst the Māori. This created a unique atmosphere in which Mormonism was syncretised, although not without tension, with an evolving Māori culture and identity, which itself was undergoing radical shifts due to colonisation. Following the Church's progression into the twentieth century, Newton argues that after World War II, the Church sought to distance itself from being perceived as a 'Māori Church', and prioritised preaching amongst New Zealand's non-Māori population, including waves of new immigrants. Newton finishes with an examination of the building of the Hamilton Temple, and the sacrifices by New Zealand Mormons for this sacred edifice.

The second of Newton's books, titled *Mormon and Māori*, published in 2014, expands upon the tensions, adaptations, and syntheses that existed in the development of Māori Mormonism.¹²¹ It includes the theological evolutions, cosmology, and compromises of the Church in New Zealand. Most prominent, was the grafting of the Māori into a broader religious narrative that linked them with other Polynesians, Native Americans, and the biblical Israelites. Newton claims the success of the Church was due to the negligence of various European Churches, as well as the disdain many Māori had towards these institutions, which were seen as complicit in the confiscation of *iwi* lands.

¹²⁰ Marjorie Newton, *Tiki and Temple: The Mormon Mission in New Zealand, 1854-1958*, Salt Lake City, Utah: Greg Kofford Books, 2012

¹²¹ Marjorie Newton, *Mormon and Māori*, Salt Lake City, Utah: Greg Kofford Books, 2014

Furthermore, Latter-day Saint missionaries spoke *Te Reo Māori*, lived amongst the communities they visited, (somewhat) respected *iwi* structures, and translated religious texts. This was in stark contrast to the Protestant and Catholic Churches, whose ministers lived in *pakeha* cities, and only visited the rural Māori villages intermittently. Although certainly ambitious, her work is not without fault, and there is relatively little on modern-day Māori-Mormon reception, recognition, or identity.

A further essential source for this dissertation is Selwyn Katene's (ed.) trilogy about New Zealand Māori-Mormons.¹²² In the first two books of this series, Katene, a Māori-Mormon academic, examines the lives of important figures within the Māori-Mormon community, written by their descendants. Katene notes that although oral and popular histories abound surrounding the integration of Māori-Mormons, written documentation is rare. Katene begins with a brief mention of the founding of the Church in 1830, as well as an 1832 *Times and Seasons* article that prophesied the spreading of the new Gospel to the 'Isles of the Sea.' He then examines *Te ao Māori* (Māori world), focussing on the prophecies of a number of *tohunga* (priests) who, according to Māori-Mormon histories, prophesied the coming of the Church. The last book of the trilogy explores the lives of individual Latter-day Saints more broadly in New Zealand public life.¹²³ Though somewhat hagiographical, this trove of information will be referred to throughout my

¹²² As both a source and an artefact it is immensely useful, as it includes accounts of Māori-Mormon attitudes towards British incursion, whether hostile, neutral, or accepting; faithfulness to the Church; Māori skills as warriors, orators, story tellers, diplomats, and hosts; and their involvement in cultural and political affairs.

Selwyn Katene (ed.), *Turning the Hearts of the Children: Early Māori Leaders in the Mormon Church*, Steele Roberts Publications, 2014; Selwyn Katene (ed.), *By Their Fruits You Will Know Them: Early Māori Leaders in the Mormon Church*, Steel Roberts Publications, 2017

¹²³ Selwyn Katene (ed.), *Let Their Light So Shine: Mormon Leaders in New Zealand*, Huai Publishers, 2021

own dissertation, and the narratives told through Indigenous voices about particular individuals will be emphasised.

As well as more faith-promoting histories surrounding Māori Latter-day Saints, recent decades have seen a burgeoning of more critical Indigenous voices appear within the literature. One of the most prominent of these is New Zealand academic Ian Barber, who has broadened understandings of New Zealand and Australian Mormon histories. Beginning in the 1990s, his first articles, examine the complexities of Māori-Mormon identity, history, and memory. For example, Barber notes in 'Between Biculturalism and Assimilation', published in *The New Zealand Journal of History*, that though official and polemic histories of the Church in New Zealand have emphasised the success of the Church amongst the Māori, there have been numerous instances of strained existence.¹²⁴ Barber argues that though polemicist narratives predominantly discuss the Church's acceptance of Māori culture, various Church policies have sought to eradicate or repress important Māori traditions, rites, and connections. As Barber argues, this has often mirrored the New Zealand government's repressive attitudes and actions towards Māori.¹²⁵ This, in particular, created strains between the predominantly American ecclesiastical leaders in New Zealand, and Māori Latter-day Saints.

In another article, 'Between Covenant and Treaty: The LDS Future in New Zealand', published with David Gilgen, Barber articulates some of the challenges that have emerged

¹²⁴ Ian Barber, 'Between Biculturalism and Assimilation: The Changing Place of Maori Culture in the Twentieth-Century Mormon Church', *The New Zealand Journal of History*, Volume 29, Issue 2, 1995, pp. 142-143

¹²⁵ Barber, 'Between Biculturalism and Assimilation: The Changing Place of Maori Culture in the Twentieth-Century Mormon Church', *The New Zealand Journal of History*, Volume 29, Issue 2, 1995, pp. 145-148

within the late-twentieth century Church in New Zealand, as well as some predictions for how the Church would continue in the new millennia.¹²⁶ Perhaps most importantly, Barber notes that by the mid-twentieth century, *te reo Māori* had been discouraged and eventually banned in Latter-day Saint congregations. Thus, though the Church has touted its acceptance of Māori culture, Barber and Gilgen's article, building upon the arguments made in 'Between Biculturalism and Assimilation', complicates this claim. Only in response to the 1987 *Māori Languages Act* that recognised *te reo Māori* as an official language of New Zealand was there a reemergence of *te reo Maori* in New Zealand Mormonism and, as pointed out by the authors, there are lingering tensions.¹²⁷

Barber and Gilgen further discuss the changing demographics of the Church in New Zealand, especially through the immigration of Latter-day Saints from the broader Pacific.¹²⁸ These authors write, ironically, that though *te reo Māori* has only been reinstated within various Church settings since the 1990s, the migration of other Pasifika peoples to New Zealand, predominantly Samoan and Tongan, has resulted in the creation of language units since the early 1970s.¹²⁹ Yet Barber notes that in the late 1970s, efforts to assimilate the broader Samoan and Tongan language units were met with hostility; in fact:

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

¹²⁶ Ian Barber and David Gilgen, 'Between Covenant and Treaty: The LDS Future in New Zealand', *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Volume 29, Issue 1, 1996, pp. 213-215

¹²⁷ Barber and Gilgen, 'Between Covenant and Treaty: The LDS Future in New Zealand', *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Volume 29, Issue 1, 1996, pp. 215

¹²⁸ Barber and Gilgen, 'Between Covenant and Treaty: The LDS Future in New Zealand', *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Volume 29, Issue 1, 1996, pp.

¹²⁹ Barber and Gilgen, 'Between Covenant and Treaty: The LDS Future in New Zealand', *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Volume 29, Issue 1, 1996, pp. 215

prominent *Matai* (Chiefs). Leaders among these Samoan Saints petitioned Church leaders in Salt Lake City for support, but in 1981 some were excommunicated.¹³⁰

This uncomfortable tension between the Church and its Māori and Pasifika adherents is important in grounding this dissertation, especially in discussions surrounding memory, representation, and reception of the religion in New Zealand.

In April 2019, Barber published his article 'Faith Across Cultures: Research on Mormonism in Oceania.'¹³¹ This source succinctly narrates the history of the Church throughout Australia, New Zealand, and the Pacific, but more importantly surveys the various methodologies that can be used to understand the development of Mormonism 'across this complex cultural-historical, demographic, and political tapestry.'¹³² Barber notes, like Newton, the relative apathy of Euro-Australian and New Zealanders to Mormon missionaries, in contrast to the success the Church has had amongst Oceanic peoples. This has, he argues, created a unique strain of Mormonism within the Pacific that is distinct from but reliant upon, and at times in tension with, Church headquarters in Utah. However, he stresses the fluidity of both the Church structure and its acolytes when dealing with inter-cultural concerns. This is amplified, Barber claims, as 'diasporic Mormon Pacific (especially western Polynesian) populations are now "extensive" in New Zealand and "significant" (along with New Zealand Māori) in Australia.'¹³³ This article ends with a call for expanded scholarship around gender and sexuality within

¹³⁰ Barber and Gilgen, 'Between Covenant and Treaty: The LDS Future in New Zealand', *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Volume 29, Issue 1, 1996, pp. 215

¹³¹ Ian Barber, 'Faith Across Cultures: Research on Mormonism in Oceania', *Mormon Studies Review*, Volume 6, 2019, pp. 55-66

¹³² Barber, 'Faith Across Cultures', *Mormon Studies Review*, Volume 6, 2019, pp. 56

¹³³ Barber, 'Faith Across Cultures', *Mormon Studies Review*, Volume 6, 2019, pp. 60

Mormonism, something he considers severely under researched, though not entirely absent.¹³⁴

Finally, in 2020, Barber published a chapter in the *Palgrave Handbook of Mormonism*, entitled 'Lands of Contrast: Latter-day Saint Societies in New Zealand/Aotearoa and Australia.'¹³⁵ This useful source described the foundations and growth of the Church within both Australia and New Zealand, detailing the differences in its development of the two distinct strains. Barber carefully traces the way in which Mormonism took a stronger footing in New Zealand when compared to Australia, largely due to its reflexive doctrine in regards to the Māori, centred around the Hagoth narrative, explored in Chapter I.¹³⁶ He emphasises that the Church's decision to extend the doctrinal 'House of Israel' identity onto the Māori came at a time of severe dispossession in New Zealand's history, and thus was seen as a source of empowerment. While Barber is interested in foundational events, individuals, and statistics, this thesis expands upon this work by examining the representation and reception of Mormonism and its adherents within these nations. Importantly, Barber articulates that for Māori Mormons, the Latter-day Saint concept of 'the Gathering' was particularly appealing, as it allowed 'anticipation that their ancestral rights lost in the course of colonization would be restored as Latter-day Saints gathered to America.'¹³⁷ Barber also examines increasing political activity among Māori and Pasifika Latter-day Saints in New Zealand in regard to Indigenous issues; this

¹³⁴ Barber, 'Faith Across Cultures', *Mormon Studies Review*, Volume 6, 2019, pp. 64-66

¹³⁵ Ian Barber, 'Lands of Contrast: Latter-day Saint Societies in New Zealand/Aotearoa and Australia', in R. Gordon Shepherd, A. Gary Shepherd, and Ryan T. Cragun (eds.), *Palgrave Handbook of Mormonism*, Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave MacMillan, 2020, pp. 455-467

¹³⁶ Barber, 'Lands of Contrast', in Shepherd, Shepherd, and Cragun (eds.), *Palgrave Handbook of Mormonism*, Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave MacMillan, 2020, pp. 459

¹³⁷ Barber, 'Lands of Contrast', in Shepherd, Shepherd, and Cragun (eds.), *Palgrave Handbook of Mormonism*, Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave MacMillan, 2020, pp. 459

has sometimes been complimented by Church doctrines, but more often has been at odds with the universalist 'gospel culture' promoted by the hierarchical organisation.¹³⁸

Barber's section on Australian Mormonism is somewhat shorter, yet charts the development of the religion since the 1840s.¹³⁹ Barber notes that until very recently, the Australian Latter-day Saint Church has been much less culturally and ethnically diverse than its New Zealand counterpart; however, he does not mention the White Australia Policy as a reason for this.¹⁴⁰ Barber does note the tensions that have existed with the immigration of diverse ethnic groups to Australia, including the *Iliafi v. The Church* legal case, and compares this to the assimilationist intent of the Church in New Zealand.¹⁴¹ Yet, perhaps most importantly, Barber poignantly indicates that

To an extent, the incorporation of diasporic Polynesian (including Māori) populations into the Australian LDS Church has brought the two lands of contrast closer together, insofar as their distinctive Latter-day Saint societies are concerned.¹⁴²

Barber does note, however, that one of the remaining legacies of difference is the way in which the Church has placed the Indigenous peoples of New Zealand and the broader Pacific in contrast to Indigenous Australians. As will be discussed in this dissertation, though there has been an increase in not only the number of First Nation Australian

¹³⁸ Barber, 'Lands of Contrast', in Shepherd, Shepherd, and Cragun (eds.), *Palgrave Handbook of Mormonism*, Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave MacMillan, 2020, pp. 462-465

¹³⁹ Barber, 'Lands of Contrast', in Shepherd, Shepherd, and Cragun (eds.), *Palgrave Handbook of Mormonism*, Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave MacMillan, 2020, pp. 466

¹⁴⁰ Barber, 'Lands of Contrast', in Shepherd, Shepherd, and Cragun (eds.), *Palgrave Handbook of Mormonism*, Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave MacMillan, 2020, pp. 467

¹⁴¹ Barber, 'Lands of Contrast', in Shepherd, Shepherd, and Cragun (eds.), *Palgrave Handbook of Mormonism*, Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave MacMillan, 2020, pp. 467

¹⁴² Barber, 'Lands of Contrast', in Shepherd, Shepherd, and Cragun (eds.), *Palgrave Handbook of Mormonism*, Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave MacMillan, 2020, pp. 467-468

Mormons, but also their visibility, the Church has not incorporated these people into their cosmology.

Another prolific Māori-Mormon scholar, Gina Colvin, has also published extensively on the tensions between the Church and the Indigenous peoples it encounters, particularly the Māori in New Zealand. Colvin has particularly been active in efforts to decolonise not only Mormonism as a religion, but also Mormon Studies. For instance, in the July 2015 issue of the *Journal of Mormon History*, Colvin sought to graft the concepts of race, whiteness, and colonisation, and the attendant theories in existent literature, into Mormon Studies.¹⁴³ Though there has always been an emphasis within the Church on the racial lineage of individuals and groups, most evident in the Priesthood Ban against those of perceived African descent, Colvin notes emphatically that this is where subsequent scholarship has, understandably, focused.¹⁴⁴ However, she argues that the broader racist, colonial attitudes of the Church need to be addressed, understood, and articulated in order to not only understand Mormonism's history but also, potentially, to change its trajectory.¹⁴⁵

This theme is extended in Colvin's 2017 article 'There's No Such Thing as a Gospel Culture' in *Dialogue*. Here she dissects the prevalence of the so-called 'gospel culture' that

¹⁴³ Gina Colvin, 'Theorizing Mormon Race Scholarship', *Journal of Mormon History*, Volume 41, Issue 3, July 2015, pp. 11-21

¹⁴⁴ Colvin, 'Theorizing Mormon Race Scholarship', *Journal of Mormon History*, Volume 41, Issue 3, July 2015, pp. 14-15

¹⁴⁵ Colvin, 'Theorizing Mormon Race Scholarship', *Journal of Mormon History*, Volume 41, Issue 3, July 2015, pp. 15-17

has been promoted by Church leaders in recent decades.¹⁴⁶ She notes that this top-down, hierarchical culture has been pushed by the Utah-centric Church, and has openly demanded the majority of Latter-day Saints, who live on the margins rather than the metropole to subsume their own cultures, identities, and personalities, whether individual, communal, or ethnic.¹⁴⁷ Colvin argues that this ‘gospel culture’, although touted by the Church as being divinely mandated, is in fact a middle-class American culture, a similar critique made by Newton, as discussed above.¹⁴⁸ Colvin argues:

The way Mormonism is popularly practiced at the metropole and transplanted around the world places the moral/legal (i.e. attention to rules and behaviour) above relational aspects of Christianity (i.e., attention to God’s relationship with us, our relationship with each other, and our relationship with the earth). Therefore, I could have my temple recommend revoked for drinking a cup of tea as a gracious gesture of hospitality... but it is unlikely that there would be any formal consequence for me if I were to espouse white supremacist ideas in Sunday School that alienate and diminish people of color.¹⁴⁹

This argument is a crucial evaluation of the complex, difficult place the Church, its doctrines, and ‘culture’ has in regard to the colonial nature of the religion. This becomes important to this dissertation when questions surrounding the place of ethnic minorities within the Australian and New Zealand Church have become a matter of public interest.

¹⁴⁶ Gina Colvin, ‘There’s No Such Thing As A Gospel Culture’, *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Volume 50, Issue 4, 2017, pp. 57-69

¹⁴⁷ Colvin, ‘There’s No Such Thing As A Gospel Culture’, *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Volume 50, Issue 4, 2017, pp. 60

¹⁴⁸ Speaking from experience, Colvin argues that this gospel culture is damaging to dispersed and diverse Mormon communities throughout the world, in particular the Global South. Colvin, ‘There’s No Such Thing As A Gospel Culture’, *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Volume 50, Issue 4, 2017, pp. 60-62

¹⁴⁹ Colvin, ‘There’s No Such Thing As A Gospel Culture’, *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Volume 50, Issue 4, 2017, pp. 59-60

Following similar theories, Colvin's 2018 chapter 'A Māori Mormon Testimony', published in the book *Decolonising Mormonism*, traces the complexity of Mormonism for many Māori.¹⁵⁰ Colvin notes that although the Church has historically been seen by Māori Mormons as a place of empowerment, more recent politically-active Māori, and broader Pasifika people, have been repressed by the Church. As an example, Colvin states that

From the 1970s on, some Mormon Church leaders set about problematising the Māori rights movement... a developing political literacy meant that even Mormon Māori were joining the movement to reclaim language, culture, and political and treaty rights. The challenge to the existing system of colonial authority in New Zealand must have resonated unfavourably with Utah who didn't want "their church" associated with protest.¹⁵¹

Thus, the tensions between the Church and some of its Māori members was fractured significantly from the 1970s by the existence of a white supremacist metropole, empowered and justified by doctrinal racism, in contrast with a predominantly Māori organisation within New Zealand, with a politically active Indigenous membership. The overarching structures of the institutional Church have been unable or unwilling to account for this divide. These tensions are crucial to the overarching argument of my own thesis: that whilst the institutional Church has become more entrenched within both Australia and New Zealand, through broader representation, the internal workings of the religion are much more complicated.¹⁵²

¹⁵⁰ Gina Colvin, 'A Māori Mormon Testimony', in Joanna Brooks and Gina Colvin (eds.), *Decolonising Mormonism: Approaching a Postcolonial Zion*, Salt Lake City: The University of Utah Press, 2018, pp. 27-47

¹⁵¹ Colvin, 'A Māori Mormon Testimony', in Joanna Brooks and Gina Colvin (eds.), *Decolonising Mormonism: Approaching a Postcolonial Zion*, Salt Lake City: The University of Utah Press, 2018, pp. 37-38

¹⁵² Colvin has become well-known in Mormon Studies circles not only due to her extensive contribution to literature, but also her blog, *KiwiMormon*, and Podcast, *A Thoughtful Faith*; both of these projects have been active from 2012 to 2022. These provide an invaluable first-person perspective of many issues facing New Zealand Mormonism, in particular from a Māori perspective.

Gina Colvin, 'About', *A Thoughtful Faith Podcast*, viewed 04/08/2022
<https://www.athoughtfulfaith.org/a-thoughtful-faith/about/>

Finally, Māori scholar Hemopereki Simon, though not Mormon himself, has contributed significantly through his positioning of Critical Indigenous theory into the Mormon Studies realm. In his article 'Mormonism and the White Possessive', published in 2022 in *Journal for Cultural and Religious Theory*, Simon discusses in depth the need to insert Critical Indigenous Studies Theory into the broader study of Mormonism; in particular, he discusses the emerging subcategory of Mormon Studies, Lamanite Studies.¹⁵³ However, as Simon articulates, the perceived ethno-scriptural genesis of the Polynesians in Mormon cosmology is fraught, for on the one hand Latter-day Saint leaders have espoused a Nephite origin, in the form of the Hagoth mythology, and others have stated Polynesians are the descendants of the Lamanites.¹⁵⁴ This has likewise been discussed at length by Newton and Hokulani Aikau, a *Kanak Maoli* (Native Hawaiian) author.¹⁵⁵ However, the crux of the issue is the racial construction along these scriptural lines: whether Māori are Nephite or Lamanite in Mormon cosmology, whilst important, is secondary to Latter-day Saint white supremacist thought.¹⁵⁶ Similarly, in a second article published in 2022, 'Hoea Te Waka ke Uta: Critical Kaupapa Māori Research and Mormon Studies Moving Forward', published in *New Sociology*, Simon argues that Kaupapa Māori, wherein 'Māori use Māori cultural perspectives and provide a strategy for ...

Gina Colvin, 'Kiwi Mormon Blog', *Patheos*, viewed 04/08/2023

<https://www.patheos.com/blogs/kiwimormon/>

¹⁵³ Lamanite Studies seeks to understand the affect on those who have historically been perceived as 'Lamanites', most predominantly Indigenous peoples of the Americas and Pasifika.

Hemopereki Simon, 'Mormonism and the White Possessive: Moving Critical Indigenous Studies Theory in the Religious Realm', *Journal for Cultural and Religious Theory*, Volume 21, Issue 3, 2022, pp. 331-332

¹⁵⁴ Simon, 'Mormonism and the White Possessive: Moving Critical Indigenous Studies Theory in the Religious Realm', *Journal for Cultural and Religious Theory*, Volume 21, Issue 3, 2022, pp. 341-342

¹⁵⁵ Aikau, *A Chosen People, A Promised Land: Mormonism and Race in Hawai'i*

¹⁵⁶ Simon, 'Mormonism and the White Possessive: Moving Critical Indigenous Studies Theory in the Religious Realm', *Journal for Cultural and Religious Theory*, Volume 21, Issue 3, 2022, pp. 348

empowerment and ... self-determination...’ can be utilised to critique the colonial structures of Mormonism, including within Mormon Studies. ¹⁵⁷

Simon’s article ‘Rolling Our Eyes Towards God’, published in *Culture and Religion* in 2023, similarly discusses the appropriation of the cultural Māori dance the haka by Latter-day Saint missionaries around the world.¹⁵⁸ He details the discontent of not only non-Mormon Māori, but also faithful Latter-day Saint Māori. ¹⁵⁹ Another article by Simon, ‘Genealogical Violence’, published in *Genealogy*, argues that the Church’s use of ‘whakapapa [sacred Māori genealogy] to promote Mormon cultural memory and narratives perpetuates settler/invader colonialism and white supremacy.’¹⁶⁰ Citing Indigenous Australian author Aileen Moreton-Robinson’s articulation of the ‘white possessive’, Simon emphasises the racism inflicted upon Pasifika and Native American peoples through the continued ‘religio-colonisation’ of the Church, especially in relation to the falsification of whakapapa. Overall, Simon’s research indicates, as does Barber and Colvin, that modern Māori, whether Mormon or not, are concerned with the Church’s theological imperialism, with its impact on Māori identity, narrative-telling, and political influence.

Thus, there is significant literature examining Mormonism in Australia and New Zealand, and the complexities, nuances, and difficulties the religion has faced. My own research,

¹⁵⁸ Hemopereki Simon. ‘Rolling Our Eyes towards God: An Intervention Arising from Mormon Missionary YouTube Activity and the Cultural (Mis)Appropriation of Haka.’ *Culture and religion* 23, no. 1 (2023): 46-80.

¹⁵⁹ Hemopereki Simon, Rebecca Bibliotheca and Landon Brophy, ‘Episode 155: The Haka: A Case of Cultural Appropriation by the LDS Church’, *Mormon-ish Podcast*, 7th May 2024
<https://www.mormonishpodcast.org/episode/haka>

¹⁶⁰ Hemopereki Simon, ‘Genealogical Violence: (Mis)Appropriation of Maori Cultural Memory through the Falsification of Whakapapa’, *Genealogy*, Volume 8, Article 12

then, seeks to explore the way that this complicated religion has been received and represented in broader Australian and New Zealand society. By tracing important historical events in the development of this religion in these nations, these act as flashpoints in which representation of the Latter-day Saints and their religion is most prominent. Through exploring these historical flashpoints and the corresponding representation, a more thorough indication of Mormonism's entanglement, both as an institution and for individual Latter-day Saints, can be grasped. It is within this conceptualisation that my dissertation seeks to add to the rich literature of the scholars cited.

CHAPTER I

'I Will Drive These Soul-Destroying Mormons From Out Of My

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Parish'¹⁶¹:

The Development of Mormonism and its Reception within

Colonial Australia and New Zealand, 1840 – 1900

Introduction

On the 13th of October 1836, the first newspaper article to mention Mormonism appeared in New South Wales' *The Colonist*. This article described the Church at its current headquarters in Kirtland, Ohio, including the construction of the Temple, and the burgeoning Latter-day Saint city. The author claimed that 'a more extraordinary sect has not sprung up since the days of Mahomet', and that its adherents 'pretend to have remarkable revelations, work miracles, [and] heal the sick.'¹⁶² From its beginning in Australia and New Zealand, Latter-day Saints have been treated with apathy and hostility, and the religion has been represented in various ways. This chapter will trace the necessary history of Mormonism within Australia and New Zealand, from its first introduction in colonial South Australia in 1840, to the end of the nineteenth century, contextualised by the development of the international Church during this same period.

¹⁶¹ Reverend T.C. Ewing, *The Mormon Delusion*, 1854, pp. 32

¹⁶² 'English Extracts – The Mormons', *The Colonist*, Sydney, New South Wales, 13th October 1836, pp. 7

Running in parallel to these narratives, is how Mormonism exists within the broader histories of Australia and New Zealand.

At the centre of this chapter will be the establishment of local Mormon communities within the antipodes, and the tensions towards this religious movement within these new colonies. In particular, this chapter will explore how Mormonism and the Latter-day Saints were received and represented by broader Australian and New Zealand media, government, and other religions, and how this began to form an early Mormon identity within the region. As will be argued, Mormon missionaries and converts in Australia and New Zealand encountered hostilities that were stoked by various internal and external factors. Prominent amongst these, the theme of perceived disloyalty towards British imperialism on the part of the Latter-day Saints will be examined closely. Moreover, the enmity of mainstream Christian ministers in Australia and New Zealand, who were active in promoting anti-Mormon literature, articles, and debates, will be analysed. Significantly, this was compounded by an unfriendly and unsympathetic non-religious press that regularly denounced the Church and its missionaries, as well as a largely apathetic or even hostile populace. Scrutinising Australian and New Zealand newspaper articles, which closely reported on Mormon efforts in Utah and at home, gives new historical insights into the ways that early Mormon missionary efforts were represented by the media. It will be argued that the Church and its adherents were seen as 'outsiders', both spiritually and socially.

This outsider status was exacerbated not only by the radical cosmology and beliefs of the Church, but also by the Latter-day Saint doctrine of the Gathering, which encouraged the migration of Latter-day Saints from Australia and New Zealand to build 'Zion' at Church

headquarters in modern-day Utah. It is asserted in this chapter that for the governments of these fledgling antipodean British colonies, this migration of religiously motivated emigres, even those who belonged to an undesirable sect, was a threat to the imperialist endeavours, which desperately required colonists for population growth and colonial defence. This theme appears throughout accounts of the interactions between Latter-day Saints and broader Australian and New Zealand society, particularly in colonial newspapers. Reactions to Latter-day Saint proselytization and migration will be situated in this context of early Australian and New Zealand colonial fears.

This chapter will also explore the racialised implementation of the doctrine of the Gathering within Oceania. During the mid-1800s, in both Australia and New Zealand, Latter-day Saint missionaries exclusively prioritised the conversion, and subsequent migration, of European colonists, linking these people with the Lost Tribes of Israel. In Australia, First Nations peoples were not preached to due to racist cosmologies within Mormonism that linked Indigenous peoples to Africans, to be discussed in this chapter. In New Zealand, missionaries did not begin proselytising to the Māori until the 1880s for similarly racialised and practical reasons; as will be explored, however, the Church had great success amongst New Zealand's Indigenous peoples. This was due to not only external factors, such as the horrors of colonialism, but a reflexive theology that incorporated Māori peoples into a broader Mormon worldview. This success was so entrenched that by the early twentieth century, Mormonism was publicly perceived in New Zealand as a 'Māori Church.' It will also focus more on the representation and perception of the Church, marking a significant pivot from existent Mormon Studies

scholarship, which focuses on the actual history of the Church in these outposts of the British Empire.

This chapter will moreover place Latter-day Saint experiences within the broader religious histories of Australia and New Zealand. Mormonism has largely been excluded from the narratives of Australian Christianity and religion, arguably due to the small number of adherents. Hilary M. Carey's groundbreaking 1996 book, *Believing in Australia*, only mentions briefly the Latter-day Saints.¹⁶³ Occupying a paragraph in her overview of 'Sectarian Christianity' within Australian history, she states 'Mormons have a fascinating Australian history... [but] have had less success with conversions among the Australian Aborigines [sic] than they have had in Oceania.'¹⁶⁴ Conversely, Carey's books *Empires of Religion*, *God's Empire*, and *Empire of Hell: Religion and the Campaign to End Transportation in the British Empire, 1788-1875* do not discuss Mormonism's place in the broader religious history of British imperialism.¹⁶⁵

Due to the way in which the Church of England and Catholicism have been integral to the history of colonial Australia, the bulk of religious histories written about this era focus on these major religions, though recent research has added nuance to these broader histories.¹⁶⁶ For example, Anna Johnston's *The Paper War: Morality, Print Culture, and*

¹⁶³ Hilary M. Carey, *Believing in Australia*, St. Leonards, New South Wales: Allen and Unwin Publishing, 1996, pp. 178

¹⁶⁴ Carey, *Believing in Australia*, pp. 178

¹⁶⁵ Hilary M. Carey, *Empire of Hell: Religion and the Campaign to End Transportation in the British Empire*, Cambridge University Press, March 2019; Hilary M. Carey, *Empires of Religion*, Palgrave MacMillan, 2008

¹⁶⁶ Michael Gladwin, *Anglican Clergy in Australia, 1788-1850: Building a British World*, Boydell and Brewer, 2015; Judith Godden, 'A 'Region of Indecency and Pruriency': Religious Conflict, Female Communities, and Health Care in Colonial New South Wales', *Humanities Research*, Volume 12, Issue 1, 2005, pp. 79-92; Bruce Kaye, 'From a Colonial Chaplaincy to Responsible Governance: The Anglican Church of Australia and Its Ecclesiological Challenge', *Ecclesiastical Law Journal*, Volume 23, Issue 1, pp. 34-49; Kathleen McPhillips, 'In this Southern Land: Gender, Nation, and Saint-Making in Australia', *Journal of Feminist*

Power in Colonial New South Wales narrates with great detail the use of newspapers, pamphlets, and tracts in religious-based tensions within colonial New South Wales.¹⁶⁷ However, no mention of Mormonism appears in the book. Moreover, additional sources have expanded historical knowledge significantly with the inclusion of narratives surrounding more prevalent minor religions, such as Quakerism, Scottish Presbyterianism, Lutheranism, the Moravians, Methodists, Islam, and even Buddhism, which have all existed in Australia since the nineteenth-century.¹⁶⁸ Scholarship similarly discusses the role that Christianity played in how Australia's First Nations peoples were represented, dispossessed, and managed within the colonial era with the aid of various religious doctrines, institutions, and rituals.¹⁶⁹ However, these sources have not included

Studies in Religion, Volume 29, Issue 1, 2013, pp. 26-39; Hugh Myers, 'Irish Convicts and Sectarian Conflict in Colonial Australia', *The Journal of the Australian Catholic Historical Society*, Volume 43, 2022, pp. 25-38; Odhran O'Brien, 'The Cost of Catholicism: Catholic Leadership and Colonial Chaplains in Western Australia, 1852-86', *Australasian Catholic Record*, Volume 96, Issue 2, pp. 131-152; Rowan Strong, 'The Colonial Religion of the Anglican Clergy: Western Australia, 1830 to 1870', *Journal of Religious History*, Volume 38, Issue 1, 2014, pp. 91-114

Welch, 'Constructing Colonial Christianities', *Journal of Religious History*, pp. 234-255

¹⁶⁷ Anna Johnston, *The Paper War: Morality, Print Culture, and Power in Colonial New South Wales*, Crawley: University of Western Australia Press, 2011

¹⁶⁸ Charlotte Baines and Marian Quartly, 'Sites of Contention: Interreligious Relations in Colonial Australia', *Studies in Religion*, Volume 42, Issue 2, June 2013, pp. 158-172; Eva Bischoff, *Benevolent Colonizers in Nineteenth Century in Australia Quaker Lives and Ideals*, Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2020 ; Frank Bongiorno, 'How Religion Shaped Australia', *Agora*, Volume 57, Issue 3, 2022, pp. 24-27; Deborah Gare, 'In the Beginning: Empire, Faith, and Conflict in Fremantle', *Studies in Western Australian History*, Volume 31, 2016, pp. 7-24; Anna Halafoff, et al., 'Buddhism in the Far North of Australia Pre-WWII: Visibility, Post-Colonialism, and Materiality', *Journal of Global Buddhism*, Volume 23, Issue 2, 2022, pp. 105-128; Felicity Jenz, 'Religious Migration and Political Upheaval: German Moravians at Bethel in South Australia, 1851-1907', *The Australian Journal of Politics and History*, Volume 56, Issue 3, 2010, pp. 351-365; Nahid Kabir, 'Mackay Revisited: The Case of Javanese-Australian Muslims, 1880-1999', *Asian and Pacific Migrational Journal*, Volume 16, Issue 3, 2007, pp. 405-424; Nahid Kabir, *Muslims in Australia: Immigration, Race Relations, and Cultural History*, Kegan Paul, 2005

Lake, 'Protestant Christianity and the Colonial Environment', *Journal of Australian Colonial History*, Volume 11, 2009, pp. 21-44; Peta Stephenson, *Islam Dreaming*, University of New South Wales Press, 2010; Wallace, *Scottish Presbyterianism and Settler Colonial Politics*

¹⁶⁹ Joanna Cruickshank and Patricia Grimshaw, *White Women, Aboriginal Missions and Australian Settler Governments: Maternal Contradictions*, Boston: Brill Publishing, 2019; Michael Gladwin, 'Clergy and Indigenous Peoples', in *Anglican Clergy in Australia, 1788-1850*, Boydell and Brewer, 2015, pp. 153-162; Patricia Grimshaw and Elizabeth Nelson, 'Empire, 'the Civilising Mission', and Indigenous Christian Women in Colonial Victoria', *Australian Feminist Studies*, Volume 16, Issue 36, 2001, pp. 295-309; Patricia Grimshaw, 'Interracial Marriages and Colonial Regimes in Victoria and Aotearoa/New Zealand', *Frontiers*, Volume 23, Issue 3, pp. 12-28; Anne Kerry, 'Christianity, Colonials, and Cross-Cultural Translation: Lancelot Threlkeld, Biraban, and the Awabakal', *Aboriginal History*, Volume 33, 2009, pp. 117-155; Claire McLisky, 'The Location of Faith: Power, Gender, and Spirituality in the 1883-84 Maloga Mission Revival',

information about Mormonism, nor its presence within colonial Australia. This chapter thus seeks to insert the history of Mormonism within this broader scholarship.

Scholarship surrounding religion in colonial New Zealand follows similar themes, seeking to understand how faith systems are transplanted into new colonies, and how these religions informed, enforced, and contradicted Britain's colonial projects in the Antipodes. Specific histories have examined the role of religious institutions in the dispossession and colonisation of Māori.¹⁷⁰ Other scholarship similarly charts the histories of various religions within the burgeoning colony of New Zealand, and the experiences of these institutions and their adherents.¹⁷¹ This scholarship, as in Australia, largely does not mention Mormonism. Importantly, however, literature discusses the

History Australia, Volume 7, Issue 1, 2010, pp. 1-20; Tande Wang, "O sin, sin, what has thou done!': Aboriginal people and Convicts in Evangelical Humanitarian Discourse in the Australian Colonies, 1830-1850", *ANU Historical Journal II*, May 2019, pp. 157-177

¹⁷⁰ James Beattie and John Stenhouse, 'Empire, Environment, and Religion: God and The Natural World in Nineteenth-Century New Zealand', *Environment and History*, Volume 13, Issue 4, 2007, pp. 413-446; Ford et al., 'Vanished Theocracies: Christianity, War, and Politics in Colonial New Zealand, 1830-80', in *Between Indigenous and Settler Governance*, Routledge Publishing, 2013, pp. 82-94; Tony Ballantyne, *Entanglements of Empire: Missionaries, Māori, and the Question of the Body*, Duke University Press, 2014; Tony Ballantyne, 'Genesis 1:28 and the Languages of Colonial Improvement in Victorian New Zealand', *Victorian Review*, Volume 37, Issue 2, 2011, pp. 9-13; Tony Ballantyne, *Webs of Empire: Locating New Zealand's Colonial Past*, University of British Columbia, 2014; Patricia Grimshaw, 'Settler Anxieties, Indigenous Peoples, and Women's Suffrage in the Colonies of Australia, New Zealand, and Hawai'i, 1888 to 1902', *Pacific Historical Review*, Volume 69, Issue 3, 2000, pp. 553-572; Raeburn Lange, 'Ordained Ministry in Māori Christianity, 1853-1900', *Journal of Religious History*, Volume 27, Issue 1, 2003, pp. 47-66; Paul Moon, 'Missionaries and the Maori Language in Nineteenth-Century New Zealand: A Mixed Inheritance', *Journal of Religious History*, Volume 43, Issue 4, 2019, pp. 495-510; Paul Moon, 'The Rise, Success, and Dismantling of New Zealand's Anglican-Led Māori Education System', *Studies in Church History*, Volume 55, 2019, pp. 426-440;

¹⁷¹ Ciara Breathnach, 'Irish Catholic Identity in 1870s Otago, New Zealand', *Immigrants and Minorities*, Volume 31, Issue 1, 2013, pp. 1-26; Sean Brosnahan, 'The 'Battle of the Borough' and the 'Saide O Timaru': Sectarian Riot in Colonial Country', *New Zealand Journal of History*, Volume 28, Issue 1, 1994, pp. 41-59; Alison Clarke, "'Days of Heaven on Earth": Presbyterian Communion Season in Nineteenth-Century Otago', *Journal of Religious History*, Volume 26, Issue 3, Volume 26, Issue 3, pp. 274-297; Lyndon Fraser, 'To Tara via Holyhead: The Emergence of Irish Catholic Ethnicity in Nineteenth-Century Christchurch, New Zealand', *Journal of Social History*, Volume 36, Issue 2, 2002, pp. 431-458; Angela Middleton, 'Missionization in New Zealand and Australia: A Comparison', *International Journal of Historical Archaeology*, Volume 14, Issue 1, 2010, pp. 170-187; Peter McKenzie, 'Public Christianity and Te Tiriti o Waitangi: How the 'Clapham Sect' Reached Down Under', *Stimulus*, Volume 18, Issue 4, pp. 23-31; Glen Robert, *Mission and Moko: Aspects of Work of the Church Missionary Society in New Zealand, 1814-1882*, Christchurch, New Zealand: Latimer Fellowship of New Zealand, 1992

emergence of the Māori *Poropoti* (prophet) Movements that erupted throughout the nineteenth century. As these *Poropoti* religions, which combined various Christian and Indigenous ideologies and beliefs, were often violently anti-colonial this context is important for the Church's position in New Zealand during the twentieth century.¹⁷² As Mormonism espoused a unique cosmological place for Māori that emphasised an ethno-Biblical connection by way of Israelite identity, the Church was in an uncomfortable position. As argued by Ian Barber, and published in the *New Zealand Journal of History*, though Māori Mormons were not as violently anti-colonial as the adherents of the *Poropoti* Movements, yet the Church's positioning of the Māori as the descendants of the Biblical Israelites created a complex perception of the Church within New Zealand.¹⁷³

This chapter will also analyse key events that indicate Mormonism's slow and steady encroachment on Australian and New Zealand consciousness in the late-nineteenth century. Though only a minority sect of Christianity, the Church nonetheless rapidly attracted disproportionate media and governmental attention. Although Mormonism was a marginalised religion within Australia and New Zealand, this chapter will show that since its introduction into these colonies, it has occupied an unique place in public consciousness, perception, and representation. This early visibility and marginalisation,

¹⁷² Michael Adas, *Prophets of Rebellion: Millenarian Protest Movements Against the European Colonial Order*, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1979; Judith Binney, 'Papahurihia, Pukerenga, Te Atua Wera and Te Nakahi: How Many Prophets?', *Journal of the Polynesian Society*, Volume 116, Issue 3, 2007, pp. 309-320; Paul Clark, *'Hauhau': The Pai Marire Search for Maori Identity*, Auckland University Press, 2014; Allan Hanson, 'Christian Branches, Maori Roots: The Cult of Rua', *History of Religions*, Volume 30, Issue 2, 1990, pp. 154-178; L. Head, 'The Gospel of Te Ua Haumene', *Journal of Polynesian Society*, Volume 101, Issue 1, 1992, pp. 7-44; Paul Moon, 'Issues of 'Authenticity' and Apocalyptic Thought in an Indigenous Religious Response to Colonisation', *Te Kahoroa*, Volume 14, Issue 1, 2021, pp. 1-23; Byron Rangiwai, 'Maori Prophetic Movements as Sites of Political Resistance: A Critical Analysis', *Te Kaharoa*, Volume 10, Issue 1, pp. 130-192; Karen Sinclair, *Maori Times, Maori Places: Prophetic Histories*, Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2002; Keith Sinclair, *Kinds of Peace: Maori People After the Wars, 1870-1885*, Auckland University Press, 2013

¹⁷³ Ian Barber, 'Matakitite, Mormon Conversions, and Maori-Israelite Identity Work in Colonial New Zealand', *Journal of Mormon History*, Volume 41, Issue 3, 2015, pp. 167-220

however, has paved the way for a more thorough syncretism and localisation of the religion throughout the twentieth and twenty-first century.

Early Proselytisation Efforts, 1840-50s: Migration and Apathy

Though information about Mormonism had existed since within Australia since at least 1836, the first Latter-day Saint missionary in the Antipodes did not arrive until 1840, in the newly formed colony of South Australia.¹⁷⁴ Seventeen-year-old William Barratt, along with his family, non-convict immigrants from North Staffordshire, England, established themselves in Victor Harbour.¹⁷⁵ The only Mormon in his family, William's call as a missionary was 'a direct consequence of his mother's and stepfather's decision to emigrate.'¹⁷⁶ Barratt was ordained in 1840 by George A. Smith, cousin of the Church's prophet, Joseph Smith. Writing to his father, George Smith described Barratt and his setting apart:

He left in good courage, and wrote back from London, the day he sailed and said to his brethren: "Be faithful and I will meet you in Zion bringing my sheaves with me" ... He said he would write to Cousin Joseph as soon as he reached the colony.¹⁷⁷

It is unknown whether Joseph Smith received or responded to Barratt's letter, although he was evidently aware of his call as he briefly, although importantly, noted in his diary 'I am likewise informed that Elders have gone to Australia.'¹⁷⁸

¹⁷⁴ William G. Eggington, 'Australia, the Church in', *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, New York: MacMillan Publishing, 1992, pp. 71

¹⁷⁵ Eggington, 'Australia, the Church in', *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, New York: MacMillan Publishing, 1992, pp. 72

¹⁷⁶ John Devitry-Smith, 'William James Barratt: The First Mormon "Down Under"', *BYU Studies Quarterly*, Volume 28, Issue 4, pp. 56

¹⁷⁷ Devitry-Smith, 'William James Barratt', *BYU Studies Quarterly*, Volume 28, Issue 4, pp. 57

¹⁷⁸ Devitry-Smith, 'William James Barratt', *BYU Studies Quarterly*, Volume 28, Issue 4, pp. 59

Upon arrival, Barratt wrote a letter to fellow-convert Alfred Cordon, also of North Staffordshire. Though he was proselytising alone, with no support from Church hierarchy or structures, this letter expressed Barratt's dedication, and his desire to eventually migrate to join his fellow religionists. Revealingly, though, Barratt found the moral temperament of South Australia depressing. Writing to Cordon, Barratt complained:

The people seem wholly determined to reject my testimony... I never saw so much Prostitution, Drunkenness, and Extortion in England as is practised here. The colony will soon kill or cure the people, in fact many of the colonists wish themselves back again...

Many are crying peace and safety to this place, but I say Woe! Woe!!! Woe is their doom! ... Brethren and Sisters farewell, if I meet you not in England I shall in Zion.¹⁷⁹

Barratt similarly wrote to Joseph Smith, and detailed the same concerns about preaching in South Australia.¹⁸⁰ Although dedicated to the faith for a number of years, Barratt is known to have eventually given up his efforts to spread Mormonism and his faith more broadly.¹⁸¹ However, it is certain that he converted South Australian colonist Robert Beauchamp, who later migrated to Utah before returning as President of the Australasian Mission in 1864; Beauchamp will be discussed later in this chapter.¹⁸²

Marjorie Newton theorised that Barratt lost his faith after hearing about the tumultuous experiences of Mormonism throughout the 1840s, in particular Joseph Smith's assassination.¹⁸³ Whatever the reason, Barratt's disillusionment was so severe that in 1855, when missionaries from Church headquarters established congregations in South Australia, Barratt made no efforts to reconnect with the Church.¹⁸⁴ Similarly, Barratt was

¹⁷⁹ Newton, *Southern Cross Saints*, pp. 23

¹⁸⁰ Newton, *Southern Cross Saints*, pp. 23

¹⁸¹ Newton, *Southern Cross Saints*, pp. 24

¹⁸² Eggington, 'Australia, the Church in', *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, New York: MacMillan Publishing, 1992, pp. 71

¹⁸³ Newton, *Southern Cross Saints*, pp. 59-60

¹⁸⁴ Newton, *Southern Cross Saints*, pp. 59-60

not with Australian converts who migrated to Zion to be with their co-religionists.¹⁸⁵ Instead, local histories record that he eventually settled in Encounter Bay and became a lay minister for the Congregational Church; he is buried at Victor Harbor, South Australia.¹⁸⁶ As Australia's first Latter-day Saint, Barratt's letters are uniquely situated in understanding the reception of Mormonism in mid-nineteenth century Australia. There are of course limitations as he only wrote of the colony of South Australia, yet his letters are filled with denouncements of the society around him. Barratt bemoaned South Australian vice and the overall antipathy and hostility towards the religion within the fledgling colony, despite its self-promotion as a 'model society' not associated with the convict labour of other Australian colonies.¹⁸⁷ Subsequent Latter-day Saint missionaries would similarly condemn the apathy of other colonies, predominantly New South Wales.

The second recorded Mormon to enter Australia was Scottish emigre Andrew Anderson and his family.¹⁸⁸ Before embarking to New South Wales, Anderson had been granted a 'licence to preach' Mormonism in Australia; as with Barratt, however, this was not with the direct support of the broader Church.¹⁸⁹ The Andersons arrived in Sydney in 1842, and settled in the township of Montefiores, near Dubbo, New South Wales.¹⁹⁰ By 1844,

¹⁸⁵ Devitry-Smith, 'William James Barratt', *BYU Studies Quarterly*, Volume 28, Issue 4, pp. 62

¹⁸⁶ Marjorie Newton, 'Pioneering the Gospel in Australia, Part 1: New Light on the First Missionaries', *The Ensign*, October 1986, viewed 13/08/2020
<https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/ensign/1986/10/pioneering-the-gospel-in-australia?lang=eng>

¹⁸⁷ Steven Anderson and Paul Sendzuik, 'Hang the Convicts: Capital Punishment and the Reaffirmation of South Australia's Foundation Principles', *Journal of Australian Colonial History*, Volume 16, 2014, pp. 93-110

¹⁸⁸ Newton, 'Pioneering the Gospel in Australia, Part 1: New Light on the First Missionaries', *The Ensign*, October 1986, viewed 13/08/2020

¹⁸⁹ 'About Us – Australia', *The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in the Pacific Website*, viewed 13/08/2020
<https://pacific.churchofjesuschrist.org/au/about-us>

¹⁹⁰ Newton, 'Pioneering the Gospel in Australia, Part 1: New Light on the First Missionaries', *The Ensign*, October 1986, viewed 13/08/2020

Anderson had formed a small branch of eleven members, the first Latter-day Saint congregation in Australia; these converts eventually made communication with Church hierarchy and missionaries.¹⁹¹ As with Barratt, Anderson found the colonists of Australia to be overly invested in the pursuit of wealth and prone to vices that made it difficult for the strict asceticism of Mormonism to flourish successfully.¹⁹² Again, this indictment shows the limited success that Latter-day Saints had in preaching in the early decades of Mormonism's Australian iteration. Anderson and his family would later depart to Zion; in 1855, they gathered with other Australian Saints who desired to emigrate to Utah.¹⁹³ The Andersons would be part of the ill-fated 1855 voyage of the *Julia Ann*, discussed later in this chapter.

The Spectre of Polygamy, 1850s

Before an examination of the experiences and reaction to the first Church-sanctioned missionaries to Australia can be discussed, it is important here to discuss the Latter-day Saint doctrine of polygamy and its place within Australian and New Zealand's press. As discussed in the introduction, one of the defining features of nineteenth-century Mormonism was the introduction of plural marriage; the concept was first initiated by Joseph Smith in Nauvoo, but would not become officially acknowledged until 1852.¹⁹⁴ Despite this, rumours of polygamy followed Mormon missionaries wherever they proselyted.¹⁹⁵ In Australia, the first inclinations to the practice were published by

¹⁹¹ Newton, 'Pioneering the Gospel in Australia, Part 1: New Light on the First Missionaries', *The Ensign*, October 1986, viewed 13/08/2020

¹⁹² Newton, 'Pioneering the Gospel in Australia, Part 1: New Light on the First Missionaries', *The Ensign*, October 1986, viewed 13/08/2020

¹⁹³ Newton, *Southern Cross Saints*, pp. 224

¹⁹⁴ Brian Hales, "'Denying the Undeniable": Examining Early Mormon Polygamy Renunciations', *Journal of Mormon History*, Volume 44, Issue 3, 2018, pp. 23-24

¹⁹⁵ Christopher Flood, *Mormons in Paris: Polygamy on the French Stage, 1874-1892*, Lewisberg, Pennsylvania: Bucknell University Press, 2021

newspapers by 1850, a year before the first 'official' missionaries arrived, and two years before it was publicly admitted by the Church. In the article 'European Intelligence', Tasmania's *The Cornwall Chronicle* stated the 'Mormons of Deseret (Salt Lake) indulge in polygamy, and hold the doctrine that a man may have as many wives as can be supported... the old men there have twenty wives, but that few of the young men have more than five.'¹⁹⁶ This same article was reprinted in *The Britannia and Trades' Advocate* on the 11th of April, the *Hobarton Guardian* on the 20th April, and the *Port Phillip Gazette and Settler's Journal* on 25th June the same year.¹⁹⁷

The Mormons' unorthodox religious-sexual practice found an unwelcome reception within Australia, which was already struggling with moral panic regarding perceived sexual immorality amongst women in the colonies. This is attested to in the scholarship of academics such as Anne Summers, Jay Damousi, Frances Raelene, Henrike Hoogenraad, and Jade Hastings.¹⁹⁸ These authors have argued that press, Church, and government was consistently concerned with the sexuality of women, whether in private or public, throughout the colonial era. Thus, perceived sexual deviance, motivated by religious

Hales, "'Denying the Undeniable": Examining Early Mormon Polygamy Renunciations', *Journal of Mormon History*, Volume 44, Issue 3, 2018, pp. 25-30

Sebastian Lecourt, 'The Mormons, the Victorians, and the Idea of Greater Britain', *Victorian Studies*, Volume 56, Issue 1, 2013, pp. 85-111

¹⁹⁶ 'European Intelligence', *The Cornwall Chronicle (Launceston, Tasmania)*, 6 April 1850, pp. 219

¹⁹⁷ 'English Extracts', *Port Phillip and Settler's Journal (Victoria)* 25 June 1850, pp. 4; 'Latest English News', *Hobarton Guardian, or True Friend of Tasmania (Hobart, Tasmania)*, 20 April 1850, pp. 4; 'Russia', *The Britannia and Trades Advocate (Hobart, Tasmania)*, 11 April 1850, pp. 3

¹⁹⁸ Jay Damousi, *Depraved and Disorderly: Female Convicts, Sexuality, and Gender in Colonial Australia*, Cambridge University Publisher, 1997; Jade Hastings, *Single Women and the Law: Crime and Legislative Change in Colonial South Australia (Doctorate's Thesis)*, Flinders University, South Australia: College of Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences, 2022; Henrike Hoogenraad, 'A Case of Cruel Optimism: White Australian Women's Experiences of Marriage Migration', *Gender, Place, and Culture: A Journal of Feminist Geography*, Volume 30, Issue 9, 2023, pp. 1199-1219; Frances Raelene, 'Sex Workers or Citizens? Prostitution and the Shaping of "Settler" Society in Australia', *International Review of Social History*, Volume 33, 1999, pp. 101-122; Anne Summers, *Damned Whores and God's Police: The Colonisation of Women in Australia*, Ringwood, Victoria: Penguin Publishers, 1994

fervour, was a cause for concern amongst Australia's press, which published salacious tales concerning Mormon polygamy for the entirety of the 1850s.¹⁹⁹ Nonetheless, what is important here is that by the time the first missionaries arrived in 1851, newspapers had already begun to publish tales of Mormon perceived sexual deviance.

The First Missionaries from Zion, 1851 - 1858

It was in this climate that the Latter-day Saint missionaries from the newly formed Mormon-polity Deseret, now modern-day Utah, arrived in Australia.²⁰⁰ Elders John Murdock and Charles Wandell established headquarters of the Australasian Mission, which encompassed both Australia and New Zealand, in Sydney.²⁰¹ As with Barratt and Anderson, these missionaries felt overwhelmed by the culture of mid-nineteenth century

¹⁹⁹ This is only a cursory example of the slew of articles that denounced Mormon polygamy during this period:

'A Letter from a Mormon Wife Defending Polygamy', *Geelong Advertiser and Intelligencer (Victoria)*, 21 September 1854, pp. 5; 'A Letter from a Mormon Wife Defending Polygamy', *The Tasmanian Colonist (Hobart)*, 9 October 1854, pp. 4; 'Advertising', *The Tasmanian Colonist (Hobart)*, 1 July 1852, pp. 4; 'Doings of the Mormonites in Utah', *Freeman's Journal (Sydney, New South Wales)*, 23 April 1853, pp. 2; 'Doings of the Mormonites in Utah', *Geelong Advertiser and Intelligencer (Victoria)*, 21 March 1853, pp. 2; 'Horrible Mormon Revelations', *The Perth Gazette and Independent Journal of Politics and News (Western Australia)*, 3 August 1853, pp. 4; *The Tasmanian Colonist (Hobart)*, 27 September 1852, pp. 4; 'Mormon Abominations Exposed by a Victim', *The Sydney Morning Herald (New South Wales)*, 30 September 1856, pp. 8; 'Mormon Miseries', *Colonial Times (Hobart, Tasmania)*, 16 December 1854, pp. 2; 'Mormon Polygamy', *The Tasmanian Daily News (Hobart)*, 14 May 1857, pp. 3; 'Mormon Revelations', *The Hobart Town Daily Mercury (Tasmania)*, 2 September 1858, pp. 3; 'Mormonism in Geelong', *Geelong Advertiser and Intelligencer (Victoria)*, 7 June 1855, pp. 4; 'Mormonist Delusions and Morals', *The Age (Melbourne, Victoria)*, 6 July 1855, pp. 3; 'Origin of the Institution of Polygamy in the Mormon Church', *Ovens and Murray Advertiser (Beechworth, Victoria)*, 8 March 1859, pp. 3; 'Startling Developments Among the Mormons – Polygamy Avowed and Defended', *Empire (Sydney, New South Wales)*, 8 June 1853, pp. 6; 'The Mormon Difficulty', *South Australian Register (Adelaide)*, 14 May 1858, pp. 3; 'The Mormon Imposture', *The Tasmanian Colonist (Hobart)*, 29 December 1853, pp. 4; 'The Mormons', *Freeman's Journal (Sydney, New South Wales)*, 2 June 1855, pp. 6; 'The Mormons – Their Bible, and Their Creed', *The Sydney Morning Herald (New South Wales)*, 18 March 1854, pp. 3; 'The Mormonites in Australia', *Adelaide Observer (South Australia)*, 16 April 1853, pp. 8; 'The Mormonites in Australia', *South Australian Register*, 16 April 1853, pp. 3

²⁰⁰ Eggington, 'Australia, the Church in', *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, New York: MacMillan Publishing, 1992, pp. 71

²⁰¹ Eggington, 'Australia, the Church in', *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, New York: MacMillan Publishing, 1992, pp. 71

Australian colonies, which was anathematic to Mormonism.²⁰² Despite considerable apathy and indifference, as well as outright hostility, Murdock and Wandell published tracts, participated in theological debates with denominational preachers, gave sermons on soapboxes in Hyde Park, and went from door to door in their quest for converts.²⁰³ Facing rejection, the missionaries condemned the ‘class’ of the people in New South Wales and their lack of receptivity to Mormonism, and lamented the prevalence of convicts, antagonistic print media, and unfriendly clergy.²⁰⁴

A clear illustration of this comes from a May 1852 article in *The Sydney Morning Herald* titled ‘The Mormon Delusion’, in which a report of Mormon polygamy was recounted.²⁰⁵ This article derided the polity of Deseret, claiming that Mormon individuals’ land, wealth, and politics were centrally controlled by a theocratic Mormon government. This article stated:

The governor [Brigham Young] was seen riding through the streets of the city in an omnibus with a large company of his wives, more than two-thirds of whom had infants in their arms, sure sign that the evil is increasing. It is not uncommon to find two or more sisters married to the same man, and in one instance, at least, a mother and her two daughters are among the wives of a leading member... this practice [is] regarded and punished as a high and revolting crimes in all civilised countries...²⁰⁶

Though polygamy had yet to be officially acknowledged by the Church, it is an accurate report, in that by October 1852 Brigham Young had an estimate of forty-six wives.

²⁰² Newton, *Southern Cross Saints*, pp. 29-31

²⁰³ Newton, *Southern Cross Saints*, pp. 29-31

²⁰⁴ Newton, *Southern Cross Saints*, pp. 30; John Murdock, *Journal and Autobiography, circa 1830-1867*, Church History Catalog, Call Number: MS 1194, pp. 104 available at: <https://catalog.churchofjesuschrist.org/record?id=e8018e8a-058f-4a05-844b-357b250c1d0d&view=browse>

²⁰⁵ ‘The Mormon Delusion’, *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 13 May 1852, pp. 2

²⁰⁶ ‘The Mormon Delusion’, *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 13 May 1852, pp. 2

According to Jeffrey Johnson, in 1847 Young had, indeed married nineteen-year-old Mary Ann Bigelow and her sixteen-year-old sister Lucy.²⁰⁷

In response to this particular article, Elder Charles Wandell wrote to *The Sydney Morning Herald* with a refutation, published two days after the original. Wandell claimed the article had created a 'false view' of the Mormons, and had brought 'a torrent of unmerited persecution upon the Saints in this city.'²⁰⁸ In a lengthy letter, Wandell sought to emphasise various Latter-day Saint doctrines, including the sanctity of the Book of Mormon, the prophethood of Joseph Smith and Brigham Young, and the 'peaceful' polity of Deseret. Wandell further claimed

Inasmuch as this Church of Christ has been reproached with the crime of fornication and polygamy, we declare that we believe that ONE MAN should have ONE WIFE and ONE WOMAN but ONE HUSBAND. (emphasis in original)²⁰⁹

Signed 'on behalf of a reviled and persecuted, yet innocent people', Wandell forcefully rejected the claims made against the Church in the previous article; it is unclear whether Wandell sincerely did not know about the Church's polygamy. However, it is apparent that Mormons had been practicing polygamy for over a decade, albeit in quasi-secret. It was not until October 1852 that this would be admitted.²¹⁰

When Murdock returned to Utah due to ill health in 1852, there were only forty-seven members in the Australasian Mission; no missionaries had yet been sent to New

²⁰⁷ Jeffrey Ogden Johnson, 'Determining and Defining 'Wife': The Brigham Young Households', *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Volume 20, Issue 3, 1987, pp. 60 (57-70)

²⁰⁸ 'The Mormons', *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 15 May 1852, pp. 4

²⁰⁹ 'The Mormons', *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 15 May 1852, pp. 4

²¹⁰ Johnson, 'Determining and Defining 'Wife': The Brigham Young Households', *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Volume 20, Issue 3, 1987, pp. 60

Zealand.²¹¹ On 6 April 1853, Wandell left Sydney Harbour with a small company of members, who desired to join their co-religionists in building 'Zion.'²¹² Later in the month, Augustus Farnham arrived in Sydney from Salt Lake City with ten new missionaries to continue the proselytization process in the Australian and New Zealand colonies.²¹³ This pattern of convert-migration from the colonies would characterise the early period of Mormonism in the region.

The unfriendly representation and reception of Mormonism continued even after the missionaries had become more established. For example, in 1854, Church of England Minister T.C. Ewing published a lecture he had given against Mormonism in the Hawkesbury Valley, New South Wales. Printed under the title *The Mormon Delusion* he warned the colonists:

The Lord being my helper, I will drive these soul-destroying Mormons from out of my parish... never attend their preachings – burn the books they may leave in your house – shun the Mormons as you would men bearing along with them pestilence and death.²¹⁴

This pamphlet was advertised for purchase in various newspapers, such as in Sydney's *Empire*, which also included a recommendation of the tract from the *Tasmanian Church Chronicle*. This hostile tract and lecture indicates a clear clergy-led anti-Mormon reception and response to the Latter-day Saints during this period.

²¹¹ 'About Us – Australia', *The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in the Pacific* Website, viewed 13/08/2020

<https://pacific.churchofjesuschrist.org/au/about-us>

²¹² 'About Us – Australia', *The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in the Pacific* Website, viewed 13/08/2020

²¹³ Newton, *Southern Cross Saints*, pp. 29

²¹⁴ 'Advertising: The Mormon Delusion', *Empire*, Sydney, New South Wales, 27 May 1854, pp. 8; Reverend Ewing, *The Mormon Delusion*, 1854, pp. 32; Newton, *Southern Cross Saints*, pp. 72

The marginalisation and othering of the Latter-day Saints is further contextualised by the fact that within both Australia and New Zealand, religion played a complicated role.²¹⁵ The power of the clergy, whilst still evident, was much less potent within these colonial enterprises than within Great Britain. For example, historian Meredith Lake contends that Australian clergy during the colonial period, predominantly Protestant, bemoaned the public's lack of religiosity, and decried the lack of Christian foundations of the colonies.²¹⁶ This is further exemplified by the fact that, unlike in the United Kingdom, the Church of England was not the official denomination of the Australian and New Zealand colonies after the 1840s, as legislation did away with the role of a state-religion.²¹⁷ As such, ministers, who feared their limited influence, had little tolerance for the active proselytisation of Mormons with their ostensibly heretical theology, prophetic story of origin, and migration to Salt Lake City as destiny. More significantly, reluctance of Mormons to settle permanently in the Antipodean colonies was an insult to the broader projects of these settler-churches, who sought to establish Christianity in the far-flung colonies of the British Empire.²¹⁸

Primarily motivated by the hostility of both secular and religious Australian society, ecclesiastical leader Augustus Farnham established Church newspaper *Zion's Watchman*. This invaluable primary source is one of the most significant indicators of how Latter-day

²¹⁵ Judith Golden, 'A 'Region of Indecency and Pruriency': Religious Conflict, Female Communities, and Health Care in Colonial New South Wales', *Humanities Research*, Volume 12, Issue 1, 2005, pp. 81

²¹⁶ Lake, 'Protestant Christianity and the Colonial Environment: Australia as a Wilderness in the 1830s and 1840s', *Journal of Australian Colonial Australia*, Volume 11, 2009, pp. 38

²¹⁷ Reid Mortensen, 'A Christian State – A Comment', *Journal of Law and Religion*, Volume 13, Issue 2, 1998, pp. 509-10

²¹⁸ Mortensen, 'A Christian State – A Comment', *Journal of Law and Religion*, Volume 13, Issue 2, 1998, pp. 509-10

Saints perceived their own standing within Australian society. This monthly periodical was published between 1853 and 1856 in Sydney, and distributed throughout the continent.²¹⁹ The purpose of *Zion's Watchman* was threefold: it attempted to broaden the reach of Mormonism's message, defend the faith from perceived enemies, and inform the Latter-day Saints of occurrences in 'Zion.' Under a masthead that read 'He Who Judgeth A Cause Before He Heareth Is Not Wise – To the Public', Farnham published the first edition in July 1853. As part of this, he wrote

Many statements having been made by the periodical press of the Colony, relative to the faith and practice of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, tending to bring such faith and church into derision, and it being utterly impossible, through the medium of such Press, to obtain liberty, freely and fully, to defend ourselves against their misrepresentations, false statements, and unscriptural citations...

Let [the colonists] repent of their priestcraft, errors and folly, and humble themselves as in the dust, and learn to speak and publish the truth.²²⁰

Farnham evidently felt unable to respond to broader society's representation of the Church and its adherents in the colony's existing print culture. Here, the importance of *Zion's Watchman* cannot be understated; it was an unmediated voice of a religious minority, with transnational roots, who felt overwhelmed by the hostility and apathy of the surrounding society. It also allowed a connection for these Australian Mormons to the broader Latter-day Saint community abroad, where they could read doctrines from Church leaders, as well as the experiences of their international co-religionists, from official sources, rather than broader representations by media.

²¹⁹ Newton, *Southern Cross Saints*, pp. 32

²²⁰ Augustus Farnham, *To The Public (Pamphlet Advertising the First Edition of Zion's Watchman)*, Sydney, 23 July, 1853 (available at <https://archive.org/details/ZionsWatchman18531856>)

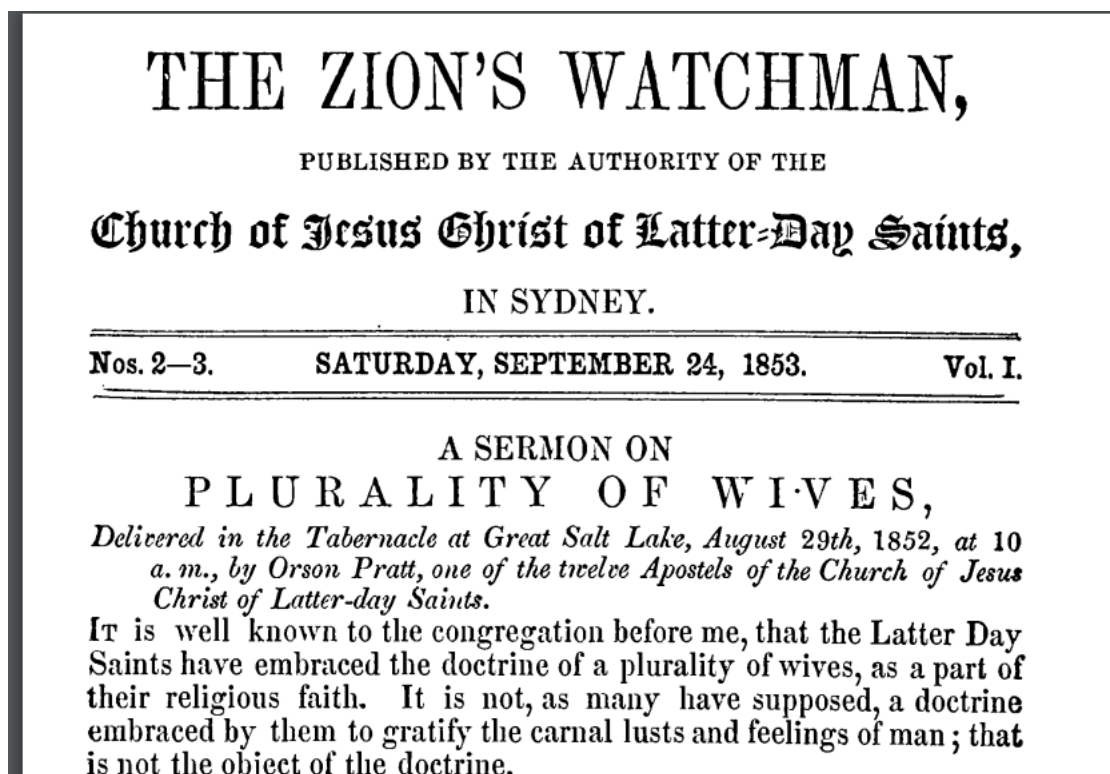


Figure 1: The Second Edition of *Zion's Watchman* in September 1853 confirming the practice of polygamy Augustus Farnham, *Zion's Watchman*, Volume 1, Number 2-3, 24 September 1853, pp. 1 <https://archive.org/details/ZionsWatchman18531856/page/n9/mode/1up>

Farnham's sense of rejection from mainstream Australian society was not unfounded, and is corroborated by the historical record; numerous newspaper articles condemned the apparent intrusion of Mormonism into the colonies. For example, an article from April 1853 in the *Launceston Examiner*, published in Tasmania, illuminates the hostility towards a Utah-centred Mormonism that threatened to deplete the small populations of settler-Australia. Referring to the recently arrived eighteen missionaries, the paper claimed the:

Aim of the Mormon agents is not simply to propagate their doctrines among the people to whom they are sent, but also to forward their proselytes, with all possible speed, to the headquarters of

the sect at Salt Lake City, and its vicinity... they come here, therefore, not merely to get converts but to promote an emigration to the country of the Faithful.²²¹

Though only a sample source of this representation, newspaper articles published in the colonies of South Australia, Victoria, Tasmania (Van Diemen's Land), and New South Wales were also hostile to the immigration of the faithful to Zion, and attacked Mormonism's doctrines and adherents.²²²

Two major threads in the press commentary should be noted here in relation to the Mormon process of 'the Gathering.' The first was that newspapers emphatically framed their hostility towards the Latter-day Saints as 'protecting' women from sexual degradation, particularly with reference to polygamy. As shall be discussed later in this chapter, this was reinforced by the public lectures of Mormon apostate Fanny Stenhouse. However, various commentators also emphasised the need for mothers in the new colonies for the purpose of population growth.²²³ This anxiety has been discussed in sources such as *A History of Australia*, in which Mark Peel and Christina Twomey emphasise colonial Australia's physical distance from its British roots as a constant source of anxiety. These scholars state that 'Australia was and is an anxiously experimental society', before arguing that these fears are the result of 'a self-consciously new society.'²²⁴ In New Zealand, similar fears existed, especially in view of defence; these

²²¹ 'Mormonism', *The Launceston Examiner (Launceston, Tasmania)*, Saturday 16 April 1853, pp. 4

²²² 'Correspondence – The Mormons and Bearded Prophets', *Freeman's journal (Sydney, New South Wales)*, Thursday 21 October 1852, pp. 9; 'Matters and Things in Utah – Doings of the Mormons', *The Tasmanian Colonist (Hobart)*, Monday 27 September 1852, pp. 4; 'Mormonism', *The Argus (Melbourne, Victoria)*, Thursday 17 January 1850, pp. 4; 'Startling Developments Among the Mormons – Polygamy Avowed and Defended', *Empire (Sydney, New South Wales)*, Wednesday 8 June 1853, pp. 6; 'Faith of the Latter-day Saints', *Adelaide Observer (South Australia)*, Saturday 8 May 1852

²²³ 'The Mormons', *The Sydney Morning Herald (New South Wales)*, Saturday 15 May 1852, pp. 4

'The Mormons, Or Latter-day Saints', *The Tasmanian Colonist (Hobart)*, Thursday 15 April 1852, pp. 4

'The Mormonites in Australia', *Adelaide Observer (South Australia)*, Saturday 16 April 1852, pp. 8

²²⁴ Mark Peel and Christina Twomey, *A History of Australia*, New York: Palgrave MacMillan Publishers, 2011, xiv; Bronwyn Fredericks and Abraham Bradfield. "'I'm Not Afraid of the Dark: White Colonial Fears, Anxieties, and Racism in Australia and Beyond,' *Media/Culture Journal*, Volume 24, Issue. 2 (2021)

were compounded by German encroachment and expansion throughout the Pacific in the nineteenth century.²²⁵

This is especially significant when considering the vast gender imbalance in these new colonies. Liz Rushen suggests that until the mid-nineteenth century, women made up less than 30% of the major Australian colonies.²²⁶ As such, the colonial enterprise was built upon controlling women's reproductive powers, and various governments sought to promote the migration of women through promises of marriage and family-rearing.²²⁷ Colonial governments sought to bring 'social stability' to the new colonies through these so-called 'matrimonial expeditions.'²²⁸ Angela Woollacott has argued that Australian fears surrounding population were heightened during the mid-1800s when a number of imperial crises, including the 'Indian Mutiny' and 'Māori Wars' saw imperial soldiers stationed in Australia called to other outposts of Empire. This was perceived to have left the continent 'unprotected' from the violent incursion of surrounding nations and empires.²²⁹ Thus, the hostility against Latter-day Saint missionaries, and the perception of these proselytes as 'promot[ing] an emigration', is better understood in the historical context of nineteenth-century anxieties within settler-colonial Australia and New Zealand.²³⁰

²²⁵ Peter Overlack, "Bless the Queen and Cure the Colonial Office": Australasian Reaction to German Consolidation in the Pacific, 1871-99", *The Journal of Pacific History*, Volume 33, Issue 2, September 1998, pp. 134-5

²²⁶ Liz Rushen, 'Marriage Options for Immigrant Women in Colonial Australia in the 1830s', *Journal of Australian Colonial History*, Volume 16, 2014, pp. 111

²²⁷ Rushen, 'Marriage Options for Immigrant Women in Colonial Australia in the 1830s', *Journal of Australian Colonial History*, pp. 111

²²⁸ Rushen, 'Marriage Options for Immigrant Women in Colonial Australia in the 1830s', *Journal of Australian Colonial History*, pp. 111

²²⁹ Angela Woollacott, *Settler Society in the Australian Colonies: Self Government and Imperial Culture*, London: Oxford University Press, 2015, pp. 186

²³⁰ 'Mormonism', *The Launceston Examiner (Launceston, Tasmania)*, Saturday 16 April 1853, pp. 4

As well as publications that decried both the theological and practical elements of Mormonism in general, various newspapers reported on interactions between local Mormons and broader society.²³¹ In this regard, *Zion's Watchman* is an invaluable historical source that details these tensions, albeit with a clear bias in favour of the Mormons. Of particular interest to the theme of religiously-based hostility is the case of 'Elder Jones and the Rev. Dr. Fullerton', published in the January 1855 edition of *Zion's Watchman*.²³² Having two children buried in the Presbyterian graveyard, Mr John Jones asked the local clergy, Revered Fullerton, to bury his third child there.²³³ Fullerton, upon learning of Jones' conversion to Mormonism, refused to bury his child in the Presbyterian Cemetery; articles reporting this matter were published in various newspapers in Sydney, including *The Herald* and *Empire*, in which both Jones and Reverend Fullerton submitted letters to the editors.²³⁴ *Zion's Watchman* reprinted these articles with commentary, concluding 'this correspondence shows the intolerant spirit of the Dr.'²³⁵ Such denominationalism is unsurprising, but this hostility to Mormons and their religion by broader clergy is important in understanding the way in which Latter-day Saints were perceived in broader colonial society, and faced hostility from established religions.²³⁶ That a localised family matter escalated into the public sphere, where broader opinions

²³¹ 'Extracts – The Mormons, and Their Customs', *Geelong Advertiser (Victoria)*, Friday 2 May 1841, pp. 1; 'Letter From Oregon – Rumoured Revolution Among the Mormons', *Adelaide Observer (South Australia)*, Saturday 24 April 1852, pp. 8; 'Mormonism – the Frightful Offspring of a False and Delusive Principle', *Freeman's Journal (Sydney, New South Wales)*, Saturday 9 April 1853, pp. 8; 'Progress of Mormonism', *The Tasmanian Colonist (Hobart)*, 28 April 1853, pp. 4; 'The Great Mormon Settlement on the Confines of California', *South Australian Register (Adelaide, South Australia)*, 10 April 1851, pp. 2; 'The New Mormon State', *The Melbourne Daily (Victoria)*, Saturday 11 May 1850, pp. 4

²³² *Zion's Watchman*, Volume 1, Numbers 26-27, pp. 210-213

(available at <https://archive.org/details/ZionsWatchman18531856>)

²³³ *Zion's Watchman*, Volume 1, Numbers 26-27, pp. 212

²³⁴ *Zion's Watchman*, Volume 1, Numbers 26-27, pp. 211

²³⁵ *Zion's Watchman*, Volume 1, Numbers 26-27, pp. 213

²³⁶ *Zion's Watchman*, Volume 1, Numbers 26-27, pp. 211

about Latter-day Saints were canvased by Reverend Fullerton and others, indicates that Mormonism was a public, although certainly marginalised, concern.

Mormonism's doctrines, and the Church's attitudes to the relationship between believers and government authorities, further hindered Mormonism's reception and representation. In April 1855 *The Zion's Watchman* published the so-called 'King Follett Sermon', the last public sermon of Joseph Smith, delivered just prior to his assassination in April 1844, in which he set out the process of deification of the faithful:

You have got to learn how to be Gods yourselves; to be kings and priests to God, the same as all Gods have done; by going from a small degree to another, from grace to grace, from exaltation to exaltation, until you are able to sit in glory as doth those who sit enthroned in everlasting power...²³⁷

This particular dogma – read as a challenge to the authority of God and government – was not well received by the Australian public. Smith's claim that 'you have got to learn how to be Gods yourselves' was highly controversial; by the early 20th century, Australian newspapers and mainstream Christians used this dogma as a shorthand means of discrediting Mormon faith.²³⁸ My own research has not uncovered whether the publication of the King Follett sermon in the April 1855 edition of *Zion's Watchman* was noted by contemporaneous colonial newspapers. However, it is significant that the Church's official publication, which began as a defensive exercise in response to hostile

²³⁷ *Zion's Watchman*, Volume 1, Numbers 32-33, April 1855, pp. 249-256

²³⁸ 'Mormon "Missionaries"', *Oven and Murray Advertiser (Beechworth, Victoria)*, Saturday 10 June 1911, pp. 2; 'The Mormon Revival of Polygamy', *Watchman (Sydney, New South Wales)*, Thursday 23 February 1911, pp. 7; 'Mormons and Mormonism: Secret Ceremonies of the Utah Temple Exposed', *Truth (Melbourne, Victoria)*, Saturday 11 December 1915, pp. 2

newspaper reports in the Australian press, contained some of the Church's more controversial theologies.

This was perhaps done to prepare the Australian Mormon emigres to Salt Lake City, as these doctrines were quite publicly discussed by the Latter-day Saint hierarchy. Moreover, by republishing sermons from ecclesiastical leaders abroad, Antipodean Latter-day Saints were expected to be knowledgeable about more diverse doctrines. As such, *Zion's Watchman* helped to create a transnational faith community that connected Latter-day Saints in the Australian colonies with ecclesiastical leaders in Salt Lake City; it also, arguably, prepared Australian converts for their eventual migration under 'the Gathering.' Most importantly, *Zion's Watchman* indicates how the Latter-day Saints perceived themselves in broader mid-nineteenth century Australia. As the Antipodean colonies were struggling with anxieties of being an 'outpost' of the British Empire, the incursion of the Latter-day Saints, with their heterodox theology and ostensibly anti-imperial practices, the reception and representations of Mormonism in this period was underscored by hostility.

Early Missionaries and Indigenous Australians, 1850s

Due to the racially-charged cosmology of Mormonism, it is important to here discuss the varied and ambiguous place of Indigenous Australians during this period. This cosmological regression was due to numerous factors, including Mormonism's scripturally based racial hierarchies, the marginalisation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people within Australian society, and the limitations of early missionaries. Of significance to the contextualisation of Indigenous Australians' unclear place in

Mormonism was the conscious pivot by mid-nineteenth-century missionaries to proselyte actively amongst various indigenous groups in the Pacific. This began with the *Ma'ohi* (Native Tahitians) in 1844 before spreading to the *Kanak Maoli* (Native Hawaiians) by 1851.²³⁹ As part of this emphasis, a cosmological connection was made between Oceanic peoples and Mormon theology, wherein they were believed to be related to the peoples mentioned in the Book of Mormon descending from a character named Hagoth, who sailed away never to be heard from again.²⁴⁰

First Nations peoples in Australia, however, were equated with African peoples by the early Latter-day Saint missionaries.²⁴¹ It should be noted, however, that this Social Darwinist perspective was the prevailing anthropological view, and widely accepted by both pseudoscience and religion.²⁴² Despite little evidence that the missionaries even attempted to proselytise to Indigenous Australians, limited records of Mormon views tended to be racist, condescending, and dismissive. One of the only primary sources from this period that mentions a Mormon perspective on Indigenous Australians comes from

²³⁹ R. Lanier Britsch, *Unto the Islands of the Sea: A History of the Latter-day Saints in the Pacific*, Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1986, 4, 96–97

²⁴⁰ For more detailed discussions about race, scripture, and Latter-day Saint theology within the Pacific, see:

Aikau, *A Chosen People, A Promised Land*; Barber, “Between Biculturalism and Assimilation”, *New Zealand Journal of History* 9, no. 2, 1995, 142–69; Barber, “Matakite, Mormon Conversions, and Māori-Israelite Identity Work in Colonial New Zealand,” *Journal of Mormon History* 41, no. 3, July 2015, pp. 167–220; Katene, ed., *Turning the Hearts of the Children*; Newton, *Tiki and Temple*; Underwood, “Mormonism, the Maori and Cultural Authenticity,” *Journal of Pacific History* 35, no. 2 (2000), pp. 133–46; Underwood, ed., *Pioneers in the Pacific: Memory, History and Cultural Identity among the Latter-day Saints*

²⁴¹ Griffin, ‘Racial Categories: Indigenous Australians and Mormonism, 1840 – Present’, *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Volume 48, Issue 1, pp. 3

²⁴² Griffin, ‘Racial Categories: Indigenous Australians and Mormonism, 1840 – Present’, *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Volume 48, Issue 1, pp. 9; Kay Anderson and Colin Perrin, ‘How Race Became Everything: Australia and Polygenism’, *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, Volume 31, Issue 5, 2008, pp. 962–990; Greg Blyton, ‘Australia: Tainted Blood – Scientific Racism, Eugenics, and Sanctimonious Treatment of Aboriginal Australians: 1869–2008’ in Bruce E. Johnson and Adebowale Akande (eds.), *Get Your Knee Off Our Necks: From Slavery to Black Lives Matter*, Springer Publishers, 2022, pp. 253–273

an 1854 journal entry from John Murdock, who was assigned to preach in Sydney.

Murdoch wrote:

New Zealand, 1600 miles from [Sydney] with much population, of both Europeans, and Native, the latter industrious, and intelligent, the young can talk, read, and write the English; But the natives on this Isle are more indolent than the American Indians. On Vandeman's [Tasmania] there is none, for they have been all removed by the English.²⁴³

The other journals and autobiography of John Murdock contain no further references to Indigenous Australians, nor do the journals of William Hyde and John Warren Norton, both of whom served missions in various Australian cities during the nineteenth century.²⁴⁴ These silences show that although the missionaries were indeed aware of Indigenous Australians, at this time there was no attempt to accommodate these people within the cosmological framework of the Church, although this would begin to change during the twentieth century.

Leaving Australia: The 'Gathering' of the Antipodean Saints, 1855-60s

On 7th of September 1855, 28 Mormons sailed from Sydney harbour aboard the *Julia Ann*, bound for San Francisco.²⁴⁵ One of the emigrating Mormons, Martha Humphries, who was

²⁴³ John Murdock, *Journal and autobiography*, circa 1830–1867, Church History Library, MS 1194, p. 104, available at <https://catalog.churchofjesuschrist.org/record?id=e8018e8a-058f-4a05-844b-357b250c1d0d&view=browse>.

²⁴⁴ John Murdock, *Journal and autobiography*, circa 1830–1867, Church History Library, MS 1194, available at <https://catalog.churchofjesuschrist.org/record?id=e8018e8a-058f-4a05-844b-357b250c1d0d&view=browse>; John Warren Norton, *Missionary journal, 1857–1858*, Church History Library, MS 14686, available at <https://catalog.churchofjesuschrist.org/assets?id=886cd34a-fe2b-456e-81aa-276ff5c98ad1&crate=0&index=0>; William Hyde, William Hyde diary, 1852–1854, Church History Library, MS 9358, available at <https://catalog.churchofjesuschrist.org/assets?id=1f609865-6fe1-48c2-a862-59d3a82df19a&crate=0&index=0>

²⁴⁵ Rachel Kohn, 'The Wreck of the Julia Ann', *ABC National Radio Website*, 12 June 2015, viewed 11/11/2020 <https://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/archived/spiritofthings/the-wreck-of-the-julia-ann/6538392>

born in England but emigrated to New South Wales as a youth, wrote to her mother before they embarked on their voyage. Her letter is reflective of the way in which the Mormons felt about their anticipated journey:

We leave Australia, with all its woes and bitterness, for the Land of Zion... Perhaps you will say, I am building on worldly hopes, that never will be realized, not so, Mother I still insist upon going, what are a few short years in this present state, compared with life eternal?²⁴⁶

After three weeks at sea, the *Julia Ann* was wrecked on a reef near Tahiti; five of the Mormons on board died, including Martha Humphries and two of Andrew Anderson's children.²⁴⁷ The surviving Saints and members of the crew were washed ashore on an uninhabited island.²⁴⁸ Captain Benjamin Pond, acting on dreams by one of the missionaries, sought assistance at the British consulate in Bora Bora.²⁴⁹ After the fateful event, there were some who maintained their commitment, and continued to Utah; others lost their faith and remained in California.²⁵⁰ One of the Latter-day Saints who persisted to Utah, Peter Penfold, wrote to his son in Australia:

Though we have lost all our worldly goods, and all that we had; yet we have faith in God, and trust He will deliver us... Do not forget to come along the first opportunity... I hope to see you all before long in the land of the free, surrounded by the saints of the Most High God.²⁵¹

News of the wreck reached both American and Australian shores, and the press of these countries reported on the event. Travel by sea was essential for American and Antipodean mobility, and sinking of ships and loss of life were reported as events of high local interest. One survivor, Esther Spangenberg, account in the *San Francisco Herald* 'as one of the sufferers in the melancholy and catastrophe' was reprinted in *The Sydney*

²⁴⁶ Kohn, 'The Wreck of the Julia Ann', *ABC National Radio Website*, 12 June 2015

²⁴⁷ Newton, *Southern Cross Saints*, pp. 147

²⁴⁸ Kohn, 'The Wreck of the Julia Ann', *ABC National Radio Website*, 12 June 2015

²⁴⁹ Kohn, 'The Wreck of the Julia Ann', *ABC National Radio Website*, 12 June 2015

²⁵⁰ Kohn, 'The Wreck of the Julia Ann', *ABC National Radio Website*, 12 June 2015

²⁵¹ Kohn, 'The Wreck of the Julia Ann', *ABC National Radio Website*, 12 June 2015

Morning Herald in July 1856.²⁵² Interestingly, within the Australian press, no publication mentioned that they were Mormons headed for Utah, although the names of the passengers and the experiences faced by the crew and passengers were reported.²⁵³

In contrast, the exodus of Mormons from Australia during 1857 and 1858 was contextualised in the Australian press within Mormon-American politics, namely the ‘Mormon War’, a conflict that erupted between the Latter-day Saint polity of Deseret and the United States government. As a result of the ‘Mormon War’, the majority of the Australian-based missionaries in Australia were recalled to Utah.²⁵⁴ Although Latter-day Saints in Australia were informed of the occurrences by Church hierarchy, Australian newspapers also closely followed the Mormon War with interest.²⁵⁵ Though the ‘Mormon War’ was short lived, tension between the Mormon polity and the United States government, particularly around the issues of polygamy and the Church’s perceived theocracy, very few missionaries were able to be dispatched to Australia or New Zealand between 1858 and the 1880s.²⁵⁶ This, combined with the departure of hundreds of

²⁵² ‘Particulars of the Wreck of the Barque Julia Anne’, *The Sydney Morning Herald (New South Wales)*, Saturday 12 July 1856, pp. 4

²⁵³ ‘Total Loss of the American Barque Julian Ann’, *Launceston Examiner (Tasmania)*, Thursday 10 April 1856, pp. 2; ‘Total Loss of the American Barque Julian Ann’, *The Shipping Gazette and Sydney General Trade List (Sydney, New South Wales)*, Monday 7 April 1856, pp. 63; ‘Total Loss of the American Barque Julian Ann’, *The Sydney Morning Herald (New South Wales)*, Wednesday 2 April 1856; ‘Wreck of the Julia Ann’, *Empire (Sydney, New South Wales)*, Monday 14 July 1856, pp. 4

²⁵⁴ Newton, *Southern Cross Saints*, pp. 33

²⁵⁵ For example, articles announced the arrival of United States soldiers into Salt Lake City; such news may have been repeated from the pulpits of rival Christian ministers. Please see:

‘A Mormon War Probable’, *Freeman’s Journal (Sydney, New South Wales)*, Saturday 20 October 1855, pp. 7; ‘The Mormon War’, *The Tasmanian Daily News (Hobart Town, Tasmania)*, Thursday 08 April 1858, pp. 3; ‘Probability of a Mormon War’, *Adelaide Times (South Australia)*, Monday 01 March 1858, pp. 3; ‘The President on the Mormon War’, *Northern Times (Newcastle, New South Wales)*, Saturday 20 March 1858, pp. 4; ‘The Mormon Rebellion’, *The Sydney Morning Herald (Sydney, New South Wales)*, Monday 22 February 1858, pp. 3

²⁵⁶ Newton, *Southern Cross Saints*, pp. 40

Mormons in the late 1850s, saw the Church struggle to grow within Australia, though it did survive.²⁵⁷

Struggles of Australian Mormonism, 1860s-80s

Mormonism in Australia was further hindered by the apostasies of ecclesiastical leaders who had been called to preach in Australia. In 1873, the Church leaders in Britain received 'disquieting reports' from members within Australia about the conduct of Mission President Robert Beauchamp. Beauchamp was baptised by William Barratt in South Australia in 1841, and had emigrated with a company of Saints to Utah in 1868 before he was set apart one year later as Mission President and sent back to Australia.²⁵⁸ Although Newton is vague in her description, I theorise here that Beauchamp had been sexually promiscuous and may have justified these extramarital affairs under the banner of polygamy. Beauchamp had stated in the England-based Mormon newspaper *The Millennial Star* '... I certainly would be glad to see... [Salt Lake City] Valley Elders preach **and live their religion** in these lands' (emphasis added).²⁵⁹ Despite the Church's open acknowledgement of the polygamy doctrine and the fact it had been discussed in mainstream Australian newspapers since at least 1850,²⁶⁰ Beauchamp's transgressions, whether under the guise of polygamy or not, caused a furore amongst the Sydney congregation.²⁶¹ This is likely due to the fact that from the beginning of the Church in

²⁵⁷ Marjorie Newton, 'The Gathering of the Australian Saints in the 1850s', *BYU Studies Quarterly*, Volume 27, Issue 2, April 1987, pp. 70

²⁵⁸ Newton, *Southern Cross Saints*, pp. 34

²⁵⁹ *The Millennial Star*, Volume 33, Issue 46, 15 November 1870, pp. 731

²⁶⁰ 'A Letter from a Mormon Wife Defending Polygamy', *Geelong Advertiser and Intelligencer (Victoria)*, Thursday 21 September 1854; 'Mormon Miseries', *The Age (Melbourne, Victoria)*, Tuesday 02 January 1855, pp. 3; 'Mormon Polygamy', *The Tasmanian Daily News (Hobart)*, Thursday 14 May 1857, pp. 3; 'Origin of the Institution of Polygamy in the Mormon Church', *Ovens and Murray Advertiser (Beechworth, Victoria)*, Tuesday 08 March 1859; 'The Mormonites in Australia', *South Australian Register (Adelaide)*, Saturday 16 April 1853, pp. 3

²⁶¹ Newton, *Southern Cross Saints*, pp. 106

Australia, members had been told that plural marriage would only be requested of members living in Zion, and could only be approved by the First Presidency.²⁶² Regardless, once Church authorities in Britain heard of this unauthorised attempt, Scottish missionary William Geedes was sent to excommunicate Beauchamp. Despite the Church's response, the Sydney branch was disconcerted by what Newton calls the 'intemperance and immorality' of the highest hierarchical Mormon in Australia.²⁶³

Charles Wandell, one of the original missionaries to Australia, similarly became disaffected with the Church hierarchy in Utah after falling out with Church prophet Brigham Young over the latter's authoritarianism.²⁶⁴ Newton posits that Wandell's loss of faith had begun with the infamous 1857 Mountain Meadows Massacre, in which Mormon colonists in Utah massacred an Oregon-bound immigration company.²⁶⁵ Although Brigham Young vehemently denied involvement, both contemporary sources and more recent scholarship, have argued a link to the prophet.²⁶⁶ Almost two decades later, Wandell broke from the Church in Utah, travelled to San Francisco from Salt Lake City, and in 1873, became a member of the Reorganised Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. This was a splinter group of Mormonism headed by Joseph Smith's family and their supporters, the majority of whom had stayed in Illinois after the westward exodus of the

²⁶² Newton, *Southern Cross Saints*, pp. 104

²⁶³ Newton, *Southern Cross Saints*, pp. 166

²⁶⁴ Marjorie Newton, *Hero or Traitor? A Biographical Study of Charles Wesley Wandell*, John Whitmer Historical Association, Independence, Missouri: Independence Press, 1992, pp. 44-5

²⁶⁵ Newton, *Hero or Traitor? A Biographical Study of Charles Wesley Wandell*, pp. 45

²⁶⁶ There is debate amongst historians, however, as to how culpable Young was in the event. Whilst some scholars argue he had foreknowledge of the massacre, and even a hand in directing it, others claim that the history of violence *against* Mormons, coupled with Young's rhetoric and paranoia, created the atmosphere in which this massacre occurred, without his direct influence.

See, for example:

Juanita Brooks, *The Mountain Meadows Massacre*, Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1963; Patrick Q. Mason, *Mormonism and Violence: The Battles of Zion*, Cambridge University Press, 2019, pp. 57-58; Alexander Thomas, *Brigham Young, the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, and the Latter-day Saint Investigation of the Mountain Meadows Massacre*, Chicago: University Press of Colorado, pp. 4-5

larger group of Mormons under Young.²⁶⁷ The Reorganised Church was formed in Nauvoo after the death of Joseph Smith, but by the 1880s was headquartered in Independence, Missouri.²⁶⁸ The history and development of the Reorganised Church is complex but is based around the belief that the successor to Joseph Smith Jr's spiritual leadership should have been his son, Joseph Smith III, rather than Brigham Young.²⁶⁹

Following his disaffection from the Utah-based Church, Wandell returned to Sydney in 1875, where he established a congregation of the Reorganised Church. Wandell found some receptivity: there were a number of Latter-day Saints who had grown disillusioned with the mainstream Mormonism, including the scandal wrought by Robert Beauchamp, and joined Wandell's Reorganised congregation, which rejected polygamy.²⁷⁰ Although relatively minor in the grander narratives of the development of Mormonism in Australia, the internal theological and religious squabbles of the two groups did affect their overall success; this will be seen more thoroughly in the next chapter. It should be noted that the Reorganised Church, now known as the Community of Christ, still exists in Australia and New Zealand, as well as throughout the Pacific.²⁷¹

²⁶⁷ Newton, *Hero or Traitor? A Biographical Study of Charles Wesley Wandell*, pp. 48

²⁶⁸ 'History: The Community of Christ Story', *Community of Christ Website*, viewed 12/10/2020
<https://www.cofchrist.org/history/>

²⁶⁹ 'Biography: Joseph Smith III', *The Joseph Smith Papers Website*, viewed 14/04/2020
<https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/person/joseph-smith-iii=>

²⁷⁰ Newton, *Hero or Traitor? A Biographical Study of Charles Wesley Wandell*, pp. 52-3

²⁷¹ 'History: The Community of Christ Story', *Community of Christ Website*

Beginnings of the Church in New Zealand, 1850s-1870s

In New Zealand, media reported on the existence and progression of Mormonism from the 1850s, before the religion had even arrived in the colony. As within the fledgling and disparate colonies of Australia, newspapers within New Zealand notified the public of key events in this period for the Utah-based Church, its diaspora, and splinters. New Zealand press similarly decried the existence of polygamy, and even reprinted 'The Mormon Delusion' article discussed above.²⁷² One particular article, 'The Doings of the Mormonites in Utah', ridicules the Latter-day Saint practice:

Polygamy prevails to an extent equal to many of tales of the Eastern romance. Governor Young has a seraglio of about thirty woman, and another named Kimbal [sic] has above that number. The "Twelve Apostles" among them have from half a dozen to a dozen females each; and all of the principle ones among them are vieing [sic] in the same object...²⁷³

This disdain of polygamy would, as in Australia, follow the missionaries wherever they would teach.²⁷⁴ New Zealand media similarly reported key events in this period of Latter-day Saint history, such as the migration of the Latter-day Saints to what is now Utah, as

²⁷² 'The Mormon Delusion', *New Zealand Spectator and Cook's Strait Guardian*, 26 June 1852, pp. 4

²⁷³ 'Doings of the Mormonites in Utah', *Nelson Examiner and New Zealand Chronicle*, 23 October 1852, pp. 140

²⁷⁴ As within Australia, there were scores of newspaper articles dedicated to Mormon polygamy. As such, only a cursory example is provided here:

'A Mormon Woman on Mormonism', *New Zealand Herald*, 10 January 1868, pp. 3; 'Attempted Elopement of One of Brigham Young's Daughters', *Star (Christchurch)*, 8 January 1870, pp. 3; 'Doings of the Mormons', *Lyttleton Times*, 2 October 1852, pp. 5; 'Doings of the Mormonites in Utah', *Nelson Examiner and New Zealand Chronicle*, 23 October 1852, pp. 140; 'Horrible Mormon Revelations', *Nelson Examiner and New Zealand Chronicle*, 15 September 1855, pp. 4; 'Miscellaneous Extracts – The Mormon Delusion', *Wellington Independent*, 16 June 1852, pp. 4; 'Mormon Experiences', *Nelson Examiner and New Zealand Chronicle*, 16 October 1858, pp. 3; 'Mormon Marriages', *Otago Daily Times*, 25 June 1866, pp. 5; 'Mormon Marriages', *Otago Witness*, 23 June 1866, pp. 6; 'Mormon Miseries', *Daily Southern Cross*, 9 February 1855, pp. 3; 'Mormonism and Its Treatment', *Southland Times*, 25 February, 1867; 'Mormonism and Polygamy', *Auckland Examiner*, 4 December 1858, pp. 3; 'Polygamy at the Salt Lake City', *Daily Southern Cross*, 29 October 1869, pp. 4; 'Startling Developments Among the Mormons – Polygamy Avowed and Defended', *Nelson Examiner and New Zealand Chronicle*, 6 August 1853, pp. 5; 'Startling Developments Among the Mormons – Polygamy Avowed and Defended', *Otago Witness*, 22 October 1853, pp. 1; 'The Mormons', *Nelson Examiner and New Zealand Chronicle*, 16 January 1856, pp. 4; 'The Mormons', *Otago Witness*, 2 June 1855, pp. 4; 'The Mormons', *Wellington Independent*, 1 August 1857, pp. 6

well as further expansion under Brigham Young,²⁷⁵ the murder of Apostle Parley P. Pratt,²⁷⁶ the Mormon War,²⁷⁷ and the Mountain Meadows Massacre.²⁷⁸ These articles, for the most part, were reprints of international articles and so do not contain further information about the actual events. However, what these articles clearly illustrate is how widespread perceptions of the Church were within New Zealand.

Missionaries from Sydney arrived in New Zealand from the mid-1850s; this was reported in a hostile manner by the media.²⁷⁹ These early missionaries were largely unsuccessful, although a congregation was established in Karori, North Island in 1855.²⁸⁰ Due to rejection and a lack of resources, the missionaries returned to Australia; only in the 1860s, after the return of Utah missionaries to the region after the 'Mormon War', did the religion begin to take root.²⁸¹ When New Zealander Latter-day Saints began to emigrate

²⁷⁵ 'Mormon Expansion', *Western Star*, 16 June 1877, pp. 6; 'United States', *Daily Southern Cross*, 11 September 1857, pp. 3; 'Utah', *New Zealander*, 21 October 1857, pp. 3

²⁷⁶ It is important to note here that the newspapers mistakenly identified the murdered Apostle as Orson Pratt, rather than Parley Pratt:

'English Extracts: Retribution', *Otago Witness*, 19 September 1857, pp. 3; 'Miscellaneous', *Lyttelton Times*, 16 September 1857, pp. 4; 'Startling Tragedy: Elder Pratt, The Mormon, killed – Seduction of a Wife', *Wellington Independent*, 16 September 1857, pp. 5; 'United States', *New Zealander*, 16 September 1857, pp. 3

²⁷⁷ 'Australia and America', *New Zealander*, 21 October 1857, pp. 2; 'Mormon Hostilities Against the United States Government', *Otago Witness*, 10 April 1858, pp. 7; 'Mormon Rebellion – One Hundred and Eighty U.S. Troops Killed', *Daily Southern Cross*, 20 April 1858, pp. 3; 'The Last Stage of Mormonism', *Daily Southern Cross*, 11 September 1857, pp. 33; 'The Mormon Difficulty in the United States', *Colonist*, 19 April 1858, pp. 3; 'The Mormon Rebellion', *Nelson Examiner and New Zealand Chronicle*, 17 March 1858, pp. 4; 'The Mormon War', *Colonist*, 30 April 1858, pp. 3; 'United States: Mormon Treason', *Daily Southern Cross*, 9 March 1858, pp. 3

²⁷⁸ 'A Mormon Massacre', *Evening Post*, 17 February 1877, pp. 1; 'Extraordinary Trial: The Mountain Meadow Massacre – A Mormon Bishop Sentenced to Death', *Waikato Times*, 20 February 1877, pp. 3; 'The Execution of a Mormon Bishop', *Bruce Herald*, 19 June 1877, pp. 2

²⁷⁹ 'The Mormonites in Australia', *Nelson Examiner and New Zealand Chronicle*, 2 July 1853, pp. 3
'Supplement – Arrival of Mormonites from Australia', *Wellington Independent*, 18 October 1854, pp. 1

²⁸⁰ Newton, *Mormon and Māori*, pp. xxiii

²⁸¹ Newton, *Mormon and Māori*, pp. 1

to Utah by the 1870s, the press vehemently disparaged this phenomenon.²⁸² One article that was reprinted across the islands editorialised:

It is scarcely necessary to say that we will look upon their departure with unfeigned pleasure, and that we trust all traces of a profession [Mormonism] which is held by the civilised world to be inimical to good morals or the welfare of the people, will soon disappear from this province.²⁸³

A similarly belligerent commentator in an 1871 article stated that those who had left their homes in New Zealand were ‘dreamy fools’ who were ‘no loss to this Colony.’²⁸⁴ This hostility is an important indicator of the marginalisation of these nineteenth-century Mormons within New Zealand, and how these religious adherents were perceived and represented.

Almost universally, New Zealand newspapers condemned the missionaries, with numerous writers labelling the Mormons and their beliefs ‘absurdities,’²⁸⁵ ‘foolish,’²⁸⁶ ‘cunning,’²⁸⁷ ‘deluded and enslaved,’²⁸⁸ and ‘dangers.’²⁸⁹ Newspapers similarly noted what towns or regions Latter-day Saint missionaries entered, and often reported with delight when the proselytes had been physically and verbally abused, or unsuccessful in their conversion efforts.²⁹⁰ Other editorials noted the fact that the preachers and

²⁸² ‘Our Mormon Missionaries: Brigham Young Wants a Cargo of New Zealand Beauties’, *Auckland Star*, 14 December 1875, pp. 2; ‘Untitled’, *Evening Post*, 11 October 1871, pp. 2; ‘Untitled’, *North Otago Times*, 25 November 1879, pp. 2; ‘Untitled – A Mormon at Karori’, *Wanganui Herald*, 18 October 1871, pp. 2

²⁸³ ‘Colonial Telegrams – The Mormons at Wellington’, *Wanganui Herald*, 27 December 1871, pp. 2

²⁸⁴ The state of Mormonism in Europe was similarly a feature of newspaper commentary; these articles disdainfully reported the exodus of Latter-day Saints from Britain and Scandinavia:

‘A Mormon Missionary’, *Lyttelton Times*, 28 November 1857, pp. 6; ‘Correspondence: Another Mormon Meeting’, *Colonist*, 29 January 1858, pp. 3; ‘Notes From the Provinces - Continued’, *Colonist*, 7 July 1871, pp. 7; ‘Suez Mail News: Mormon Converts’, *Thames Advertiser*, 12 November 1878, pp. 3 ‘The Nebraska Took Away a Woman and Three Children’, *Marlborough Press*, 16 August 1871, pp. 2; ‘Untitled’, *Evening Post*, 7 August 1871, pp. 2; ‘Untitled’, *Nelson Evening Mail*, 10 August 1871, pp. 2

²⁸⁵ ‘Monday, January 17, 1876’, *Evening Post*, 17 January 1876, pp. 2

²⁸⁶ ‘Town News’, *New Zealand Mail*, 15 January 1876, pp. 14

²⁸⁷ ‘Odds and Ends’, *Otago Witness*, 1 April 1876, pp. 3

²⁸⁸ ‘The English Mail of the 17th of June’, *The New Zealander*, 16 December 1857, pp. 2

²⁸⁹ ‘The Mormon Missionaries’, *Auckland Star*, 12 February 1876, pp. 3

²⁹⁰ ‘Late News’, *Press*, 14 December 1875, pp. 2; ‘The Evening Herald, Friday December 24 1875’, *Wanganui Herald*, 24 December 1875, pp. 2; ‘Telegrams: From the Press Agency’, *Hawke’s Bay Herald*, 14

ecclesiastical leaders of other denominations would aggressively interrupt the missionaries' attempts at conversion to theologically challenge the Church's teachings.²⁹¹ At times, newspapers would report on Mormon sermons, almost exclusively in derogatory tones.²⁹² One particular newspaper noted the 1876 arrival of two missionaries from Salt Lake City, brothers 'F.' and 'C.C.' Hurst, who had 'passed their boyhood' in New Zealand, and so returned 'to the island as messengers'; this article claimed they had found few converts amongst the colonists.²⁹³ By then, Mormons were so negatively viewed that even returning sons of the colony were met with disdain.

Mixed in with suspicions and at times apathy were outbursts of aggression towards and assaults on Mormon missionaries. For example, in 1870, *The Evening Post* noted that Robert Beauchamp

...at Wellington received very bad treatment, being hooted and pelted with brickbats when he appeared in public. At last he shook the dust [from his feet] and came to Melbourne.²⁹⁴

Under the headline 'Disgusted and Disgusting Mormon Missionaries', another paper noted the popular ill feelings were reciprocated by the missionaries, frustrated at their lack of success

The Mormons say that the New Zealand people are too straight-laced and demure, and that the population is composed of Methodists, Quakers, and money-grubbers. The preachers are mortified at their ill-success. They intended trying Auckland, but hearing that the place is exceedingly more virtuously inclined than the South, did nothing but shake their dust [from their feet] at it. They are trying hard to lure into their way of thinking, two or three passengers, who are listening; but much

February 1877, pp. 2; 'Telegrams: From the Press Agency', *Star (Christchurch)*, 14 February 1877, pp. 2; 'Telegraphic News: Latest from Australia', *Globe*, 14 February 1877, pp. 2

²⁹¹ Newton, *Tiki and Temple*, pp. 20

²⁹² 'News of the Day – Mormon Lecture', *Globe*, 15 April 1876, pp. 2; 'The Mormon Emissaries', *Auckland Star*, 29 May 1879, pp. 2

²⁹³ 'Mormon Missionaries for New Zealand', *New Zealand Herald*, 14 December 1875, pp. 3; 'Mormon Missionaries for New Zealand', *Westport Times*, 1 February 1876, pp. 4

²⁹⁴ 'Mormonism in Melbourne', *Evening Post*, 28 October 1870, pp. 2

enraged who rile them with sarcasm. They are disgusted with New Zealand, and will never more return to its unmormonlike shores.²⁹⁵

The perception here from the press that missionaries lacked virtue and were 'luring' people away from the colonial projects in New Zealand through the peddling of vice is essential to emphasise here, as a similar accusation was levied against the missionaries across the Tasman. These articles, though derisive of the missionaries, showed familiarity with the historical Mormon practice of 'shaking the dust', a canonised 'ritual curse' that has been in existence from the origin of the Church.²⁹⁶

The Latter-day Saint practice of shaking dust from their feet, as a symbol of a holy curse, supposedly has Biblical precedents.²⁹⁷ In the context of Mormonism, it was used to emphasise that the missionaries had attempted to preach to a person, family, city, or area but had been rejected.²⁹⁸ Theologically, this ritual cursing was 'a means of holy retaliation ... [and] was considered part of a missionary's duty to prepare the world for the imminent millennium.'²⁹⁹ Samuel Weber, who wrote on the subject, claimed that it further 'designated unbelievers as such, making them as separate from believers from the day of judgements.'³⁰⁰ In the context of New Zealand, therefore, the missionaries' decision to shake the dust from their shoes towards the city of Auckland essentially condemned the population in Latter-day Saint theology. Although this practice has Biblical roots, it seems

²⁹⁵ 'Disgusted and Disgusting Mormon Missionaries: They Shake the Dust of Auckland from Their Feet', *Auckland Star*, 13 February 1877, pp. 2

²⁹⁶ Samuel R. Weber, "'Shake Off the Dust of Thy Feet': The Rise and Fall of Mormon Ritual Cursing", *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Volume 46, Issue 1, Spring 2013, pp. 109

²⁹⁷ Daniel Belnap, "'Those Who Receive You Not': The Rite of Wiping Dust Off the Feet", in Daniel Belnap (ed.) *By Our Rites of Worship: Latter-day Saint Views on Ritual in Scripture, History, and Practice*, Provo, Utah: Religious Studies Centre; Salt Lake City:: Deseret Book, 2013, pp. 209-11

²⁹⁸ Weber, "'Shake Off the Dust of Thy Feet'", *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Volume 46, Issue 1, 2013, pp. 109-10

²⁹⁹ Weber, "'Shake Off the Dust of Thy Feet'", *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Volume 46, Issue 1, 2013, pp. 109

³⁰⁰ Weber, "'Shake Off the Dust of Thy Feet'", *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Volume 46, Issue 1, 2013, pp. 109

to be a unique Mormon ritual;³⁰¹ as such, it is not likely the newspapers would have been aware of the gravity surrounding the practice. The reported pronouncement of this sacred curse is undeniably an indicator of the tensions, hostilities, and lack of reception that the missionaries received in late nineteenth-century New Zealand. Nevertheless, the sheer volume and detail of these primary sources highlights a very engaged media, even though official Church records were clear that there was relatively little success in the Church's first few decades within New Zealand. Though this press coverage was far from unbiased, it informed broader New Zealand society about the perceived dangers of the sect. This representation, whether exaggerated or not, was an important element in the 'othering' of the Latter-day Saints in the first decades of the religions' existence in New Zealand.

'Invasion by Brigham Young' and the Lectures of Fanny Stenhouse, 1870s

I have argued that underneath hostility and derision against Mormons sat a deeper fear and anxiety, namely a perception that Mormons had no commitment to the Australasian colonial project. Two unique events in Australian-Mormon history occurred within the 1870s that reinforced this public hostility. The first was an article in January 1871, published in the colonial newspaper the *Melbourne Herald* that warned of an impending 'invasion by Brigham Young... and his followers' of the Australian continent.³⁰² Although the reliability of this claim is debatable, as there is little evidence to suggest Young had any intention of creating theocratic colonies in Australia, newspapers around the

³⁰¹ Weber, "'Shake Off the Dust of Thy Feet'", *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Volume 46, Issue 1, 2013, pp. 110

³⁰² 'Mormon Settlement', *The Bendigo Advertiser (Victoria)*, Thursday 20 April 1871, pp. 2

continent reprinted the claim. Reactions from the public, in the form of hostile editorials, indifferent and supportive letters to the editors, and responses by commentators, varied significantly.³⁰³ Some British newspapers tentatively approved of the idea, claiming that it was better for the Mormons to settle the Australian interior than other colonial empires, much to the disdain of Australian commentators.³⁰⁴

This myth continued to be reprinted in newspapers every few decades for over eighty years. The story grew, however, and eventually came to include an apparent 'letter' that Brigham Young sent to a Gippsland farmer, despite this letter not being mentioned in original reports.³⁰⁵ The persistence of the rumours about a Mormon invasion reflect the Australian colonists distrust of the distant Mormon hierarchy on the one hand, and the anxieties associated with colonisation, including the fear of other European empires on the Australian continent, on the other. This is further contextualised by the media's relaying of the Mormon Polity's development within modern-day Utah; the Latter-day Saint pattern of migration, isolation, and consolidation would have fuelled these colonial anxieties within Australia. Thus, in the view of the colonial press, whether they came to Australia to entice settlers away or form theocratic colonies in the Australian interior, Mormons were perceived as perpetual outsiders.

³⁰³ 'Contemplated Introduction of Mormonism into Australia', *The Maitland Mercury and Hunter River Advertiser*, Thursday 06 April 1871, pp. 4

'Epitome of News', *Gippsland Times*, Saturday 02 April 1871

'Growls By A Cynic', *The Cornwall Chronicle*, Wednesday 12 April 1871, pp. 3; 'The Great Obstruction to Settlement in the Interior', *The Riverine Herald*, Saturday 22 April 1871, pp. 3

³⁰⁴ 'Monday, November 6, 1871', *The Argus*, Monday 06 November 1871, pp. 5

³⁰⁵ 'A Mormon Invasion', *West Gippsland Gazette*, Tuesday 08 February 1910, pp. 2; 'Brigham Young's Family: An Old Letter, They Nearly Became Gippslanders', *The Bendigo Independent*, Saturday 1 January 1910, pp. 6; 'Gippsland Pioneers: Letter From Brigham Young, A Possible Immigrant', *Kalgoorlie Western Argus*, Tuesday 04 January 1910, pp. 15; 'Historic Letters', *West Gippsland Gazette*, Tuesday 14 December, 1909, pp. 7; 'Letter From Brigham Young' in 'Countries Cities and Towns: Their Rise and Development, No. 21 History of Warragul', *Weekly Times*, Saturday 19 January 1929, pp. 5; 'Solving the Problem', *Burra Record*, Wednesday 03 August 1921, pp. 4; 'The Story of Warragul: Jubilee History Published by Shire', *Leader*, Saturday 26 January 1935, pp. 24

Within this context, when female author and dissident of the Church, Fanny Stenhouse, toured Australia to promote the release of her book an *Expose of Polygamy in Utah: A Lady's Life Among the Mormon*, she was received with great interest, fanning hostility and salacious curiosity.³⁰⁶ Stenhouse's book was a memoir recounting her life as a plural wife of a Mormon elder for over two decades from the mid-1800s.³⁰⁷ To promote the publication, Stenhouse toured and spoke of her first-hand experiences.³⁰⁸ Multiple newspapers reported Stenhouse's public Australian lectures.³⁰⁹ Of particular note, according to numerous colonial newspapers, Stenhouse was the first female public lecturer in Australia, to which she addressed mixed gender audiences.³¹⁰ As such, Stenhouse represents an interesting intersection of both Feminist and Latter-day Saint history in Australia. Unsurprisingly, newspaper reports of the time were strongly gendered, and described Stenhouse's tone of voice, dress, and mannerisms.³¹¹

Despite violating gendered notions of public and private spheres, newspapers praised Stenhouse, while simultaneously portraying Mormonism in a grim light.³¹² For example,

³⁰⁶ Fanny Stenhouse (ed. Linda Wilcox DeSimone), *Expose of Polygamy: A Lady's Life Among the Mormons*, first released 1872, republished Logan, Utah: Utah State University Press, 2008, pp. 12

³⁰⁷ Stenhouse (ed. DeSimone), *Expose of Polygamy*, pp. 8

³⁰⁸ Stenhouse (ed. DeSimone), *Expose of Polygamy*, pp. ii-iv

³⁰⁹ 'Among the Mormons', *The Cumberland Mercury (Parramatta, New South Wales)*, Saturday 18 September 1875, pp. 2; 'Mormonism', *Freeman's Journal (Sydney, New South Wales)*, Saturday 11 September 1875, pp. 13; 'Mormonism at Footscray', *The Williamstown Chronicle (Victoria)*, Saturday 01 April 1876, pp. 3

³¹⁰ 'Mrs. Fanny Stenhouse', *Evening News (Sydney, New South Wales)*, Monday 06 September 1875, pp. 2; 'Mrs. Fanny Stenhouse on Mormonism', *The Capricornian (Rockhampton, Queensland)*, Saturday 12 February 1876, pp. 109

³¹¹ 'Mrs. Fanny Stenhouse', *Evening News (Sydney, New South Wales)*, Monday 06 September 1875, pp. 2

³¹² 'Mrs. Fanny Stenhouse', *Miners' Advocate and Northumberland Recorder (Newcastle, New South Wales)*, Saturday 16 October 1875, pp. 3; 'Tonight's Amusement', *Evening News (Sydney, New South Wales)*, Saturday 04 September 1875, pp. 4

an 1875 article for Sydney's *Freeman's Journal* contained a review of Stenhouse's lecture, which concluded

She described, in a very able and interesting manner, the misery and debasement of polygamy. She also gave her auditors a lucid description of the religious faith of the Mormons, and showed how the greatest misery, the most frightful crimes, and the most excessive debauchery were concealed under its cloak, and looked upon as acts of faith.³¹³

Stenhouse's lectures provided firsthand accounts for Australian colonists regarding Mormonism, and arguably fuelled the air of mistrust against the Latter-day Saints. For example, in her very first lecture, Stenhouse stated 'five Mormon missionaries are on a mission to Australia for the purpose of making converts'; though not outrightly stated, this was interpreted by the press as efforts to 'lure' women into polygamy through migration.³¹⁴ More importantly, though, is the way in which Stenhouse and those who wrote about her speaking tour shaped perceptions of Mormonism in Australia. As the first woman to publicly lecture in the colonies, where her experiences as a plural wife, followed by her disaffection and emphasis on 'traditional' Christian moralities were publicly consumed, Stenhouse is an essential figure in the discussion of the broader themes of this chapter, the representation of and reaction to Mormonism within the antipodean British colonies. Although Mormonism is and was an openly proselytising religion, that set out its messages in public speeches and publications, its ritual life, including the practice of polygamy, had always been intended to be for insiders only. Stenhouse's lectures, both directly and indirectly, perpetuated the fear that Mormonism, particularly in regards to polygamy, had much to hide.

³¹³ 'Mormonism', *Freeman's Journal* (Sydney, New South Wales), Saturday 11 September 1875, pp. 13

³¹⁴ 'Mrs. Fanny Stenhouse', *Miners' Advocate and Northumberland Recorder* (Newcastle, New South Wales), Saturday 16 October 1875, pp. 3; 'Mrs. Fanny Stenhouse on Mormonism', *The Capricornian* (Rockhampton, Queensland), Saturday 12 February 1876, pp. 109; 'Tonight's Amusement', *Evening News* (Sydney, New South Wales), Saturday 04 September 1875, pp. 4

Though missionaries had been present in New Zealand since the 1850s, during this period, only 'Pākehā' or European settlements were preached to.³¹⁵ Newton suggests that as well as for racial reasons, there was also the real and perceived danger for missionaries travelling too far outside major urban centres, as the violent colonisation of New Zealand was ongoing during this period.³¹⁶ As in Australia, British and European colonists within New Zealand were largely uninterested in the message of Mormonism.³¹⁷ Despite opposition, several companies of Latter-day Saints left for Zion from New Zealand between the 1850s and 1880s.³¹⁸ Although there was apparent intent to proselytise amongst the Indigenous inhabitants of New Zealand from at least the 1850s, it was not until the 1880s that missionaries began to actively preach amongst the Māori.³¹⁹ There are a number of reasons for this conscious pivot, outlined below.

The first is that the Māori were not the first Pacific Islanders to be preached Mormonism. The racial theology of the Gathering posited Europeans as part of the Ten Lost Tribes, and thus Latter-Day Saint missionaries initially focussed on European colonists in the Pacific. However, in the 1850s, they began preaching to the native inhabitants of both Hawai'i and Tahiti, the *Kanak Maoli* and *Ma'ohi* respectively.³²⁰ From at least 1855, there was a

³¹⁵ Newton, *Tiki and Temple*, pp. 38-9

³¹⁶ Newton, *Tiki and Temple*, pp. 38

³¹⁷ Newton, *Tiki and Temple*, pp. 38

³¹⁸ 'Arrival of the R.M.S.S. Colima', *Otago Daily Times*, 134 December 1875; 'Auckland', *North Otago Times*, 29 May 1880, pp. 2; 'Untitled', *New Zealand Herald*, 15 June 1880, pp. 3; Newton, *Tiki and Temple*, pp. 5-7, 30, 112, 132

³¹⁹ Newton, *Tiki and Temple*, pp. 39-42

³²⁰ Britsch, *Unto the islands of the Sea*, pp. 34, 72

push by Apostle George Q. Cannon, who was a missionary in the Hawai'ian Islands from 1851, to label Pacific Islanders as the descendants of the House of Israel.³²¹ According to Latter-day Saint doctrine that developed during this period, Indigenous Pacific Islanders were the descendants of Book of Mormon peoples and thus, by extension, ethnically and scripturally related to both Europeans and the Indigenous peoples of the Americas. This included the expansion of the 'Tribe of Israel' identification being placed onto Pasifika peoples; this is important as it created a cosmological connection between Oceania and Mormonism.³²² This radical institutional and theological change has been discussed in detail by Mormon Studies scholars such as Hokulani Aikau, Ian Barber, Hemopereki Simon, and Marjorie Newton.³²³ With its theological salvation resting abroad, Mormonism was unappealing to the Pākehā' in New Zealand; paradoxically, this came at a time when a theological pivot, that embraced Pasifika people within Latter-day Saint cosmology, emerged.

When missionaries began preaching to the Māori in New Zealand, however, the ideology of 'the Gathering' had already begun to shift. After tens of thousands of religiously motivated individuals across the globe had migrated to Zion from the 1850s, and as Utah began to push for statehood in the United States, the Church began to decrease the emphasis on physical migration. As such, by the time the Māori began to be the primary focus of evangelical efforts in New Zealand by the 1880s, ecclesiastical leaders were not

³²¹ Britsch, *Unto the Islands of the Sea*, pp. 5

³²² R. Lanier Britsch, 'Maori Traditions and the Mormon Church', *The New Era*, June 1981
<https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/new-era/1981/06/maori-traditions-and-the-mormon-church?lang=eng>

³²³ Aikau, *A Chosen People, A Chosen Land: Mormonism and Race in Hawai'i*
Barber, 'Between Biculturalism and Assimilation', *New Zealand Journal of History*, Volume 9, Issue 2, 1995, pp. 142-169; Barber, 'Matakite, Mormon Conversions, and Maori-Israelite Identity Work in Colonial New Zealand', *Journal of Mormon History*, Volume 41, Issue 3, July 2015, pp. 167-220

overly interested in Māori converts migrating.³²⁴ Despite this, both Barber and Newton have explored the idea that many Māori Mormons desired to migrate to Utah to be with their co-religionists.³²⁵ There were some Māori Mormons who even believed that in order for the Second Coming of Christ to occur, converts from the Pacific had to return to the 'land of their inheritance', i.e. North America.³²⁶ Due to this dichotomy, Mormon Studies scholars have noted the nuanced and at times strained relationship between Māori Mormons and the Utah-based Church hierarchy.³²⁷ There are records of Māori-Mormon individuals and families emigrating to Utah; this, however, was only with their own funds, rather than as part of a Church program.³²⁸

The introduction and propagation of the Church in Hawai'i and Tahiti was different from New Zealand in key regards. In these Pacific Islands, Latter-day Saint colonies were created for the specific purpose of gathering *Kanak Maoli* and *Ma'ohi* Mormons from various tribes, villages, and islands in one or more geographical location; this consolidation, and by extension isolation, was a strategy used by the Church to ensure converts did not fall away from the faith, as well as to physically prepare for the return of Jesus Christ.³²⁹ However in New Zealand, the Church was able to create long-standing Latter-day Saint communities amongst Māori populations wherever they were

³²⁴ Newton, *Tiki and Temple*, 76-80

³²⁵ Barber, 'Matakite, Mormon Conversions, and Maori-Israelite Identity Work in Colonial New Zealand', *Journal of Mormon History*, Volume 41, Issue 3, pp. 180

³²⁶ Barber, 'Matakite, Mormon Conversions, and Maori-Israelite Identity Work in Colonial New Zealand', *Journal of Mormon History*, Volume 41, Issue 3, pp. 173

Newton, *Maori and Mormon*, pp. 22

³²⁷ Barber, 'Matakite, Mormon Conversions, and Maori-Israelite Identity Work in Colonial New Zealand', *Journal of Mormon History*, Volume 41, Issue 3, pp. 175; Underwood, 'Mormonism, the Maori, and Cultural Authenticity', *The Journal of Pacific History*, Volume 35, Issue 2, September 2000, pp. 133-146

³²⁸ Newton, *Tiki and Temple*, pp. 78

³²⁹ Aikau, *A Chosen People, A Promised Land*, pp. 14; Britsch, *Unto the Islands of the Sea*, pp. 32

situated.³³⁰ This was the result of missionaries traveling to various *iwi* (tribes) and attempting to convert tribal leaders, who would in turn convert those in their villages and extended familial-social circle.³³¹ At times, Mormon missionaries were unable to convert leaders, but were granted permission to baptise members of the *iwi*.³³²

The success of the Mormon missionaries amongst the Māori has been discussed in detail by various scholars; here, a summary is important. Barber, Newton, Underwood, and Katene have suggested one of the key reasons for the success amongst the Māori was the socio-political and religious context in which the missionaries began to preach.³³³ In particular, the existence of various prophecies uttered by Māori *tohunga* (spiritual experts) and respected Elders convinced many Māori that Mormon missionaries were true emissaries from God. Underwood wrote of various Māori *rangitara* (chiefs, leaders) who, according to oral traditions, prophesied of the coming of Latter-day Saint missionaries, and whose words inspired Māori converts to Mormonism. One of these was Arama Toiroa, who in 1830, declared to his descendants that they had joined the Church of England in vain, 'for it [was] not the true church.'³³⁴ Instead, Toiroa supposedly foretold of

a true form of worship... brought across the great ocean and you will hear of it coming from Poneke (Wellington)... afterwards its representative will come to Te Mahia... when this "Karakia" (form of

³³⁰ Barber, 'Matakite, Mormon Conversions, and Maori-Israelite Identity Work in Colonial New Zealand', *Journal of Mormon History*, Volume 41, Issue 3, pp. 177; Newton, *Tiki and Temple*, pp. 72

³³¹ Barber, 'Matakite, Mormon Conversions, and Maori-Israelite Identity Work in Colonial New Zealand', *Journal of Mormon History*, Volume 41, Issue 3, pp. 177

³³² Barber, 'Matakite, Mormon Conversions, and Maori-Israelite Identity Work in Colonial New Zealand', *Journal of Mormon History*, Volume 41, Issue 3, pp. 179

³³³ Barber, 'Matakite, Mormon Conversions, and Maori-Israelite Identity Work in Colonial New Zealand', *Journal of Mormon History*, Volume 41, Issue 3, pp. 175; Katene, 'Introduction' in Katene (ed.), *Turning the Hearts of the Children*, pp. 3; Newton, *Maori and Mormon*, pp. 68; Underwood, 'Mormonism, the Maori, and Cultural Authenticity', *The Journal of Pacific History*, Volume 35, Issue 2, September 2000, pp. 137

³³⁴ Underwood, 'Mormonism, the Maori, and Cultural Authenticity', *The Journal of Pacific History*, Volume 35, Issue 2, September 2000, pp. 142

worship) is introduced among you, you will know it, for one shall stand and raise both hands to Heaven. When you see this sign enter into that Church.”³³⁵

This interaction was used by many of Toiroa’s descendants, including prominent Māori Mormon leader Hirini Whaanga, as proof of the missionaries claims. Similarly, in 1881, Ngati Kahungunu prophet and *rangitara* Paora Potangaroa supposedly declared

...You will recognise it when it comes. Its missionaries will travel in pairs. They will come from the rising sun. They will visit us in our home. They will learn our language and teach the gospel in our own tongue. When they pray, they will raise their right hands.³³⁶

These prophecies, combined with an underlying dissatisfaction with the Christianity of the dispossessors, were foundational to the success of the Mormon missionaries amongst the Māori. These prophecies have similarly become important in the curation of ethno-religious identity for subsequent generations of Mormon Māori.

³³⁵ Underwood, ‘Mormonism, the Maori, and Cultural Authenticity’, *The Journal of Pacific History*, Volume 35, Issue 2, September 2000, pp. 143

³³⁶ Underwood, ‘Mormonism, the Maori, and Cultural Authenticity’, *The Journal of Pacific History*, Volume 35, Issue 2, September 2000, pp. 143

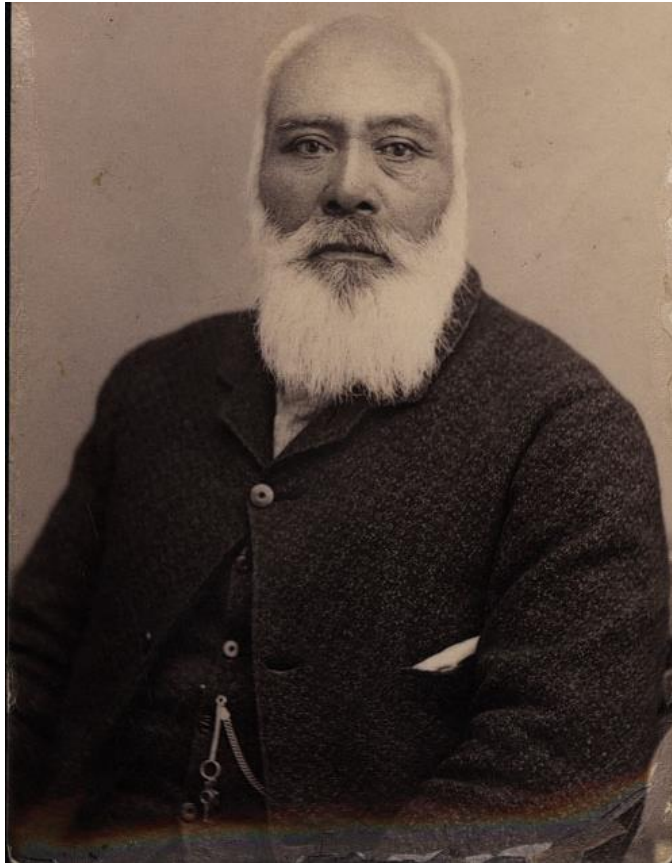


Figure 2: Prominent Māori Mormon leader, Hirini Whaanga
 'New Zealand, October 1895-January 1896', in Reid Nelson and Riley Moffat (eds.), *Tales from the World Tour: The 1895-1897 Travel Writings of Mormon Historian Andrew Jenson*, Provo, Utah: Religious Studies Center; Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2012, pp. 185

Other social, political, and cultural contexts help explain the rapid success of the Mormon missionaries amongst the Māori. By 1880, the colonial conflicts known in Māori as *Nga Pānanga o Aotearoa*, 'The Great New Zealand Wars', or *Te Riri Pakeha*, 'The White Man's Anger', had largely come to an end.³³⁷ This had resulted in the deaths of thousands of Māori, and the violent dispossession of ancestral homelands at the hands of the British.³³⁸ As such, many Māori came to view the British and European religions as either

³³⁷ Allen Chadwick, *The Treaty of Waitangi Companion: Maori and Pakeha from Tasman to Today*, Auckland, New Zealand: Auckland University Press, 2010; Alan Ward, *An Unsettled History: Treaty Claims in New Zealand Today*, Wellington, New Zealand: Bridget Williams Books, 1999

³³⁸ Danny Keenan, 'The 'New Zealand Wars' or 'Land Wars'?: The Case of the War in Taranaki 1860-61', *Journal of New Zealand Studies*, Issue 1, October 2002, pp. 99-107; Vincent O'Malley, "'Recording the Incident with a Monument": The Waikato War in Historical Memory', *Journal of New Zealand*, Issue 19,

complicit or conspirators in the bloodshed and theft of land that.³³⁹ As the Mormon Church was not directly involved in the Land Wars, and was an American religion, many Māori saw this religion as a more viable option than major European denominations.³⁴⁰ For Māori who had gone through the horrors of colonialism but were still drawn to Christianity, Mormonism allowed a synthesis of the political, religious, and cultural.³⁴¹ This link was even explicitly made in an article published in *North Otago Times* in 1890. President of the New Zealand Mission, A. T. Wright, was reported as declaring to Māoris that he had 'heard of your sufferings, and seen your losses of land...'³⁴² For Māori dispossessed by violent British imperialism, Wright's declarations would have undoubtedly been perceived as a political, not just spiritual, assertion. Renowned New Zealand religious historian Peter Lineham argued that as well as these extraneous factors, the Latter-day Saints success amongst Māori, which he is clear to articulate was not achieved painlessly, largely focused on the respect American missionaries paid to existing political structures within *iwi*.³⁴³ For example, he stated that the missionaries were able to convert large numbers of Māori when a particular rangatira converted to the Church. Contrastingly, Lineham stated that even when this did not occur, if missionaries sought consent from the rangatira to preach to their people, there was more success.³⁴⁴ Lineham argues that there have been extremes when this did not occur, including violence and

2015, pp. 79-97; Keith Sinclair *Origins of the Maori Wars*, Auckland, New Zealand: Auckland University Press, 2013

³³⁹ Sinclair, *Origins of the Maori Wars*, Auckland, New Zealand: Auckland University Press, 2013, pp. 6

³⁴⁰ Barber, 'Matakite, Mormon Conversions, and Maori-Israelite Identity Work in Colonial New Zealand', *Journal of Mormon History*, Volume 41, Issue 3, pp. 176

³⁴¹ Barber, 'Matakite, Mormon Conversions, and Maori-Israelite Identity Work in Colonial New Zealand', *Journal of Mormon History*, Volume 41, Issue 3, pp. 176

Katene, 'Introduction' in Katene (ed.), *Turning the Hearts of the Children*, pp. 3

³⁴² 'Mormon Conference at Tauranganui', *North Otago Times*, 16 October 1890, pp. 4

³⁴³ Peter Lineham, 'The Mormon Message in The Context Of Maori Culture', *Journal of Mormon History*. Jan1991, Vol. 17, pp. 62-93.

³⁴⁴ Lineham, 'The Mormon Message in The Context Of Maori Culture', *Journal of Mormon History*. Jan1991, Vol. 17, pp. 67

court cases, and that this was amplified by more established Churches, especially the Anglicans.³⁴⁵ The main emphasis of this article is that despite the attempts by the missionaries and the institutional Church to adapt to Māori culture, there have been specific tensions. Like other scholars, discussed in the introduction, Lineham locates these tensions, and argues that these have increased with the Church's decision to emphasise a 'gospel culture' at the expense of Māori and Pasifika cultural heritage.

Due to this success, colonial governments and populations viewed Mormon missionaries with increased suspicion and hostility. This was compounded by the actions of the missionaries, who preached throughout Māori *iwis*, in a vastly different approach from mainstream Christian clergy. Latter-day Saint evangelists attempted to learn the language of those they were preaching to, in stark contrast to British Protestants and Catholics, who would only preach in English, and actively barred the speaking of *te reo Māori* in their congregations.³⁴⁶ Moreover, while mainstream clergy lived in European settlements and only occasionally visited Māori *iwis*, Mormon missionaries lived with those interested in their message.³⁴⁷ This ecclesiastical success was deepened by the translation of the Book of Mormon into Māori in 1889, *Ko Te Pukapuka Moromona*.³⁴⁸ Similarly, by the early twentieth century a Māori-language Church newspaper, *Te Karere*, was established. This encouraged the continuation of *te reo Māori* within the New Zealand

³⁴⁵ Lineham, 'The Mormon Message in The Context Of Maori Culture', *Journal of Mormon History*. Jan1991, Vol. 17, pp. 76

³⁴⁶ Barber, 'Matakite, Mormon Conversions, and Maori-Israelite Identity Work in Colonial New Zealand', *Journal of Mormon History*, Volume 41, Issue 3, pp. 177

³⁴⁷ Barber, 'Matakite, Mormon Conversions, and Maori-Israelite Identity Work in Colonial New Zealand', *Journal of Mormon History*, Volume 41, Issue 3, pp. 177

³⁴⁸ 'Mormon and Maori', *New Zealand LDS Church Website*, 18 July 2014, viewed 19/09/2020

<https://news-nz.churchofjesuschrist.org/article/mormon-and-maori>

'The Book of Mormon in Maori', *Te Ara Website*, viewed 17/06/2020

<https://teara.govt.nz/en/interactive/31114/the-book-of-mormon-in-maori>

Church, even when this was being repressed by the government.³⁴⁹ Scholars of Mormon-Māori experiences have established the importance of this melding of Māori culture with Latter-day Saint theology and practice. These institutional solidifications within New Zealand, as well as the cosmological innovations, cultural synthesis, and the propagation of spiritual narratives, resulted in a mass of conversion of Māori.³⁵⁰ Barber notes that by the turn of the twentieth century, 8% of Māori throughout New Zealand were faithful Mormons, but that this would increase within the next couple decades.³⁵¹

However, this localisation and embrace of aspects of Māori culture was challenging to existing Mormon beliefs, practises, and dogmas. Newton and Underwood note that for the first few decades of the Church in New Zealand, the hierarchy in Auckland and Salt Lake City excommunicated members who approached the *'tohunga-Māori'* (spiritual specialists) for healing, even if they also sought blessings from the Church's priesthood.³⁵² The Church's attitude paralleled the views and hostilities of the colonial governments towards Māori spiritualities, which eventually led to the Tohunga Suppression Act of 1907.³⁵³ The Church was also avidly against Māori members receiving *tā moko*, traditional tattoos, although Church leaders rarely excommunicated members for this

³⁴⁹ *Te Karere*, LDS Church Catalog Website, Call Number M205.6 M583 v. 1-54, 1907-1960

<https://catalog.churchofjesuschrist.org/record/fa56ea02-dde5-4892-9eb2-886ca48eb4c7?view=browse>

³⁵⁰ Barber, 'Matakite, Mormon Conversions, and Maori-Israelite Identity Work in Colonial New Zealand', *Journal of Mormon History*, Volume 41, Issue 3, pp. 177 ; Underwood, 'Mormonism, the Maori, and Cultural Authenticity', *The Journal of Pacific History*, Volume 35, Issue 2, September 2000, pp. 144

³⁵¹ Ian Barber, 'Between Biculturalism and Assimilation: The Changing Place of Maori Culture in the Twentieth Century New Zealand Mormon Church', *New Zealand Journal of History*, Volume 29, Issue 2, 1995, pp. 142

³⁵² Barber, 'Between Biculturalism and Assimilation', *New Zealand Journal of History*, Volume 29, Issue 2, 1995, pp. 148-50; Newton, *Tiki and Temple*, 106-7; Underwood, 'Mormonism, the Maori, and Cultural Authenticity', *The Journal of Pacific History*, Volume 35, Issue 2, September 2000, pp. 148

³⁵³ 'New Zealand Acts as Enacted: Tohunga Suppression Act 1907 (7 EDW VII 1907 No 13)', *New Zealand Legal Information Institute*, viewed 31 January 2023
http://www.nzlii.org/nz/legis/hist_act/tsa19077ev1907n13353/

practice.³⁵⁴ Perhaps most significant, however, was the Church's changing of *tangihangas*, Māori funerals.³⁵⁵ From the early twentieth century, many Māori Mormons travelled to Hawai'i to receive their endowments; one aspect of this, was the instruction to members to be buried in their Temple Robes.³⁵⁶ As *tangihangas* required bodies to 'lie in state', Church leaders were concerned that Māori members would inevitably reveal the sacred and guarded Temple Robes to those not initiated in Temple rituals.³⁵⁷ Despite the cultural and religious tensions, these religious innovations had a two-fold affect. On the one hand, it began to entangle Mormonism more fully in New Zealand, especially in comparison to Australia. Simultaneously, the Church became alienated and marginalised from broader New Zealand society, as it was largely perceived to be a 'Māori Church.'

This perception of Mormonism being a 'Māori Church' directly correlated to the representation of the religion by the mainstream New Zealand press in the late-nineteenth century. Whilst many newspaper articles mentioned the success of the missionaries amongst the Māori in neutral tones, other commentators were much more hostile.³⁵⁸ For example, a July 1883 article from the *South Canterbury Times* noted that the missionaries had published Latter-day Saint tracts into Māori, before sarcastically stating 'the migration of the Kingites [i.e. Māori hostile to the British Crown] *en masse* to Utah

³⁵⁴ Newton, *Tiki and Temple*, 105-06

³⁵⁵ Newton, *Tiki and Temple*, 62-3

³⁵⁶ Newton, *Tiki and Temple*, 62-3

³⁵⁷ Newton, *Tiki and Temple*, 62-3

³⁵⁸ 'Customs Revenue: Mormon Missionaries Among the Maoris', *Timaru Herald*, 9 August 1883, pp. 7; 'Local and General', *Clutha Leader*, 13 April 1883, pp. 6; 'Local and General: Mormonism Among the Moaris', *Temuka Leader*, 7 April 1883, pp. 2; 'Religious', *Auckland Star*, 20 June 1885, pp. 6; 'Tea Table Talk', *Auckland Star*, 13 November 1884, pp. 2; 'Untitled', *Daily Telegraph*, 30 June 1884, pp. 2; 'Untitled', *New Zealand Times*, 12 February 1885, pp. 2; 'Untitled', *New Zealand Mail*, 13 February 1885, pp. 12; 'Untitled', *New Zealand Herald*, 5 April 1883, pp. 4; 'Wellington Items', *Lyttelton Times*, 21 October 1886, pp. 5; 'Wellington Items', *Star (Christchurch)*, 21 October 1886, pp. 4

would be an unexpected solution of the Native difficulty.³⁵⁹ Yet another article, published in March 1884 in *Otago Daily Times*, ‘The Mormons at Wairarapa’, derisively observed:

Several Māori’s have been baptised... and ... believe that were they to “sell out” and go to Salt Lake they would be treated as brother, for there all men are equal.

It is... believed in by some of the Māori converts – men, although but semi-civilised, of average intelligence – that ere long the true Messiah will personally appear at Salt Lake and reign...³⁶⁰

This article was republished in various newspapers without additional commentary.³⁶¹ It shows not only that there were understandings of Mormon doctrines in New Zealand press, but also an acknowledgement, although insincere, of why Latter-day Saint evangelism was appealing to the Māori.

There were similarly critical articles published in various newspapers. In a November 1884 article in the *Poverty Bay Herald*, one commentator stated:

[Mormon] doctrines accord with so many of the customs and traditions of the Māori’s – indeed, of all the primitive races, for that matter – that it is easy to understand how they can easily be won over...

It shows how weak the cause must be when the disciples have to seek for converts amongst a people who... in another decade or two, will have become almost extinct.³⁶²

This racially specific hostility is important to note. Not only was the commentator aggressive towards the beliefs and cosmology of Mormonism, but also held Social Darwinist attitudes towards the Māori in general. This sentiment was echoed in another article, printed in the *Wairarapa Daily Times* in April 1890, which stated ‘if its influence amongst the Maories [sic] is in the direction of converting an... idle and improvident race

³⁵⁹ ‘News of the Day’, *South Canterbury Times*, 24 July 1883, pp. 2

³⁶⁰ ‘The Mormons at Wairarapa’, *Otago Daily Times*, 10 March 1884, pp. 3

³⁶¹ ‘The Mormons at Wairarapa’, *Nelson Evening Mail*, 19 March 1884, pp. 4; ‘The Mormons at Wairarapa’, *Wairarapa Daily Times*, 19 March 1884, pp. 2

³⁶² ‘Published Every Evening’, *Poverty Bay Herald*, 12 November 1884, pp. 2

to habits of thrift and industry it will do some good for them.’³⁶³ Such racialised antagonism saw the colonial press diminish the brutality of British imperialism amongst the Māori, and mock their spiritual conversion.

Written in vastly different tones, other primary sources of the time allow a more nuanced insight into how Mormonism was perceived and represented in late nineteenth century New Zealand media. For example, numerous New Zealand newspapers published an article that originally appeared in 1885 in the Church-owned, Salt Lake City based *Deseret News*.³⁶⁴ This article lauded the ‘remarkable spread of the Gospel among the natives... who are evidently of the house of Israel.’³⁶⁵ It is fascinating that an article printed in a Church-owned newspaper, which included official Mormon theology, was republished in various New Zealand newspapers without additional commentary. Moreover, other newspaper articles commented on the success of Mormonism with the Māori, on the construction of Latter-day Saint buildings, various conferences, and the Māori translation of the *Book of Mormon*.³⁶⁶ There were also articles that discussed the fact that there were Māori

³⁶³ ‘Mormonism in New Zealand’, *The Wairarapa Daily Times*, 9 April 1890, pp. 2

³⁶⁴ ‘Mormon Missionaries Among the Maoris (From the “Deseret News,” Salt Lake City)’, *The Auckland Star*, 7 March 1885, pp. 4; ‘Mormon Missionaries Among the Maoris (From the “Deseret News,” Salt Lake City)’, *Hawke’s Bay Herald*, 22 April 1885, pp. 4; ‘Mormon Missionaries Among the Maoris (From the “Deseret News,” Salt Lake City)’, *Te Aroha News*, 7 March 1885, pp. 6

³⁶⁵ ‘Mormon Missionaries Among the Maoris (From the “Deseret News,” Salt Lake City)’, *The Auckland Star*, 7 March 1885, pp. 4; ‘Mormon Missionaries Among the Maoris (From the “Deseret News,” Salt Lake City)’, *Hawke’s Bay Herald*, 22 April 1885, pp. 4

³⁶⁶ ‘Local and General: Mormonism in the Colony’, *Temuka Leader*, 8 April 1890, pp. 2

‘Maori Mormons’, *Taranaki Daily News*, 20 February 1900, pp. 2; ‘Mormonism Conference at Tauranganui’, *New Zealand Herald*, 1 October 1890, pp. 6; ‘Mormonism’, *Pelorus Guardian and Miners’ Advocate*, 15 August 1890, pp. 3; ‘Mormonism Amongst the Maoris’, *Evening Star*, 9 August 1890, pp. 2

‘Mormonism Amongst the Maoris’, *South Canterbury Times*, 12 August 1890, pp. 3; ‘Mormonism Amongst the Maoris’, *Timaru Herald*, 12 August 1890, pp. 4; ‘Mormonism in New Zealand’, *The Wairarapa Daily Times*, 9 April 1890, pp. 2; ‘Scintillations from Parliament’, *Observer*, 28 July 1894, pp. 18; ‘Table Talk’, *Auckland Star*, 3 May 1893, pp. 1; ‘Topics of the Day: The Crusade Against Mormonism’, *West Coast Times*, 16 December 1899, pp. 2; ‘Untitled’, *Auckland Star*, 24 July 1894, pp. 4; ‘Untitled’, *Bay of Plenty Times*, 3 February 1896, pp. 2; ‘Untitled’, *New Zealand Herald*, 1 March 1890, pp. 4; ‘Untitled’, *New Zealand Herald*, 25 July 1894, pp. 4; ‘Untitled’, *Samoa Times and South Sea Advertiser*, 7 March 1891, pp. 2; ‘Untitled’, *Wairarapa Daily Times*, 27 April 1888, pp. 2

Mormons who desired to make the pilgrimage to Zion; when individuals such as Hirini Whaanga made this journey, this was similarly reported.³⁶⁷

These less hostile articles illustrate the mixed reactions and perception of Mormonism from New Zealand's press, that at times did not solely rely on aggressive stereotypes and hostility. There were consequently a small number of strident articles overtly confrontational to the idea of Māori migration. For example, an article published in *The Marlborough Express* in May 1894, warned

The inducing of the Natives to sell off their lands and goods, and make tracks for Salt Lake City is a very different matter, and opens up a very important question as to the Government responsibilities...

One can easily imagine what would be the position of these poor deluded Natives when once they had arrived in Utah... and [their coreligionists] would have little in common with the brown skinned new chums from far off New Zealand...³⁶⁸

Ironically, the paternalistic argument against Māori Mormons' emigration to Utah was cloaked in concern about the exploitation by the Church in Utah. This dichotomy is essential to emphasise, as it would influence how the Church in New Zealand would progress in the twentieth century: on one hand, Mormons were perceived and portrayed as part of the colonial enterprise of converting and 'uplifting' Māori, whilst on the other the Church was seen as exploitative.

The End of Polygamy, 1890

Despite being one of the defining features of Mormonism since almost its inception, in 1890 prophet of the Church Wilfred Woodroffe formally disavowed polygamy. It is

³⁶⁷ 'Interesting Extracts: Maori Mormons', *Ashburton Guardian*, 24 December 1886, pp. 2

³⁶⁸ 'The Mormons and the Maoris', *The Marlborough Express*, 19 May 1894, pp. 2

beyond the scope of this thesis to delve into all the reasons for this monumental shift.³⁶⁹ However, what is crucial here is the reaction of both the Australian and New Zealand press of this development. Only a few days after Woodroffe penned and announced the 'Manifesto', which outlawed all future polygamous marriages amongst Mormons, newspaper articles in both Australian and New Zealand press began to publish about the repudiation of the practice.³⁷⁰ Whilst most of these are merely reprints, two examples of more localised reactions that were reported illuminate the way in which this event was portrayed in the colonies. The first was an editorial published in Adelaide's *The Advertiser* on the 27th of October 1890, that discussed the abolition of the 'shameful scandal', from the 'so-called religious movement.'³⁷¹ 'The wonder is that it has been tolerated so long', mused the writer, before criticising crucial beliefs of the religion, such as the sanctity of

³⁶⁹ There are numerous reasons posited by various scholars, including the decades of anti-polygamy bills the United States congress had passed, the prosecution and arrest of prominent polygamous Mormons, the seizing of Church assets by the US government, popular disdain towards the practice throughout the rest of the country, and the fact that the Latter-day Saint hierarchy was seeking statehood for Utah.

See, for example:

James Bennett, "'Until This Curse of Polygamy is Wiped Out": Black Methodists, White Mormons, and the Constructions of Racial Identity in the Late Nineteenth Century', *Religion and American Culture*, Volume 21, Issue 2, 2011, pp. 167-194; Sarah Barringer Gordon, 'The Mormon Question: Polygamy and Constitutional Conflict in Nineteenth-Century America', *Journal of Supreme Court History*, Volume 28, Issue 1, 2003, pp. 14-29; Joan Iversen, *The Antipolygamy Controversy in U.S. Women's Movements, 1880-1925: A Debate on the American Home*, New York: Routledge, 2013; Christine Talbot, *A Foreign Kingdom: Mormons and Polygamy in American Culture, 1852-1890*, Baltimore: University of Illinois Press, 2013

³⁷⁰ Here, just a sample of these is necessary, as there are hundreds of these articles. See, for example:

'A New Mormonism', *South Australian Chronicle*, 1 November 1890, pp. 5; 'Cablegrams', *Waipwawa Mail*, 9 October 1890, pp. 3; 'Collapse of Mormonism', *Evening News (Sydney, New South Wales)*, 27 September 1890, pp. 4; 'Late Cables', *Wanganui Chronicle*, 9 October 1890, pp. 2; 'Monogamist Mormons', *Newcastle Morning Herald and Miners' Advocate (New South Wales)*, 27 September 1890, pp. 5; 'Mormon Manifest – Polygamy Repudiated', *The Australian Star (Sydney, New South Wales)*, 26 September, 1890, pp. 6;; 'Mormonism and Monogamy', *The Telegraph (Brisbane, Queensland)*, 1 October 1890, pp. 4; 'News by Cable', *New Zealand Times*, 27 September 1890, pp. 2; 'Polygamy Abandoned Among the Mormons', *The Inquirer and Commercial News (Perth, Western Australia)*, 1 October 1890, pp. 3; 'The Abolition of Polygamy', *Press*, 28 November 1890, pp. 5; 'The Abolition of Polygamy – Scene in the Tabernacle', *Nelson Evening Mail*, 11 December 1890, pp. 4; 'The Decay of Mormonism', *The Australian Star (Sydney, New South Wales)*, 11 October 1890, pp. 4; 'The Mormon Church – The Renunciation of Polygamy', *New Zealand Times*, 13 December 1890, pp. 4; 'The Mormon Church and Polygamy', *New Zealand Herald*, 2 December 1890, pp. 5; 'The Mormon Church and Polygamy', *Otago Daily Times*, 13 December 1890, pp. 5; 'The Mormon Presidents Proclamation', *The Queenslander (Brisbane)*, 6 December 1890, pp. 1091; 'The New Mormonism', *The Avoca Mail (Victoria)*, 21 November 1890, pp. 5

³⁷¹ 'The Advertiser MONDAY OCTOBER 27, 1890', *The Advertiser (Adelaide, South Australia)*, October 27 1890, pp. 4

the Book of Mormon (which ‘cannot ... be believed in’) and the prophethood of both Joseph Smith and Brigham Young.³⁷²

This particular article was evidently offensive to one South Australian Mormon, ‘D.M.S Morgan from Moonta’, who wrote in response of the derision. Morgan contended that one of the key doctrines of the Church was to obey the local laws of each country a congregation may exist. Morgan attested to the sanctity of their scripture, whilst posing if the Latter-day Saints were the licentious community that was claimed, why had their enterprise at Salt Lake City been so successful. This lengthy letter sought to address every criticism levelled against the Church in the original article.³⁷³ This letter and the preceding article clearly indicate the negative sentiments levelled against the Latter-day Saints, and illustrates the perception of the religion and its adherents. The second reaction that is of note also occurred within South Australia.³⁷⁴ Here, the article notes a lecture given in Adelaide by a Reverend J. Nicholson, who discussed the ‘rise and progress of Mormonism’ from its inception under Joseph Smith, the guilt of Mormons in perpetuating ‘massacres’, and polygamy under Brigham Young. The editorial described a ‘good attendance’ at this ‘sketch’ of Mormon history.³⁷⁵ This religiously-motivated lecture, that again indicates a hostility against the Church from more mainstream Christian ministers, is important here at this flashpoint in Mormon history. As polygamy had been such a defining aspect of how Mormonism had been perceived in Australian and New Zealand press, its disavowal understandably had a major impact on how Latter-day

³⁷² ‘The Latter-day Saints’, *The Advertiser (Adelaide, South Australia)*, 18 November 1890, pp. 7

³⁷³ ‘The Latter-day Saints’, *The Advertiser (Adelaide, South Australia)*, 18 November 1890, pp. 7

³⁷⁴ ‘Church Intelligence’, *The Advertiser (Adelaide, South Australia)*, 14 November 1889, pp. 3

‘Church Intelligence’, *The Express and Telegraph (Adelaide, South Australia)*, 14 November 1890, pp. 3

³⁷⁵ ‘Church Intelligence’, *The Advertiser (Adelaide, South Australia)*, 14 November 1889, pp. 3; ‘Church Intelligence’, *The Express and Telegraph (Adelaide, South Australia)*, 14 November 1890, pp. 3

Saints were represented. As will be seen in the next chapter, however, this spectre was not easily eradicated, and would continue to dictate Mormonism's broader representation and reception in the twentieth century.

Conclusion

Although the Church struggled in the nineteenth century to gain adherents within Australia and New Zealand, it remained resolute in the aim of converting antipodean colonists. Despite some successes, early missionaries were discouraged by the lack of interest in Mormonism from the colonists. Mid-nineteenth century converts faced apathy, violence, and hostility from the public, media, and rival clergy, the same situation that had led Mormons in the United States to trek across the continent to establish Zion. These experiences exacerbated the marginalisation of the Church and its converts. As has been demonstrated, there was an undeniable hostility from colonial and local newspapers towards Latter-day Saint missionaries and their faith more broadly. Even the establishment of *Zion's Watchman*, a Church-owned newspaper, is evidence of this theme of marginalisation in its attempts to combat the perceived misrepresentation of Mormonism in the Australian colonial press. However, scandals and controversies in the United States and in Australia, including the hysteria over a potential Mormon 'invasion', fuelled fears that Australian society had against missionaries, members, and the Church. As within Australia, New Zealand press published a constant stream of anti-Mormon articles that posited the Church and its adherents as outside of the mainstream Christian faith.

For the first missionaries, hostility, violence, and apathy had been the main reactions to their sacred message. This was largely due to the realities of colonial life, which included fears of invasion and isolation, but also the rituals and doctrines of the Latter-day Saints themselves. In particular, the Gathering, which required converts to migrate to Salt Lake City, infuriated those who were concerned about growing the population of the southern hemisphere colonies. Moreover, although the practice of polygamy had been disavowed by the Church in the late nineteenth century, the taboo of the practice was a spectre that hovered in the Antipodean colonies during this period; despite its ban in 1890, this stereotype would continue to loom well into the twentieth century. Despite these many challenges, the Church managed to maintain consistent, albeit peripheral, communities within these colonies. As will be more thoroughly explored in the next chapter, the representation, reception, and entanglement of the Latter-day Saints would have both continuities and sharp pivots in the twentieth century, influenced by the growth of more permanent local faith communities.

CHAPTER II

'In The Days Of Our Forefathers Mormons Were Rightly Classified

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With The Evil One'¹:

Fear, Localisation, and Continued Marginalisation, 1900 - 1960s

Introduction

In April 1912, missionaries and Latter-day Saints welcomed government dignitaries and the broader public to the dedication of the Māori Agricultural College, built by the Church near Hastings, North Island. This institution was established to bring better education to Māori Mormon young men, who had been largely disenfranchised due to the colonisation that had occurred within New Zealand the previous century, as well as due to subsequent government policies. Only a year later, public discord broke out in Adelaide, South Australia in response to street meetings held by the Latter-day Saint missionaries. Dubbed in the press the 'Mormon Riots', citizens in Adelaide were inflamed by fears missionaries were 'stealing' Australian women to be polygamous wives in Utah. These two instances, discussed in greater detail within this chapter, indicate the unique trajectories of the Australian and New Zealand Church. Whilst the Church continued to steadily grow throughout New Zealand, the newly federated country of Australia

¹ 'Mormons and Mormonism: A Straight Talk by the Rev. T. H. E. Hopkins, M.A., Notes of a Sermon Preached at St. Benedict's Church, Minlanton, on Sunday Evening April 6, 1913', *The Pioneer (Yorketown, South Australia)*, Saturday 12 April 1913, pp. 3

continued to treat Mormonism, as well as its preachers and adherents, with both contempt and apathy.²

Due to this, the Church was represented and received differently within these colonies, with the Church become more entrenched within New Zealand, yet remaining peripheral in Australia. Despite this broader acceptance within New Zealand, this chapter will explore several key events that instilled anti-Mormon sentiment. Running parallel, however, was an incremental move towards acceptance of the Latter-day Saints throughout these colonies and later nations; this, arguably, occurred due to a greater visibility of Mormon individuals, as well as the institutional Church. This gradual and reluctant acceptance similarly occurred due to the sustained efforts of the Church to become a permanent institution in these countries after the end of 'the Gathering.' These endeavours to become more rooted and localised, in turn, influenced the reception and representation of the Church throughout the early twentieth century. Despite this begrudging acceptance of the religion, it is nonetheless evident that the Church and its adherents throughout this period were continually represented and perceived as religious and societal 'outsiders.'

This chapter will examine of the ways in which the Church became localised and entangled in the broader society of Australia and New Zealand throughout the mid-twentieth century. This is most evident in several key events, including the construction of the various Church buildings, such as chapels throughout Australia and New Zealand. Moreover, this chapter will demonstrate that the Church became more entrenched within

² Newton, *Southern Cross Saints*, pp. 74

the antipodes as Māori Mormons were more involved in the political sphere of New Zealand, the utilisation of local leadership during the Second World War, and the Mormon Yankees basketball team in post-war Australia. These unique developments within the twentieth century represent a fundamental pivot in not only the history of the Church within these nations, but also how the Latter-day Saints have been represented and perceived by broader society. This more thorough localisation and entanglement is important, as it provides the foundation for the construction of Temples, which will be discussed in subsequent chapters. As an important structural note, the majority of this chapter features the Church in Australia, as the following chapter will go into detail regarding the construction of the Hamilton Temple and Church College, both of which were completed in 1958.

This chapter discusses several original historical case studies not found in existing Mormon Studies scholarship, as well as places the development of the Church within broader literature surrounding New Zealand and Australian religious history. This chapter seeks to expand upon observations made by Marjorie Newton, as well as the more in-depth discussions of the changing of Māori-Mormon identity in the twentieth century by Ian Barber and Grant Underwood.³ Though this chapter will of course utilise these foundational sources, it will also seek to examine the development of New Zealand Mormonism from a differed perspective. That is, the changing identity of its adherents, which was created and propagated by developments within the religion, was in turn informed and represented by broader New Zealand society.

³ Barber, 'Between Biculturalism and Assimilation: The Changing Place of Māori Culture in the Twentieth-Century New Zealand Mormon Church', *New Zealand Journal of History*, Volume 29, Issue 2, 1995, pp. 142-169

Within literature surrounding religious history in these nations during the twentieth century, historians have charted a changing role of religion. For example, whilst religion was an important aspect of the Australian psyche, the various Churches struggled with the purposeful attempts to secularise the nation.⁴ The success of 'secularisation' is of course debated, and is the subject of Gregory Melleuish's article 'A Secular Australia?', published in the *Journal of Religious History*. Melleuish convincingly articulates that the interwoven nature of religious institutions, the faith of prominent individuals, including politicians, and the Australian law is immensely complex and deserves further dissection. A similar topic is explored in Chavura et al.'s seminal work *Reason, Religion, and the Australian Polity: A Secular State?*; like Melleuish, Chavura et al. argue that Australia, although boasting separation between Church and state, has a more nuanced and complicated historical and contemporary relationship with religion.⁵

More recent scholarship has similarly indicated the prominence of religious individuals within social and political movements of twentieth-century Australia. For example, the Christian rhetoric and foundation of the Suffragette Movement in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century; the anti-communist influence of Catholic Archbishop Daniel Mannix; and the activism of Christian University students.⁶ Further scholarship has similarly examined the tensions between religiosity in the public space; immigrant and diasporic engagement with religion, particularly after the end of the White Australia

⁴ Melleuish, 'A Secular Australia?: Ideas, Politics, and the Search for Moral Order in Nineteenth Century and Early Twentieth Century Australia', *Journal of Religious History*, Volume 38, Issue 3, 2014, pp. 398-412

⁵ Chavura, Gasciogne, and Tragenza, *Reason, Religion, and the Australian Polity: A Secular State*

⁶ Brenda Niall, *Mannix*, Melbourne, Victoria: Text Publishing Company, 2015; James Griffin, 'Daniel Mannix and the Cult of Personality', in Oliver MacDonough and W.F. Mandle *Ireland and Irish-Australia: Studies in Cultural and Political History*, London: Croom Helm, pp. 95-118; Meredith Lake, 'Faith In Crisis: Christian University Students in Peace and War', *The Australian Journal of Politics and History*, Volume 56, Issue 3, pp. 441-454; Laura Rademaker, "'A Miserable Sectarian Spirit': Sectarianism and the Women's Movement in Early Twentieth-Century New South Wales', *Labour History*, Issue 112, 2017, pp. 175-190

Policy; and the role of religious institutions in Australia's forced removal of Indigenous children from their families.⁷ It is within this emerging, nuanced telling of Australian religious history that this chapter explores the development, influence, and reception of Mormonism within Australia.

Similarly, in New Zealand, religious history has focused on several key events and themes throughout the twentieth century. For example, recent scholarship has explored the role of Christian Churches in governance, culture and society, Christian-Māori relations, and Christian Māori identity.⁸ More in-depth research has explored the rise of evangelicalism in New Zealand, Christian-based protest against teaching evolution in state schools, Christian hostility against contraception, and the Catholic Church's anti-communist rhetoric.⁹ More broadly, there are numerous denomination and geographic specific

⁷ Melissa Bellanta, 'A Hard Culture: Religion and Politics in Turn-of-the-Century Australia', *The Australian Journal of Politics and History*, Volume 56, Issue 1, 2010, pp. 55-65; Clarissa Carden, 'Bibles in State Schools: Moral Formation in the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Century Queensland School', *History of Education Review*, Volume 47, Issue 1, 2018, pp. 16-24; Anna Haebuch, *Broken Circles: Fragmenting Indigenous Families, 1800-2000*, Fremantle Arts Centre Press, 2000; Jane James, 'Interpreting Umeewarra Mission', *International Journal of Heritage Studies*, Volume 5, Issue 3-4, 1999, pp. 203-212; Anne Pattel-Gray, 'The Hard Truth: White Secrets, Black Realities', *Australian Feminist Studies*, Volume 14, Issue 30, 1999, pp. 259-266; Jessiva Stroja, 'Refugee Resettlement and Policies of Assimilation: An Oral History of Engagement with Religion and Responses to Trauma in Post-War Queensland', *Religion*, Volume 53, Issue 2, 2023, pp. 269-288; Reena Tiwaria and John Stephens, 'Trauma and Healing at Western Australia's Former Native Missions', *AlterNative: An International Journal of Indigenous Peoples*, Volume 16, Issue 3, 2020, pp. 248-258

⁸ Beattie James, 'Rethinking Science, Religion, and Nature in Environmental History in Early Twentieth-Century New Zealand', *Historical Social Research*, Volume 29, Issue 3, pp. 82-103; Geoffrey Troughton, 'Religion, Churches, and Childhood in New Zealand, c. 1900-1940', *The New Zealand Journal of History*, Volume 40, Issue 1, 2006, pp. 39-56; John Stenhouse, 'God's Own Silence: Secular Nationalism, Christianity', *New Zealand Journal of History*, Volume 38, Issue 1, 2004, pp. 52-71; John Stenhouse, "'Like Strychnine in Its Bones'? Puritanism, Literary Culture, and New Zealand History', *Journal of New Zealand Literature*, Volume 30, Issue 30, 2012, pp. 150-176; Geoff Troughton, 'Anti-Churchianity, Discursive Christianity, and Religious Change in the Twentieth-Century', *Journal of New Zealand Studies*, Volume 17, 2014, pp. 93-106; Angela Wanhalla, "'Modernising" Maori Marriage in New Zealand', *Journal of Religious History*, Volume 43, Issue 2, 2019, pp. 217-233

⁹ Rex Ahdar, 'Reflections on the Path of Religion-State Relations in New Zealand', *Brigham Young University Law Review*, Volume 2006, Issue 3, 2006, pp. 619; Sean Brosnahan, 'Being Scottish in an Irish Catholic Church in a Scottish Presbyterian Settlement: Otago's Scottish Catholics, 1848-1895', *Immigrants and Minorities*, Volume 30, Issue 1, 2012, pp. 22-42; Stuart Lange, *A Rising Tide: Evangelical Christianity in New Zealand, 1930-65*, Dunedin, New Zealand: Otago University Press, 2013

studies that have been carried out; for instance, exploring the development of the predominantly Scottish Presbyterian area of Otago, South Island or the experiences of New Zealand Baptists and Catholics during the twentieth century.¹⁰

It is important to note that, unlike in Australian historiography, more mainstream overviews of religious history in New Zealand does contain some references to Mormonism, albeit briefly.¹¹ This reflects the way in which Mormonism was much more entrenched in New Zealand during the twentieth century, in contrast to Australia. There is also literature that discusses the continued influence of the Māori *Poropoti* (prophetic) Movements that either continued from the nineteenth-century or sprung up in the twentieth century. This context is important, as at the turn of the century, Mormonism was perceived by New Zealand society to be a 'Māori Church', with emphasis on Israelite genealogy of the Māori. This identity was also appropriated by the anti-British *poropoti*

Ronald Numbers and John Stenhouse, 'Antievolutionism in the Antipodes: From Protesting Evolution to Promoting Creationism in New Zealand', *The British Journal for the History of Science*, Volume 33, Issue 3, 2000, pp. 335-350; Nicholas Reid, 'Struggle for Souls: Catholicism and Communism in Twentieth Century New Zealand', *Australian Historical Studies*, Volume 37, Issue 128, 2006, pp. 72-88; Geoffrey Troughton, 'Religious Education and the Rise of Psychological Childhood in New Zealand', *History of Education Review*, Volume 33, Issue 2, pp. 30-44; Christopher van der Krogt, 'Exercising the Utmost Vigilance: The Catholic Campaign Against Contraception in New Zealand During the 1930s', *Journal of Religious History*, Volume 22, Issue 1, 1998, pp. 320-355; Richardson, 'Religions and Missionaries around the Pacific, 1500-1900.' *Anglican and Episcopal History* 76, no. 4 (2007): 562; Christopher van der Krogt, 'Irish Catholicism, Criminality, and Mental Illness in New Zealand from the 1870s to the 1930s', *New Zealand Journal of History*, Volume 50, Issue 2, pp. 90-121

¹⁰ Laurie Guy, *Baptists in Twentieth Century New Zealand: Documents Illustrating Baptist Life and Development*, Auckland: Baptist Research and Historical Centre, 2005; Kevin Molloy, 'Devotion and Acculturation: Irish Print Culture and the Ethnic-Religious Interface in Colonial New Zealand, 1873-1914', *Script and Print*, Volume 29, Issue 1-4, 2005, pp. 205-220; Christopher van der Krogt, 'A Catholic-Labour Alliance?: The Catholic Press and the New Zealand Labour Party', *Australasian Catholic Record*, Volume 78, Issue 1, 2001, pp. 16-29; Christopher van der Krogt, 'Catholic Religious Identity and Social Integration in Interwar New Zealand', *The Catholic Historical Review*, Volume 86, Issue 1, 2000, pp. 47-65

¹¹ Ian Breward, 'Religion and New Zealand Society', *The New Zealand Journal of History*, Volume 13, Issue 2, 1979, pp. 138-148; Alison Clarke, 'Churchgoing in New Zealand, 1874-1926: How 'Mediocre' Was It', *The New Zealand Journal of History*, Volume 47, Issue 2, 2013, pp. 106-135; William James Hoverd, and Chris G Sibley. 'Religious and Denominational Diversity in New Zealand 2009.' *New Zealand sociology* 25, no. 2 (2010): 59-87; Lachy Paterson, 'Reweti Kohere's Model Village', *The New Zealand Journal of History*, Volume 41, Issue 1, 2007, pp. 27-44

movements. Thus, the broader context of New Zealand religious history is essential to understanding the place of Mormonism in New Zealand, and how it was perceived and represented by broader New Zealand society.

Localisation in Australia, the ‘Mormon Riots’, and Hostile Clergy, 1900-1910s

Though Australia was on the periphery of Mormonism during the early twentieth century, the first Latter-day Saint chapel constructed on the continent was built in the Brisbane, Queensland suburb of Woolloongabba, and opened in 1904.¹² This was a labour of both longing and belonging on the part of the Brisbane Mormons: it was the efforts of both the local religious adherents and the institutional Church to maintain and expand the presence of the religion within the country. The end of the Gathering meant that localisation was now inevitable and encouraged. The chapel built at Brisbane took two years, and was funded partly by the Church hierarchy, and by the Brisbane Mormon community. The erection of the Chapel on Gibbons Street in Woolloongabba in 1904 was reported in two *The Telegraph* articles; these noted not only the construction, but also the existence of congregations in other parts of the state.¹³ As shall be discussed later in the chapter, chapels in Melbourne, Adelaide, and Sydney were built in the succeeding years; as with Brisbane, these chapels were partly paid for by the Church, with contributions, whether in physical labour or monetary sacrifices, by the Australian Latter-day Saints.¹⁴ Nonetheless, the creation of the Brisbane Chapel created a

¹² Newton, *Southern Cross Saints*, pp. 15, 48

¹³ ‘Mormons in Brisbane: Erection of a Church Building’, *The Telegraph*, Brisbane, Queensland, 29 November 1904, pp. 2; ‘Mormons in Brisbane: Erection of a Church Building’, *The Telegraph*, Brisbane, Queensland, 30 November 1904, pp. 2

¹⁴ Newton, *Southern Cross Saints*, pp. 37, 80, 87

permanent, physical anchor of the Latter-day Saint communities to both the geographic area, and to Salt Lake City. Perhaps due to these new physical anchors of the religion, hostilities continued within Australia towards the more localised, rooted existence of the Latter-day Saints.

For example, in February 1913, resentment against Latter-day Saints escalated when a 'riot' broke out in Adelaide, South Australia in response to a Mormon street meeting.¹⁵ This riot began as it was thought Mormon missionaries were attempting to 'seduce' South Australian women to migrate to Utah and become plural wives.¹⁶ According to reports, police had to be called in order to protect the preachers from 'an incensed population.'¹⁷ South Australian newspapers were the first to publish on the 'riot', but national newspapers rapidly reported the event.¹⁸ As recorded in Adelaide newspaper *The Advertiser*:

[The Mormon] meeting came to an abrupt ending owing to the hooting and interruption by hundreds of people...

When the benedictions were pronounced the band of Mormons, together with a party of young women who take part in the meetings, proceeded in the direction of Grote street with a large band

¹⁵ 'Unseemly Religious Squabble', *The Mail (Adelaide, South Australia)*, Saturday 22 February 1913, pp. 1

¹⁶ 'Mormons Meeting Broken Up, Excitement at Victoria Square: Women Crushed, Police to the Rescue', *The Advertiser (Adelaide, South Australia)*, Monday 17 February 1913, pp. 15; 'Mormons Meeting, Excitement in Adelaide', *Barrier Miner (Broken Hill, New South Wales)*, Tuesday 25 February 1913, pp. 2

¹⁷ 'Unseemly Religious Squabble', *The Mail (Adelaide, South Australia)*, Saturday 22 February 1913, pp. 1

¹⁸ 'Mormons in Adelaide', *Daily Post (Hobart, Tasmania)*, Friday 14 March 1913, pp. 4; 'Mormons in Adelaide', *Darling Downs Gazette (Queensland)*, Monday 17 March 1913, pp. 4; 'Mormons in Adelaide', *The Bathurst Times (Bathurst, New South Wales)*, Friday 14 March 1913, pp. 3; 'Mormons in Adelaide', *The North West Post (Formby, Tasmania)*, Saturday 15 March 1913, pp. 2; 'Mormons in Adelaide, Trouble Narrowly Averted', *The Age (Melbourne, Victoria)*, Wednesday 12 March 1913, pp. 9; 'Mormons Meeting, Excitement in Adelaide', *Barrier Miner (Broken Hill, New South Wales)*, Tuesday 25 February 1913, pp. 2; 'The Mormons in Adelaide, Police Protection Given', *The Advertiser (Adelaide, South Australia)*, Monday 10 February 1913, pp. 17

of men and women following in a thrilling manner... the police, seeing the attitude of the crowd, kept between both parties.¹⁹

Accounts of similar events were printed in South Australian newspapers in the succeeding weeks, as subsequent disruptions erupted:

Suddenly the meeting was changed into a crowd of yelling men and boys and screeching women. The audience, who numbered between six and seven hundred, closed in on the ring of preachers... Something should be done to stop these disgraceful displays in Adelaide on the Sabbath.²⁰

This framing of the street meetings, and the subsequent riots, as 'disgraceful displays on the Sabbath' is important to note: the Mormons were seen as desecrating the Christian holy day within Adelaide with their proselytisation. Despite the official denouncement of the practice by the Church over twenty years previous, popular belief of polygamy's contemporary existence saw Latter-day Saints viewed as a 'menace.' Fanning these hostilities, these newspaper articles did not indicate that polygamy had been banned.

The reactions of this incident are telling of this theme of representation and perception. In response to the three riots, the Adelaide City Council quickly voted to ban public meetings of Mormons. An article dated 10th of March in Adelaide newspapers *The Express and Telegraph*, stated 'the matter was considered by the Parliamentary and by-laws committee... and it was recommended that action be taken to prevent the meetings in the future.'²¹ The City Council's decision was reprinted in newspapers around the country,

¹⁹ 'The Mormons in Adelaide, Police Protection Given', *The Advertiser (Adelaide, South Australia)*, Monday 10 February 1913, pp. 17

²⁰ 'Mormons Meeting Broken Up, Excitement at Victoria Square: Women Crushed, Police to the Rescue', *The Advertiser (Adelaide, South Australia)*, Monday 17 February 1913, pp. 15

²¹ 'Mormons Meetings to be Prevented', *The Express and Telegraph (Adelaide, South Australia)*, Monday 10 March 1913, pp. 4; 'Unconsidered Trifles', *The South Eastern Times (Millicent, South Australia)*, Friday 14 March 1913, pp. 2

with almost exclusively positive commentary.²² More telling of this theme, was the public debate that erupted in the columns of newspapers about the incident. For example, one article published in *The Advertiser* states the Latter-day Saint missionaries were ‘rebuked on past (perhaps present) polygamy by those who are called Reorganised Latter-day Saints.’²³ This is interesting to note, as it reveals internal sectarian grievances of the Latter-day Saint movement, which had been in conflict within Australia since the colonial period as discussed in the first chapter, helped fester this public hostility, although was certainly not the only cause.²⁴ Importantly, this author also wrote, ‘as per the King’s example, and by advice of the Chief Justice, the reading of the Bible should be advocated, to the rejection of any serious imitations, such as the Book of Mormon.’²⁵ Citing the monarch, this comment is evidence of the religious-based antagonism that Australian Christians felt towards the Latter-day Saints, their beliefs, and scripture.

Other responses to the Mormon Riots shed further light on the overarching theme of how Mormonism was represented in the Australian press. A letter to the editor signed by A. Scrymour, a Latter-day Saint, was submitted to Adelaide’s *The Mail*. After stating that he was disappointed in the ‘poor conception of what religious liberty means’; he proceeded

²² ‘Mormons in Adelaide’, *The North West Post (Formby, Tasmania)*, Saturday 15 March 1913, pp. 2; ‘Mormon Meetings to be Interdicted in Adelaide’, *Barrier Miner (Broken Hill, New South Wales)*, Tuesday 11 March 1913, pp. 1

‘S. Australia, Mormons in Adelaide, Trouble Narrowly Averted’, *Huon Times (Franklin, Tasmania)*, Saturday 15 March 1913, pp. 6

²³ ‘Views and Comments: Mormons in Adelaide’, *The Advertiser (Adelaide, South Australia)*, Tuesday 04 February 1913, pp. 11

²⁴ ‘Views and Comments: Mormons in Adelaide’, *The Advertiser (Adelaide, South Australia)*, Tuesday 04 February 1913, pp. 11

²⁵ ‘Views and Comments: Mormons in Adelaide’, *The Advertiser (Adelaide, South Australia)*, Tuesday 04 February 1913, pp. 11

To show the ignorance of many of who have so much fault to find with the Mormons... I was told that I ought to be ashamed of myself sending two of my daughters over there; but as I happen to have only one, and she is still at home, the shot failed to reach its mark....²⁶

In this rebuke, Scrymour further invoked the 'flag of Great Britain' as his guarantee to worship how he chose, and expressed his displeasure towards the South Australian public, who he accused of being religiously repressive. It should be acknowledged here that although Scrymour invoked religious freedom under the protection of the British Crown, his speech is more reminiscent of the protection of religious freedom in the United States' Constitution.²⁷ This is perhaps an indicator of the Latter-day Saints' broader connection to the culture of the United States, in which the Church was of course founded and the headquarters resided. That *The Advertiser* published Scrymour's response is revealing, as it indicates that the Latter-day Saints had a voice in response to these 'Riots', and the press was willing to print this rebuttal.

Although the connection to the Mormon Riots is uncertain, numerous sermons published throughout Australia in the same year derided Mormonism. A sermon by Reverend T. Hopkins, preached in rural Minlaton, South Australia, was printed in the newspaper *The Pioneer*. Reverend Hopkins lamented:

²⁶ 'The Mormons Meeting – To The Editor', *The Advertiser (Adelaide, South Australia)*, Wednesday 19 February 1913, pp. 5

²⁷ 'First Amendment': *Constitution of the United States*, 15 December 1791
<https://constitution.congress.gov/constitution/>

In the days of our forefathers Mormons were rightly classified with the evil one and an agent belonging to such a sect was shunned as if he had the plague... Why not call it by its proper appellation – the home of sin – the haven of lust in all its forms, adultery and fornication...²⁸

Similarly, Reverend A. D. Shaw, a Baptist pastor in Rockhampton, Queensland reportedly read to his congregation a letter he had received from Bruce Kinney, a contemporary in Denver City, Colorado.²⁹ In this, Kinney discussed his disdain of Mormonism, calling it the 'Islam of America', and vehemently denounced the past practice of polygamy and Mormonism's claim to continued revelation as an abhorrence to Christians across the world.³⁰ This interaction with an American preacher indicates a transnational anti-Mormon rhetoric blossoming within Australia.

Another anti-Mormon sermon, also from a pulpit in Rockhampton, by Congregationalist Reverend J. Bongers was printed both in Queensland and Victorian newspapers. Unlike his contemporaries, Bongers was not so concerned with polygamy, as he acknowledged that the practice had largely been eradicated. Bongers discussed an array of Latter-day Saint history, decrying Joseph Smith as a plagiarist and conman, before discussing some lesser known doctrines.³¹ He stated:

²⁸ 'Mormons and Mormonism: A Straight Talk by the Rev. T. H. E. Hopkins, M.A., Notes of a Sermon Preached at St. Benedict's Church, Minlanton, on Sunday Evening April 6, 1913', *The Pioneer (Yorketown, South Australia)*, Saturday 12 April 1913, pp. 3

²⁹ 'The Mormons, A Pulpit Reference: Letter from American Missionary', *Morning Bulletin (Rockhampton, Queensland)*, Monday 25 August 1913, pp. 8

³⁰ 'The Mormons, A Pulpit Reference: Letter from American Missionary', *Morning Bulletin (Rockhampton, Queensland)*, Monday 25 August 1913, pp. 8

³¹ 'Bible Talks: Mormonism – Its Fundamental Nature and Doctrines by the Rev. J. Bongers', *The Ballarat Star (Ballarat, Victoria)*, Saturday 26 July 1913, pp. 8

Mormonism is fundamentally rotten, it is based on immorality, and instituted on a most unblushing fraud, and that its teachings are a tissue of imposture, misinterpretation of Scripture, and blasphemy...³²

Amongst these, he notes the so-called 'Adam-God Doctrine', and accurately quotes Brigham Young's claim that 'Adam is our Father and our God, and the only God with whom we have to do.'³³ Here, Bongers' sermon also shows two important themes: first, it shows a greater familiarisation with actual Mormon doctrine, rather than a strictly stereotypical view of the Latter-day Saints. Second, we can see the beginning of a shift in anti-Mormon hostilities in Australia that began to be based upon *theological* disagreements, rather than on unsuitable practices, i.e. polygamy. These sermons, printed in various newspapers, further imply the contempt broader Australian society, particularly the staunchly religious, felt towards the Latter-day Saints and their faith.

A similar example of Australian resentment towards Mormonism occurred three years after the 'Mormon Riots.' In 1916, an Anglican Bishop in Adelaide formally requested that the City Council bar Mormon missionaries from the city. The Bishop accused the missionaries of propagating 'white slavery', likely a salacious representation of polygamy and the Gathering.³⁴ Despite the official end of Church sanctioned migrations, a

³² 'Bible Talks: Mormonism – Its Fundamental Nature and Doctrines by the Rev. J. Bongers', *The Ballarat Stat (Ballarat, Victoria)*, Saturday 26 July 1913, pp. 8

³³ By the early 1900s this doctrine had been rejected by the Church, and a more traditional view of deity and Adam and Eve was canonised.

'Bible Talks: Mormonism – Its Fundamental Nature and Doctrines by the Rev. J. Bongers', *The Ballarat Stat (Ballarat, Victoria)*, Saturday 26 July 1913, pp. 8; 'Mormonism: Its Fundamental Nature and Doctrines, Sermon by the Rev. J. Bongers', *Morning Bulletin (Rockhampton, Queensland)*, Monday 16 June 1813, pp. 6; David John Buerger, 'The Adam-God Doctrine', *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Volume 15, Issue 1, pp. 37-45

³⁴ 'Mormon Activities', *Daily Post (Hobart, Tasmania)*, Thursday 10 August 1916, pp. 4 'Mormons in Adelaide', *The Advertiser (Adelaide, South Australia)*, Monday 10 February 1913, pp. 17 'To The Editor: Mormons in Adelaide', *The Advertiser (Adelaide, South Australia)*, Monday 17 February 1913, pp. 12

continuous stream of religiously-motivated emigres from Australia still left for the United States to marry in the Temple.³⁵ This migration was ill-received by the newspapers of the newly federated country, who consistently derided, in particular, women and their faith. As argued in the previous chapter, this was due to nation-building fears: the immigration of women weakened the prospects of Australian men to marry and reproduce, thus threatening the country itself. These fears were severely heightened due to the loss of male life during wartime, and the anxieties surrounding the future of Australian masculinity, centred on defence and labour. Although the Anglican Bishop's attempt to ban Mormon missionaries from Adelaide was unsuccessful, this highlights the way in which Mormonism was heavily marginalised in early twentieth-century Australia, despite a perceptibly more localised presence as indicated by the construction of chapels.

The Māori Agricultural College, 1913

One of the most important physical events that signified a more in-depth localisation and entanglement of the Church in New Zealand during the early twentieth century was the construction of the Māori Agricultural College in Hastings, North Island in 1913. For historical context, New Zealand had only been granted 'Dominion' status in the British Empire in 1907; this granted semi-autonomy to New Zealand, in the realms of legislative, judicial, and executive, though it was still governed by Britain in the realms of foreign

'Mormon Activities', *Daily Post (Hobart, Tasmania)*, Thursday 10 August 1916, pp. 4

³⁵ 'Off to Utah: Mormon Romance, Melbourne Girl's Resolve – Relatives Appeal to Police', *The Sun (Sydney, New South Wales)*, Thursday 18 September 1913, pp. 3; 'Mormon Temple Opens in Hamilton: 20 April 1958', *New Zealand History Website*, viewed 14/05/2020

<https://nzhistory.govt.nz/mormon-temple-opens-in-hamilton>; 'Why Mormon Woman Quit South Australia', *The Mail (Adelaide, South Australia)*, Saturday 12 February 1949, pp. 3; Newton, *Southern Cross Saints*, pp. 196

relations, Māori affairs, and the Constitution.³⁶ The purpose of the Māori Agricultural College was to:

Teach the Māori's the principles of agriculture that they may better utilise their valuable land holdings; to instruct them in the manual arts that they may build their own houses, barns, bridges, etc.; to train them in the secular branches of education that they may cope successfully with their associates in the commercial and social world, and to furnish them an opportunity to possess themselves of that education that will imbue them with a better understanding of the obligations of life and a higher appreciation of its opportunities and blessings.³⁷

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Though there are evidently more altruistic and spiritual aspects that were emphasised with the building of this College, it is also important to note the colonial undertones present. Though the religious education received by the Māori youth was paramount, it was this blending of the quasi-colonial, social, and religious that made the Māori Agricultural College such a unique aspect of the Church's existence in New Zealand. The Māori Agricultural College was officially dedicated by Mission President Orson Romney on Sunday the 6th April 1913.³⁸ In the weeks previous, thousands of Mormon and non-Mormon New Zealanders had been invited to tour the premises. As will be discussed in the Temple chapters, these efforts to demystify Mormon physical structures are crucial in how the Church seeks to reduce hostility from broader society. It is also important to note here that though the College was mostly paid for by the Church, and even had

³⁶ 'New Zealand Sovereignty: 1857, 1907, 1947, or 1987?', *New Zealand Parliament (Paremata Aotearoa)*, 28 August 2007
<https://www.parliament.nz/en/pb/research-papers/document/00PLLawRP07041/new-zealand-sovereignty-1857-1907-1947-or-1987#:~:text=lf%20judged%20by%20the%20Montevideo,of%20New%20Zealand's%20legal%20independence.>

³⁷ Newton, *Tiki and Temple*, pp. 124

³⁸ Newton, *Tiki and Temple*, pp. 126

American teachers involved, non-Mormon Māori chiefs contributed significant funds to the building of the College, as they saw the potential benefit for their people.³⁹

The reaction to the Māori Agricultural College within New Zealand was largely positive, and indicates support for the colonial aspect, though there was some disdain at the Church's involvement. For example, in an article for *Press*, published on 9 April 1913, the author writes:

The Mormons at Salt Lake made a garden out of a wilderness. In New Zealand, they find a garden, and see its Māori possessor letting it become a wilderness. So, having made him steady and sober, they proceed to make him industrious and skilful in the utilisation of those portions of his heritage that remain to him. Questions of theology apart, work upon these lines cannot fail to be beneficial to the State...⁴⁰

There are several key analyses that can be taken from this source. Perhaps most evidently is the fact that the Māori Agricultural College was seen as a quasi-colonial project that should be lauded. Despite the praise for the Church, the animosity regarding the Church's involvement, and the decrying of other religious organisations for their failure to engage more successfully with the Māori, is a keen point of emphasis for this commentator. Nonetheless, the Māori Agricultural College was an interesting turning point for the Church in New Zealand. Not only a spiritual institution, the College blended the temporal and cosmological, and sought to bring about a positive change in Māori peoples' lives, albeit through a paternalistic worldview. The College would remain in existence for almost twenty years until it was destroyed by the Napier earthquake of 1931.⁴¹ The

³⁹ Newton, *Tiki and Temple*, pp. 125

⁴⁰ 'The Mormon and the Maori', *Press*, 9 April 1913, pp. 8

⁴¹ As an interesting aside, the construction of the Māori Agricultural College by the Church was mentioned in newspapers in Australia. As in New Zealand, these newspaper articles emphasised the fact that, under the Church's direction, Māori were 'taught temperance, virtue, and industry.' The tone of these articles was congratulatory of the Church, indicating that their 'alien' status was somewhat diminished due to their quasi-colonial project amongst the Māori:

construction of the College represents a stark differentiation between the development of the Church in Australia and New Zealand, and indicates the continuation of a more thorough entrenchment in the latter. Arguably, the Church's position as being viewed as an ally in the 'colonisation' of the Māori became a crucial turning point in New Zealand Mormonism.

'A Mormon Maid' in Australia and New Zealand, 1917-20s

In the midst of World War I, the debut of the 1917 silent film from the United States, 'A Mormon Maid', created a furore in both Australia and New Zealand. Set in the late nineteenth century, the film follows non-Mormons John and Nancy Hogue and their daughter Dora, who are convinced by migrating Latter-day Saints to take refuge in 'the City of Saints' after their home is destroyed by Native Americans.⁴² After arriving in Salt Lake City, the Hogues prosper until Mormon leaders dictate John has to take a second wife.⁴³ Horrified, John is told that he could instead marry off Dora to polygamist Apostle Darius Burr. Dora agrees so her father does not have to marry again, but Church leaders renege and demand that both marry. Consequently, Dora is promised to Darius Burr, and John is married to an unnamed woman.⁴⁴ In response, Nancy commits suicide; after her

'Seen and Heard: Mormon Convention', *The Telegraph*, Brisbane, Queensland, 18 May 1912, pp. 19; 'Seen and Heard: Mormon Convention', *The Week*, Brisbane, Queensland, 24 May 1912, pp. 8; Newton, *Tiki and Temple*, pp. 189-92

⁴² Elisabeth Waegel, 'Representations of Nineteenth Century Mormonism in *A Mormon Maid*: A Critical Analysis', *Journal of Religion and Film*, Volume 22, issue 3 (2018), pp. 4

⁴³ Waegel, 'Representations of Nineteenth Century Mormonism in *A Mormon Maid*: A Critical Analysis', *Journal of Religion and Film*, Volume 22, issue 3 (2018), pp. 4

⁴⁴ Waegel, 'Representations of Nineteenth Century Mormonism in *A Mormon Maid*: A Critical Analysis', *Journal of Religion and Film*, Volume 22, issue 3 (2018), pp. 4

funeral, Dora, her love interest Tom (a Mormon), and her father attempt escape but are followed by 'Avenging Angels', mythicised versions of the historically factual 'Danites.'⁴⁵

After leaving Salt Lake City, the surviving Hogues and Tom are cornered by the Danites before John is shot. Dora is returned to Salt Lake City, where she prepares to join Darius Burr's harem.⁴⁶ Here, 'the apostles are dressed up in the 'nighties' and white hoods favoured of the Ku Klux gangs', an interesting reference to the 1915 American film 'Birth of a Nation.'⁴⁷ However, before the ceremony is complete, Dora reads the revelation on plural marriage, which states that a woman must be a virgin in order to be married.⁴⁸ Dora states she is not a virgin, and leaves; she then meets Tom at her house where she explains that she had lied in order to escape. An Avenging Angel enters the home and drags Dora to Jordan Rock, where Darius is waiting in order to 'punish her for lying.'⁴⁹ Tom goes to Jordan Rock to rescue Dora; he fights one of the Avenging Angels.⁵⁰ Another Avenging Angel helps Dora to fight, and finally kill, Darius. The supportive Avenging Angel 'takes off his hood – it is her father.'⁵¹ John, Dora, and Tom ride off, and the film ends.⁵² It should be here emphasised the development of a 'good Mormon' love story that runs in contrast with the sexual deviance of the Mormon Apostles. This is perhaps an indicator

⁴⁵ Rebecca Foster Cornwall and Leonard J. Arrington, 'Perpetuation of a Myth: Mormon Danites in Five Western Novels, 1840-90', *BYU Studies Quarterly*, Volume 23, Issue 2, pp. 147-67

⁴⁶ Waegel, 'Representations of Nineteenth Century Mormonism in *A Mormon Maid: A Critical Analysis*', *Journal of Religion and Film*, Volume 22, issue 3 (2018), pp. 5

⁴⁷ 'A Mormon Maid', *The Daily News (Perth, Western Australia)*, Wednesday 01 August 1917, pp. 5

⁴⁸ Waegel, 'Representations of Nineteenth Century Mormonism in *A Mormon Maid: A Critical Analysis*', *Journal of Religion and Film*, Volume 22, issue 3 (2018), pp. 5

⁴⁹ Waegel, 'Representations of Nineteenth Century Mormonism in *A Mormon Maid: A Critical Analysis*', *Journal of Religion and Film*, Volume 22, issue 3 (2018), pp. 5

⁵⁰ Waegel, 'Representations of Nineteenth Century Mormonism in *A Mormon Maid: A Critical Analysis*', *Journal of Religion and Film*, Volume 22, issue 3 (2018), pp. 6

⁵¹ Waegel, 'Representations of Nineteenth Century Mormonism in *A Mormon Maid: A Critical Analysis*', *Journal of Religion and Film*, Volume 22, issue 3 (2018), pp. 6

⁵² Waegel, 'Representations of Nineteenth Century Mormonism in *A Mormon Maid: A Critical Analysis*', *Journal of Religion and Film*, Volume 22, issue 3 (2018), pp. 6

of a more nuanced representation of Latter-day Saints, one that tried to subvert stereotypes.

Additional context helps to explain the overt sexual imagery, from Burr's 'harem' to Dora's forced kidnapping by Danites, through another lens other than public stereotypes of the Mormons. In 1910, the United States Congress passed the 'Mann Act', a bill that was dedicated to ending so-called 'white slavery', defined as the forced transportation of 'any woman or girl for the purpose of prostitution or debauchery, or for any other immoral purpose.'⁵³ Though this Bill was passed to suppress the forced prostitution of women, Kelli McCoy noted that it quickly became 'a heavy-handed tool for moral and social control', and that even consensual relationships were targeted.⁵⁴ The Mann Act, and the quest to end 'white slavery', had the backing of not only politicians but also religious and social organisations and individuals; it is within the first decade of this legislation that *A Mormon Maid* was released.

Moreover, the film's trope of 'Danites' requires unpacking. Represented in *The Mormon Maid* as zealous militant enforcers of the Mormon hierarchy, these characters are largely sensationalised, yet based on historical reality.⁵⁵ The Danites' existence is rooted in the

⁵³ Brian Donovan, *White Slave Crusades: Race, Gender, and Anti-Vice Activism, 1887-1917*, Baltimore: University of Illinois Press, 2005; Kelli McCoy, 'Regulating Respectable Manliness in the American West: Race, Class, and the Mann Act, 1910-1940', *Western Legal History: The Journal of the Ninth Judicial Circuit Historical Society*, Volume 28, Issue 1, 2015, pp. 5

⁵⁴ McCoy, 'Regulating Respectable Manliness in the American Wes', *Western Legal History*, Volume 28, Issue 1, 2015, pp. 5

⁵⁵ Cornwall and Arrington, 'Perpetuation of a Myth', *BYU Studies Quarterly*, Volume 23, Issue 2, pp. 147-67
David J. Whittaker, 'Danites', in Daniel H. Ludlow (Editor in Chief), *Encyclopaedia of Mormonism*, New York, Toronto, and Oxford: MacMillan Publishing, 1992, pp. 356-7

conflicts that occurred between Mormons and Missouri militia in 1838.⁵⁶ The role of Danites is debated, with official Church history claiming Danites were a fringe organisation that 'only existed for five months.'⁵⁷ More recent scholarship from the Church argues 'the popular notion of the Danites as an enduring secret society of Latter-day Saint avengers far outlived the society's brief existence.'⁵⁸ Despite the Church's claim of the Danites being short-lived, in 1858 Brigham Young threatened 'if men come here [Utah] and do not behave themselves, they will... find the Danites, whom they talk so much about.'⁵⁹ Thus, this idea of hyper-militant, zealous vigilantes, displayed in Australian and New Zealand theatres through *The Mormon Maid*, is based on historical

⁵⁶ Whittaker, 'Danites', in Daniel H. Ludlow (Editor in Chief), *Encyclopaedia of Mormonism*, New York, Toronto, and Oxford: MacMillan Publishing, 1992, pp. 356-7

⁵⁷ 'Gospel Doctrine Topics: Danites', *The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* website, viewed 23/03/2022

https://abn.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/history/topics/danites?lang=eng&adobe_mc_ref=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.churchofjesuschrist.org%2Fstudy%2Fhistory%2Ftopics%2Fdanites%3Flang%3Deng&adobe_mc_sdid=SDID%3D42765815E4188EC9-48D47378CCD9704E%7CMCORGID%3D66C5485451E56AAE0A490D45%2540AdobeOrg%7CTS%3D1647997887

⁵⁸ 'Glossary: Danites', *The Joseph Smith Papers*, viewed 23/03/2022

<https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/topic/danites>

⁵⁹ Brigham Young '05 July 1857 – True Happiness – Fruits of Not Following Counsel – Popular Prejudice Against the Mormons – The Coming Army – Punishment of Evildoers' in G.D. Watt, *Journal of Discourses by Brigham Young, President of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, His Two Counsellors, the Twelve Apostles and Others*, Volume 5, Liverpool: R. James, 1858, pp. 6

realities.



Figure 3: John Hogue (middle), in a representation of the Temples robes, guarded by the 'Danites' Still from Robert Z. Leonard (dir.) *A Mormon Maid*, Paramount Pictures, April 1917, 37:47 <https://archive.org/details/AMormonMaid1917MaeMurrayFrankBorzage>

The sensationalistic nature of the film got a swift and severe response from the Church hierarchy, both within the United States and internationally; as such, *A Mormon Maid* was successfully banned in parts of the United States.⁶⁰ It also reportedly attempted to stop the film from being broadcast in other parts of the world, including Australia and New Zealand. For instance, in the Victorian newspaper *Northcote Leader*, an article claimed:

On arrival [the film was] passed without demur by the [censors, but almost immediately afterwards a cable message was received by the Censorship Board from the Governor of Utah, asking that the exhibition of the film should be prohibited. For the Governor of an American state to take it upon

⁶⁰ Waegel, 'Representations of Nineteenth Century Mormonism in *A Mormon Maid*: A Critical Analysis', *Journal of Religion and Film*, Volume 22, issue 3 (2018), pp. 6

himself to make such a request was looked upon as a distinct breach of official procedure... It was decided to disregard the request; but, to meet any possible objection, a recommendation was made that special mention should be made of the film depicting Mormonism as it was, and not as it is today.⁶¹

Due to both the content of the film and the attempted censorship, cinemas across Australia readily showed *A Mormon Maid*.⁶² This was complimented by dozens of advertisements in a score of newspapers, many of these not only informed of the screenings, but added commentary to the situation.⁶³ Moreover, newspapers reported on the popularity of the film, with Sydney newspaper *Sunday Times* claiming that over 40,000 people had attended the film in a week, in only two theatres.⁶⁴

As well as this, there was debate within these newspapers surrounding the showing of *A Mormon Maid*. One letter from W. Heathcote in the *Newcastle Morning Herald and Miners' Advocate*, stated:

⁶¹ 'A Mormon Maid – Northcote Theatre', *Northcote Leader (Northcote, Victoria)*, Saturday 30 June 1917, pp. 3

⁶² 'A Mormon Maid', *Daily Standard (Brisbane, Queensland)*, Saturday 18 August 1917, pp. 3; 'A Mormon Maid', *The Daily News (Perth, Western Australia)*, Tuesday 31 July 1917, pp. 5; 'Amusements – Majestic Theatre "A Mormon Maid"', *Kalgoorlie Miner (Kalgoorlie, Western Australia)*, Monday 01 October, 1917, pp. 6; 'Mormon Maid at the Empire Theatre', *The Swan Express (Midland Junction, Western Australia)*, Friday 24 August 1917, pp. 2; 'The Mormon Maid', *The Bendigo Independent (Bendigo, Victoria)*, Wednesday 25 July 1917, pp. 7

⁶³ 'A Mormon Maid at Crystal Palace and Lyric', *Sunday Times (Sydney, New South Wales)*, Sunday 03 June 1917, pp. 26

"'Mormon Maid' Held Up – Utah's Governor Protests Against Showing of Film Sydney', *The Herald (Melbourne, Victoria)*, Thursday 24 May 1917, pp. 6; "'The Mormon Maid' Film To Be Shown in Sydney', *The Ballarat Star (Ballarat, Victoria)*, Friday 01 June 1917, pp. 2; "'A Mormon Maid" at Empress', *Evening News (Sydney, New South Wales)*, Wednesday 13 June 1917, pp. 4; 'Amusements: A Mormon Maid', *Gympie Times and Mary River Mining Gazette (Gympie, Queensland)*, Tuesday 20 November 1917, pp. 2; 'New Market Theatre "The Mormon Maid"', *The Essendon Gazette and Keilor, Bulla and Broadmeadows Reporter (Moonee Ponds, Victoria)*, Thursday 28 June 1917, pp. 2; "'The Mormon Maid" at Casino', *Port Pirie Recorder and North Western Mail (Port Pirie, South Australia)*, Tuesday 21 August 1917, pp. 3; "'The Mormon Maid" The Film the Mormons Tried to Stop, One of the Big Sensations in Screen History – A Revelation of the Hidden Secrets of Utah', *Collie Mail (Perth, Western Australia)*, Saturday 06 October 1917, pp. 3

⁶⁴ '40,000 See Mormon Maid', *Sunday Times (Sydney, New South Wales)*, Sunday 10 June 1917, pp. 35

A few days ago a letter appeared in your paper as a protest against the proposed screening of the film "A Mormon Maid" on the grounds that, being based on Mormonism as it existed a hundred years ago, it would likely prejudice modern Mormonism in the eyes of the Australian public. At first sight, your correspondent, who is evidently a Mormon, appears to have legitimate grounds for complaint... If modern Mormons are worth anything, they will not be ashamed of their early days, but will rest contented that the great majority of the public who witness "A Mormon Maid" will judge the principles involved on their merits.⁶⁵

Although the original letter to which W. Heathcote replied is not readily available, it is nonetheless an interesting example of individual Mormons' responses to perceived misrepresentation. It shows that members of the public were interested in *A Mormon Maid* and the surrounding controversy; as written by Heathcote, the efforts to have the film censored in Australia were met with disdain. Heathcote was certainly not the only commentator to voice his distaste at the attempted censorship of the film; this theme was common in the promotion of *A Mormon Maid* throughout Australia and New Zealand.

The debate surrounding *A Mormon Maid* is significant in and of itself, as is the sheer number of viewers the film attracted. It indicates not only a level of awareness about Mormonism from the wider Australian community, but also a time when stereotypes of Latter-day Saints were being reinforced by new forms of mass media and a consumption of these by the public. The debates in these sources, and the nuances attached to those debates, indicates the complexities surrounding the overarching theme of this dissertation, that is the reception and perception of Mormonism within Australia and New Zealand. It further indicates that although numerically the Church was still a fringe element of Australian society, culturally, Mormonism was overrepresented. These newspaper debates surrounding censorship and proper depiction of the Church not only

⁶⁵ 'A Mormon Maid', *Newcastle Morning Herald and Miners' Advocate* (Newcastle, New South Wales), Saturday 09 June 1917, pp. 6

suggest that Mormonism was beginning to have a more permanent existence within Australia, but also a new form of assertiveness by the Church in seeking to protect its image internationally. The response to this film also indicates that new forms of media, i.e. film, reinforced stereotypes of Mormonism for a much larger audience, with an accessibility that had previously been unavailable. These issues were materially significant for Australian viewers, particularly those whose faith was depicted in the film.

New Zealand cinemas also screened *A Mormon Maid*, and newspapers there commented on both the film and the attempted censorship of the movie within Australia. It also appears that 'similar attempts' from the Mormon hierarchy to ban the screening of the film were made in New Zealand.⁶⁶ In New Zealand, numerous commentators posit that the success of the film within Australia was largely the result of the controversies surrounding the film. The profile of the movie had been raised significantly by the Church's attempted censorship.⁶⁷ Articles in New Zealand repeatedly praised the historical accuracy of the movie. For instance, in the newspaper *Dominion*, the writer claims 'nothing has been left undone to make an exact reproduction of the Mormon rites, noticeably the marriage ceremonial and other customs.'⁶⁸ Similarly, a November 1917 article in the *New Zealand Times* claimed that it was a 'true record of Mormon practices when the faith was in its full strength.'⁶⁹ An October 1918 article in the *Horowhenua Chronicle* similarly lauds the historical accuracies of *A Mormon Maid*. In particular, the

⁶⁶ 'Amusement: Pollard's Pictures', *Hokitika Guardian*, 29 April 1918, pp. 1

⁶⁷ "A Mormon Maid" – The Picture the Mormons Tried to Stop', *Grey River Argus*, 24 April 1918, pp. 4; 'Amusements: The King's Theatre – A Mormon Maid', *Stratford Evening Post*, 26 February 1918, pp. 5; 'Amusements: Pollard's Pictures', *Hokitika Guardian*, 26 April 1918, pp. 4; 'Amusements: The Picture the Mormons Tried to Block: A Mormon Maid', *Taranaki Daily News*, 18 February 1918, pp. 1

'The Grand "A Mormon Maid"', *Wanganui Chronicle*, 13 February 1918, pp. 6

⁶⁸ 'The King's Theatre: "The Mormon Maid"', *Dominion*, 20 November 1917, pp. 6

⁶⁹ 'Utah City', *New Zealand Times*, 14 November 1917, pp. 6

depiction of ‘Destroying Angels’, or Danites.⁷⁰ However, that this aspect of the film was taken as fact speaks to the overarching theme of this chapter, that is the antagonistic representations and perceptions of Mormonism within Australia and New Zealand. News reports in both Australian and New Zealand media show the far-reaching affect that *A Mormon Maid* had in promoting hostile public discourse within these countries in relation to the Latter-day Saints and their religion, and a blurring of historical practices with popular misrepresentations.

Developing Theology Surrounding Indigenous Australians, 1920s and 1930s

Like the earliest missionaries, for most of the twentieth century, Latter-day Saint proselytes ignored Indigenous Australians. The available historical reports and records of the Australasian missions between 1895 and the 1950s do not indicate any references to Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people, bar two exceptions. The first is a 1912 photograph in the first volume of *Australasian Mission History* showing three missionaries with two Aboriginal men, one of them labelled the “king of their tribe,” all of whom are holding boomerangs.⁷¹ As this source contains no further information or reference, it is arguable, then, that Indigenous Australians, whilst known to missionaries and ecclesiastical leaders, were seen as “exotic” but not viewed as serious targets for proselytisation. It should be noted, however, that only the first volume of this record is open to research; there are three additional volumes, as well as numerous sources from various Australian missions, but these are restricted in the Church’s archives. Further

⁷⁰ ‘The Destroying Angels’, *Horowhenua Chronicle*, 24 October 1918, pp. 3

⁷¹ ‘Australia Sydney South Mission manuscript history and historical reports, 1895–1970; volume 1,’ Church History Library, LR 108712, p. 168, available at: <https://catalog.churchofjesuschrist.org/assets?id=aa192eba-317a-4186-a89f-d7a12be39916&crate=0&index=0>.

examination of currently unavailable sources may reveal additional information. In the second, Joseph B. Gunnell, who served in the Australian Mission from 1922–24, wrote a description of the “White Australia Policy,” which denied immigration to anyone not of Northern European descent from the early 1900s until the 1950s. He wrote, “No negroes, Japanese, Chinese, or Indians are allowed to live in Australia. It is called white Australia. Soon after Australia was discovered, the natives lived on reservations like our Indians do here.”⁷² Gunnell’s brief summary again stands as an extremely rare discussion of race in Australia from Latter-day Saint sources.

From the twentieth century, however, the exclusion of Indigenous Australians began to take a more formal theologically racist reasoning. Latter-day Saint leaders officially categorised Indigenous Australians to the same exclusions from full participation as those of African descent. For example, in 1921, Hugh Cannon reported at the end of David O. McKay’s apostolic world tour that ‘Church members in Australia are all white, practically no work being done among the Aborigines.’⁷³ This open admittance is important, as it reveals that Church leaders were not oblivious to the fact that missionary work had not been done amongst Australia’s First Peoples. More revealingly, in 1938, a missionary reported about an Aboriginal family in Bundaberg, Queensland:

Mrs. Grace and her family have asked for baptism but from orders we have received from the president of the mission they are not anxious to have them come into the Church. Apostle Smith and Rufus K. Hardy [who were touring the mission at the time] also told us . . . they are of the Negro race.⁷⁴

⁷² Joseph B. Gunnell, Missionary journal, Church History Library, MS 20462, available at <https://catalog.churchofjesuschrist.org/assets?id=247db0e7-f2dd-448d-a0b8-f6a6fa8f5eb8&crate=0&index=0>.

⁷³ Newton, *Southern Cross Saints*, pp. 210

⁷⁴ Newton, *Southern Cross Saints*, pp. 210

It is apparent that this Aboriginal family was explicitly barred from baptism, despite the fact that it was not policy throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries to deny African people baptism or confirmation into the Church.⁷⁵ However, it appears there were informal prohibitions at work. Moreover, this source does highlight the fact that the Church hierarchy perceived Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to be cosmologically linked to African people.

The Church in Australian and New Zealand Media During the Interwar Period, 1920s – 40s

Throughout the interwar period there was continued public hostility directed against the Latter-day Saints and the Church within both Australia and New Zealand. In both there was an enduring fascination with polygamy. Two common threads of this theme of fascination ran in conjunction with each other: the first were public commentators who advocated that the threat of polygamy was still existent, and defenders of Mormonism, whether Latter-day Saints themselves or outsiders, who articulated this was a historical rather than contemporary practice. Yet, not all coverage was salacious. A 1920 article from *The Horsham Times* in South Australia reported on a sermon given by Apostle George Albert Smith in Glasgow, Scotland. This commentator neutrally details the apparent reason for the institution of polygamy:

in order to absorb the large surplus of women that existed among them, and at the same time maintain a virtuous state, polygamy was introduced and practiced. In course of time, however, the

⁷⁵ Bruce R. McConkie, ed., *Doctrines of Salvation: Sermons and Writings of Joseph Fielding Smith*, vol. 2 (Salt Lake City: Deseret Publishing, 1954), 55–56
Reeve, *Religion of a Different Color*, 265.

balance of the sexes became equal and in 1890 polygamy was prohibited by a manifesto of the Mormon Church. There had been no violation of that decree.⁷⁶

This, of course, is a very simplistic and only partially accurate reason that the doctrine and practice of polygamy was begun and then ceased. However, the tone of this 1920 article is significant as it highlights the gradual beginnings of a more benign or even sympathetic representation of Mormonism, and even polygamy.

Despite this, the issue of polygamy was a persistent concern for the Latter-day Saint missionaries. A 1921 newspaper notes that a faithful Mormon leader in a meeting in Newtown, Sydney 'denied that polygamy [contemporarily] existed there [Salt Lake City] and said that even before the law stopped it, not more than five percent of the Mormons had more than one wife.'⁷⁷ Articles throughout this decade repeated these claims from missionaries, indicating that it was a continual source of tension from Australian citizens, and that Mormons felt the need to defend their faith.⁷⁸ Certainly, there were still a plethora of newspaper articles in Australia and New Zealand that claimed that polygamy was an existing practice.⁷⁹ Other articles were eager to warn the women of Australian

⁷⁶ 'Mormon Polygamy', *The Horsham Times*, Victoria, 20 April 1920, pp. 7

⁷⁷ 'Mormon Propaganda', *Sunraysia Daily*, Mildura, Victoria, 30 August 1921, pp. 3

⁷⁸ 'Misunderstood: Mormons and Polygamy', *The Daily Express*, Wagga Wagga, New South Wales, 30 August 1921, pp. 1; 'Mormon Propaganda', *The Farmer and Settler*, 23 June 1922, pp. 3; 'Mormon Propaganda: Polygamy Not Practiced', *The Age*, Melbourne, Victoria, 13 January 1926, pp. 10; 'Mormon Wives', *The Daily News*, Perth, Western Australia, 116 December 1922, pp. 11; 'No Polygamy: Excommunication Penalty', *The Sun*, Sydney, New South Wales, 17 May 1922, pp. 8; 'No Polygamy: Mormon Elder Explains', *The Richmond River Express and Casino Kyogle Advertiser*, 26 May 1922, pp. 3; 'Polygamy in Utah: Mormon Apostle's Denial', *The Grafton Argus and Clarence River General Advertiser*, New South Wales, 30 August 1921, pp. 3

⁷⁹ 'Appalling Polygamy', *Northern Standard*, Darwin, Northern Territory, 23 November 1928, pp. 2; 'Mormon Activity: Amazing Revelations' *The Richmond River Herald and Northern Districts Advertiser*, 7 April 1922, pp. 2; 'Mormonism: Polygamy Still Remains', *Merredin Mercury and Central Districts Index*, Western Australia, 5 February 1920, pp. 3; 'Mormonism: Polygamy Still Remains', *Nungarin Trayning Mail and Kununoppin Advertiser*, Western Australia, 7 February 1922, pp. 3; "'Sealed Brides" More About Mormonism, Polygamy in Salt Lake City', *Truth*, Perth, Western Australia, 28 October 1922, pp. 6; "'Sealed

states that even if polygamy was no longer a practice, Latter-day Saint missionaries were dedicated to finding wives to bring home to Utah; arguably, this was a continuation of similar concerns from previous decades.⁸⁰

Within the Australian context, debates surrounding race, gender, and sexuality within the newly federated nation surely contributed to a festering of these fears and stereotypes. Numerous authors have argued that the early twentieth century was a time of immense cultural and social change within Australia.⁸¹ This, of course, was influenced by legislative changes, such as the introduction of the 'White Australia Policy', but also more grassroots fears surrounding women.⁸² For example, Adrien McCrory and Alana Piper have addressed the way in which women were criticised, whether by press, clergy, or even the

Brides" More About Mormonism, Polygamy in Salt Lake City', *Truth*, Brisbane, Queensland, 16 July 1922, pp. 13

⁸⁰ 'Lured to Utah', *The Journal*, Adelaide, South Australia, 77 February 1920, pp. 6; 'Mormon Methods', *Geelong Advertiser*, Victoria, 3 April 1920, pp. 9; 'Mormon Missionaries', *Truth*, Brisbane, Queensland, 28 January 1923, pp. 6; 'The Mormon Method', *Glenn Innes Examiner*, New South Wales, 5 September 1921, pp. 3

⁸¹ Alison Bashford, "Is White Australia Possible?" Race, Colonialism, and Tropical Medicine', *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, Volume 23, Issue 2, 2000, pp. 248-271; Sharon Crozier-De Rosa, *Shame and the Anti-Feminist Backlash: Britain, Ireland, and Australia, 1890-1920*, New York: Routledge, 2018; Lisa Featherstone, 'Rethinking Female Pleasure: Purity and Desire in Early Twentieth-Century Australia', *Women's History Review*, Volume 21, Issue 5, 2012, pp. 715-731; Lisa Featherstone, Rebecca Jennings, and Robert Reynolds (eds.), *Acts of Love and Lust: Sexuality in Australia from 1945 to 2010*, Newcastle Upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2014; Lisa Featherstone, 'The Science of Pleasure: Medicine and Sex Therapy in Mid-Twentieth-Century Australia', *The Journal of the Society for the Social History of Medicine*, Volume 31, Issue 3, 2018, pp. 445-461; Ann McGrath, *Illicit Love: Interracial Sex and Marriage in the United States and Australia*, Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2015; Victoria Stead and Jon Eltman, *Labour Lines and Colonial Power: Indigenous and Pacific Islander Mobility in Australia*, Canberra: ANU Press, 2019; Jesse Tumblyn, *The Quest for Security: Sovereignty, Race, and the Defense of the British Empire, 1898-1931*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019

⁸² Nikki Henningham, "Hats Off, Gentlemen, to Our Australian Mothers!": Representations of White Femininity in North Queensland in the Early Twentieth Century', *Australian Historical Studies*, Volume 32, Issue 117, 2001, pp. 311-321; Margaret Jacobs, *White Mother to a Dark Race: Settler Colonialism, Maternalism, and the Removal of Indigenous Children in the American West and Australia, 1880-1940*, Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2009; Anita Stelmach, 'Mrs Gleiber's Boarding House: A 'Rendezvous for the Lowest Characters' in Early Twentieth-Century Adelaide', *Journal of the Historical Society of South Australia*, 2018, Issue 46, pp. 47-69

general public, for a lack of appropriate ‘femininity.’⁸³ Within the context of these fears, a number of primary sources related to the Latter-day Saints are important to analyse.

One newspaper article, published in both Sydney and Adelaide and entitled ‘Ware the Mormon’, stated that ‘parents cannot be urged too strongly to keep a watchful eye on the religious meetings their daughters attend.’⁸⁴ Other newspaper articles around the country similarly focus on warning Australian women, with one 1922 commentator in Perth’s *Mirror* stating ‘we solemnly warn all ladies... better one day in the Golden West than a century in Salt Lake City as a Latter-day Saints No. 6, 7, or 8 illegal-legal wife.’⁸⁵ Another article, from *The Ballarat Star* in 1922 warned of open hostilities: ‘if any Mormon missionaries enter Ballarat, I suggest they be drummed out of it.’⁸⁶ This fear even had Latter-day Saints responding to accusations by journalists in Adelaide in 1923, where they promised that they were ‘not here to steal girls.’⁸⁷ Whilst these fears are largely due to historical migration patterns of Latter-day Saints out of Australia and stereotypes of polygamy, parallels appear when juxtaposed with the Australian press’ reaction to the relationships between Australian woman and American soldiers during World War II, perhaps indicating the missionaries ‘Americanness’ as a further alienating factor.⁸⁸ These

⁸³ Adrien McRory, ‘Policing Gender Nonconformity in Victoria, 1900-1940’, *Provenance*, Issue 19, 2021, pp. 33-42; Alana Piper, ‘“A Growing Vice”: The *Truth* about Brisbane Girls and Drunkenness in the Early Twentieth Century’, *Journal of Australian Studies*, Volume 34, Issue 4, 2010, pp. 485-497

⁸⁴ ‘Ware the Mormon’, *The Sun*, Sydney, New South Wales, 3 January 1920, pp. 8; ‘Ware the Mormon’, *Observer*, Adelaide, South Australia, 10 January 192, pp. 43; ‘Ware the Mormon’, *The Register*, Adelaide, South Australia, 30 December 1919, pp. 7

⁸⁵ ‘“Mormon Menace”’, *Mirror*, Perth, Western Australia, 4 March 1922, pp. 2

⁸⁶ ‘Correspondence: A Warning Against Mormonism’, *The Ballarat Star*, Victoria, 7 January 1922, pp. 2

⁸⁷ ‘Mormon Church’, *News*, Adelaide, South Australia, 5 October 1923, pp. 7

⁸⁸ Rachel Harris, ‘“Soldier Struck”: Public Discourses, Women, and American Servicemen in World War II South Australia’, *Journal of Australian Studies*, Volume 45, Issue 4, pp. 560-577; Marilyn Lake, ‘The Desire for a Yank: Sexual Relations between Australian Women and American Servicemen during World War II’, *Journal of the History of Sexuality*, Volume 2, Issue 4, April 1992, pp 621-633

newspaper articles show that public perception of Mormon missionaries was still largely negative, particularly in relation to the migration of Australian women to Utah.

Contrarily, demonstrative of a more nuanced representation, numerous articles within New Zealand printed the Mormon belief that the Māori, and by extension other Pacific Islanders, had originated from the Americas.⁸⁹ One 1920 article from the *Taranaki Herald* stated that

Wiremu Duncan [a Māori Mormon]... according to a Honolulu paper traces his family history back for 110 generations, or approximately 2500 years, including an ancestor named Hema, in the 65th generation, one of whose descendants was Emma K. Lewis, a woman born on the island of Hawai'i... this led to further investigation, with the result that there were found three other Maori family trees that joined and became one with the Hawaiian family trees. The Honolulu paper sets out to prove in a page of reading matter, with copious illustrations, that the ancestors of the Maoris originally came from Hawai'i.⁹⁰

Of note here is not only that this theological-ethnic connection between the Māori and Native Hawaiians, but that it was published in the press of both New Zealand and Hawai'i. Unlike previous discussions of this topic, this claim was reported without much contempt or hostility.

⁸⁹ 'General Items', *Stratford Evening Post*, 21 July 1920, pp. 3; 'General News', *Press*, 17 July 1920, pp. 8; 'Local and General', *Dominion*, 15 July 1920, pp. 6; 'Party of Maoris', *Auckland Star*, 12 July 1920, pp. 4; 'Party of Maoris', *Hawera and Normanby Star*, 21 July 1920, pp. 5; 'Party of Maoris', *Southland Times*, 20 July 1920, pp. 4; 'Party of Maoris', *Taranaki Herald*, 26 July 1920, pp. 2; 'The Maori Race: Question of Where it Came From', *Bay of Plenty Times*, 31 July 1920, pp. 4

⁹⁰ 'Untitled', *Taranaki Herald*, 26 July 1920, pp. 2

Some articles even seem to agree with the Church's cosmological claims about the voyages of the Book of Mormon character Hagoth, and comment on these ideas without derision.⁹¹ A 1920 article in *Hawke's Bay Tribune* stated that:

According to the Book of Mormon, two ships of Hagoth, with passengers and provisions, left the west coast of America in the year 54 B.C and never returned. It is considered quite likely that one or both of those vessels contained colonists from America, who located on Hawaii, and that they are the race of people who have spread over the islands of the Pacific.⁹²

This claim was reprinted almost verbatim in several other articles in 1920.⁹³ This more neutral reporting is perhaps indicative of the way in which the Church had become more entrenched within New Zealand during this period. Contrarily, there were not any such articles in Australia that acknowledged this theological perspective. This is an important distinction, as it shows that both the Church and broader society in New Zealand was more aware of their position within the greater Pacific, as opposed to Australia.

One particularly interesting 1922 article, published in Sydney's *Watchman*, sought to defend the Latter-day Saints against the onslaught of public hostility circulated by the country's media. Signed 'L.G.W.', it is a letter to the editor in response to the claim that Mormons were unfaithful to the British Empire due to their religious beliefs; the claim

⁹¹ 'Local and General', *Dominion*, 15 July 1920, pp. 6; 'General Items', *Stratford Evening Post*, 21 July 1920, pp. 3; 'General News', *Press*, 17 July 1920, pp. 8; 'Untitled', *Auckland Star*, 12 July 1920, pp. 4; 'Untitled', *Auckland Star*, 13 July 1920, pp. 4; 'Untitled', *Manawatu Standard*, 13 August 1920, pp. 4; 'Untitled', *Southland Times*, 20 July 1920, pp. 4

⁹² 'Party of Maoris', *Hawke's Bay Tribune*, 15 July 1920, pp. 5

⁹³ 'Party of Maoris', *Auckland Star*, 12 July 1920, pp. 4; 'Party of Maoris', *Hawera and Normanby Star*, 21 July 1920, pp. 5; 'Party of Maoris', *Southland Times*, 20 July 1920, pp. 4; 'Party of Maoris', *Taranaki Herald*, 26 July 1920, pp. 2

was that the belief in living Prophets was treasonous to the Crown. Announcing himself as 'Australian-born and bred', the author states that

Hundred of "Mormons" spilt their blood and made the supreme sacrifice on the battlefields of France, and among the latter was a close friend of my own who sailed with the Australian troops, and whose memory I honour and respect. How can "D.M" say that Mormons are disloyal in the face of these facts? It is a deliberate misstatement. No man worthy of the name of a Christian would stoop so low as to make such an assertion.⁹⁴

This article highlights a unique debate within the columns of this newspaper. Rather than the hostility towards the Latter-day Saints due to their beliefs, practices, or history, there was instead a debate about the imperialist loyalty of Mormons. It is unclear whether L.G.W. is himself a Latter-day Saint; yet his advocacy of this marginalised religious community is keenly voiced. Although just a single example, it does indicate that there were tensions within Australia that were outside of the realm of the theological and cultural differences of the Latter-day Saints.

As well as societal and media critiques of the Latter-day Saints, in both Australia and New Zealand, clergy of other Christian denominations were ardent opponents of the faith. For example, an article titled 'Latter-day Saints and Primitive Practices', appeared in a May 1922 edition of Melbourne's *The Herald*. The author noted the growth of the Mormon community in Victoria, as well as plans for a chapel to be constructed, before stating that 'a Mormon Church is not an addition to its ecclesiastical institutions which Melbourne can be congratulated.'⁹⁵ Moreover, in 1929 Reverend J. Haddon Bates, of the Northcote, Victoria Presbyterian Church, publicly preached against the missionaries and their

⁹⁴ 'A Mormon's Defence', *Watchman*, Sydney, New South Wales, 23 February 1922, pp. 3

⁹⁵ 'Latter-day Saints and Primitive Practices', *The Herald*, Melbourne, Victoria, 15 May 1922, pp. 6

'methods.'⁹⁶ He warned that the Mormon proselytes predominantly visited during the day when husbands were not at home. Within the context of broader public perceptions of the Latter-day Saints during this period, the implication was that this was a sinister tactic in order to lure women into the faith, and on to Salt Lake City.⁹⁷ Reverend Bates claimed that 'I am told that a Mormon [chapel] is being built near the Westgarth railway station; if that is so, some steps are necessary to see that trouble is avoided.'⁹⁸ This religious antagonism during the interwar period is indicative of the fact that stigma surrounding Mormonism was encouraged by the sermons of mainstream clergy. Moreover, the construction of the Latter-day Saint chapels throughout the country, which physically anchored the community, resulted in further hostilities from broader society, particularly other denominations.

Crucial to the representation and reception of Mormonism in Australia during this period, is that it was only in the 1920s that the Church began to be recognised as an official religion in the country. According to Newton, this was an arduous process that came about after intense lobbying from American Latter-day Saint leaders.⁹⁹ Victoria was the first to recognise the religion in 1923, followed by Tasmania and Western Australia in 1925, New South Wales in 1930, and South Australia in 1938.¹⁰⁰ The staggered nature of this legal recognition meant that whilst Mormons in Victoria could be married by a Latter-day Saint celebrant in 1923, it would be another fifteen years before Mormons in South Australia had the same right.¹⁰¹ In particular, the recognition of the Church by Victoria

⁹⁶ 'Mormon Missionaries in Northcote', *The Herald*, Melbourne, Victoria, 19 September 1929, pp. 13

⁹⁷ 'Mormon Missionaries in Northcote', *The Herald*, Melbourne, Victoria, 19 September 1929, pp. 13

⁹⁸ 'Mormon Missionaries in Northcote', *The Herald*, Melbourne, Victoria, 19 September 1929, pp. 13

⁹⁹ Newton, *Southern Cross Saints*, pp. 78

¹⁰⁰ Newton, *Southern Cross Saints*, pp. 79-81

¹⁰¹ Newton, *Southern Cross Saints*, pp. 79-81

caused a furore in the national press. One 1923 article, published in Western Australia's *Mirror*, stated incredulously:

In the Victorian 'Government Gazette' of September appears an announcement that the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has been declared a religious denomination by the Executive Council... A few years ago such an act would have wrecked any cabinet. Now it passes almost without comment.¹⁰²

This belief that such a decision would have 'wrecked' a sitting government is repeated verbatim in several other newspaper articles across the country.¹⁰³ From these sources, it is evident that Mormonism was undeniably considered an outside religion, and that its recognition, in Victoria at least, was reported on with bewilderment.

According to Newton, the issue of polygamy was the predominant reason which various state governments were reticent in allowing the Latter-day Saint faith legal recognition.¹⁰⁴ Though polygamy had been officially abandoned in 1890, Australian policy makers were concerned that Latter-day Saint celebrants would encourage illegal plural marriages.¹⁰⁵ As such, when Australian Mission President Clarence Tingey sought government recognition in New South Wales in in the late 1920s, he was met with hostility from government officials. In response, Tingey received a letter of introduction from the American consul to meet Premier Thomas Bavin.¹⁰⁶ Though Tingey was received courteously from the Premier, he was next introduced to an unnamed official who,

¹⁰² 'Among Perth's Mormons', *Mirror (Perth, Western Australia)*, 13 October 1923, pp. 2

¹⁰³ 'Mormonism: Church Recognised in Victoria', *The Advertiser (Adelaide, South Australia)*, 2 October 1923, pp. 10; 'Mormonism: Church Recognised in Victoria', *Chronicle (Adelaide, South Australia)*, 6 October 1923, pp. 54; 'Mormons in Victoria: Religion Officially Recognised', *The Farmer and Settler (Sydney, New South Wales)*, 26 October 1923, pp. 4; 'Mormons Recognised: Victorian Decision', *The Sun (Sydney, New South Wales)*, 2 October 1923, pp. 6

¹⁰⁴ Newton, *Southern Cross Sains*, pp. 80

¹⁰⁵ Newton, *Southern Cross Saints*, 80

¹⁰⁶ Newton, *Southern Cross Saints*, pp. 81

reportedly, berated the Mission President: ‘we have decided time and time again that you people are not entitled to this privilege.’¹⁰⁷ According to reminiscences from Tingey, the official argued that Mormonism would not be recognised in New South Wales due to a fear that polygamous marriages would be performed.¹⁰⁸ According to Newton, Tingey retorted that Mormons were tax-paying citizens, and ‘threatened to go to court to obtain a writ of *mandamus* compelling the department to register LDS celebrants.’¹⁰⁹ Apparently, the official stated that if the Latter-day Saints were to alter their scriptures and remove Section 132 from the Doctrine and Covenants, which is the apparent command to practice polygamy, the religion would be recognised.¹¹⁰ Instead, Tingey signed a sworn affidavit that the Church’s celebrants would not perform plural marriages, after which Mormonism was officially recognised in New South Wales.¹¹¹ Though it is difficult to ascertain whether this ordeal, as recollected by Tingey and reported by Newton, is entirely accurate or was embellished, this event does show the negativity surrounding the Latter-day Saints during this period, and the challenges of becoming recognised by official state governments.

One of the most important aspects of being recognised as an official religion was the ability for Mormon marriage celebrants to perform legal weddings. As such, during the 1920s and 1930s, there were numerous newspaper articles about local Australian-Mormons’ marriages. Perhaps expecting that these weddings would contain the ‘esoteric’ secret rites that had been published for decades, these commentators almost seem

¹⁰⁷ Newton, *Southern Cross Saints*, pp. 81

¹⁰⁸ Newton, *Southern Cross Saints*, pp. 81

¹⁰⁹ Newton, *Southern Cross Saints*, pp. 81

¹¹⁰ Newton, *Southern Cross Saints*, pp. 81

¹¹¹ Newton, *Southern Cross Saints*, pp. 81

disappointed by the lacklustre ceremonies.¹¹² Often occurring within Latter-day Saint chapels or within other denominational Churches, these weddings were simple; they were not the 'sealings' that occur within Temple walls, as there was no such building within Australia at this time within which these could be performed. Nevertheless, these articles do highlight one important aspect: the legality of these ceremonies made possible through official government recognition. Previously, Latter-day Saint couples had to be married civically or by the clergy of another denomination.¹¹³

Highlighting this pivot, in 1923 the *Armidale Express and New England General Advertiser* noted that 'the first Mormon marriage in Australia took place' at the Latter-day Saint chapel in Melbourne.¹¹⁴ Other articles throughout the period from the 1920s to the 1940s discussed the occurrence of Latter-day Saint marriages; a common theme of these articles is their emphasis on the fact that polygamy had been abandoned, much to the bemusement, and somewhat disbelief, of reporters.¹¹⁵ As late as 1940, a reporter for Sydney's *The Sun* asked a Mormon groom whether he would be 'content with one wife.'¹¹⁶ Confirming that he would be, the groom was then pressed to state that polygamy had

¹¹² 'Church is Crowded for Mormon Wedding', *The Sun*, Sydney, New South Wales, 8 December 1940, pp. 14; 'Mormon Marriage', *The Armidale Express and New England General Advertiser*, New South Wales, 26 October 1923, pp. 6; 'Mormons Wed at Bendigo', *Recorder*, Port Pirie, South Australia, 11 April 1936, pp. 3; 'Mormons Wed at Hurstville', *Daily News*, Sydney, New South Wales, 18 March 1940, pp. 3; 'Mormon Wedding: 15 Minute Ceremony', *The Herald*, Melbourne, Victoria, 22 October 1923, pp. 16; 'Mormon Wedding', *Western Star and Roma Advertiser*, Queensland, 18 April 1936, pp. 8

¹¹³ Newton, *Southern Cross Saints*, pp. 78-79

¹¹⁴ 'Mormon Marriage', *The Armidale Express and New England General Advertiser*, New South Wales, 26 October 1923, pp. 6

¹¹⁵ 'Mormon Wedding', *Western Star and Roma Advertiser*, Queensland, 18 April 1936, pp. 8

'Church is Crowded for Mormon Wedding', *The Sun*, Sydney, New South Wales, 8 December 1940, pp. 14

¹¹⁶ 'Church is Crowded for Mormon Wedding', *The Sun*, Sydney, New South Wales, 8 December 1940, pp.

been banned within the religion officially for half a century.¹¹⁷ The reporter noted his surprise at the 'sweet simplicity' of the ceremony.¹¹⁸

The official recognition of the religion and subsequent allowance of Latter-day Saint celebrants is an important moment in Australian-Mormon history. It emphasises that whilst there was still a slate of hostility and ridicule from Australian society, the governments of various states had begun to acknowledge this marginalised religion and its acolytes. This could have been due to the fact that the Latter-day Saint community in Australia, no longer under the obligation of migrating under 'the Gathering', had begun to grow. Newspapers throughout Australia similarly followed the progression of the Church within the country; for instance, numerous articles reported the number of Mormons living in respective Australian states.¹¹⁹ They also reported on the Australian government's decision in 1922 to not increase the quota of Mormon missionaries allowed to proselytise in the country.¹²⁰ This article also stated that 'assurances are given by the Church that its members will not preach any pernicious doctrines and that it will not attempt to induce people who may accept the Mormon faith to leave Australia.'¹²¹ New Zealand media similarly discussed the restrictions on the missionaries in Australia.¹²²

¹¹⁷ 'Church is Crowded for Mormon Wedding', *The Sun*, Sydney, New South Wales, 8 December 1940, pp. 14

¹¹⁸ 'Brisbane Girls to be Mormon Wives', *Truth*, Brisbane, Queensland, 2 September 1940, pp. 1, 21

¹¹⁹ 'Among Perth's Mormons', *Mirror*, Perth, Western Australia, 13 October 1923, pp. 2; 'Mormon Faith: Growing Slowly', *News*, Adelaide, South Australia, 2 January 1929, pp. 5; 'Mormons in Victoria', *Zeehan and Dundas Herald*, Tasmania, 20 May 1922, pp. 1

'We have Mormons With Us', *Truth*, Perth, Western Australia, 20 September 1924, pp. 1

¹²⁰ 'Influx of Mormon Elders Restricted', *The Herald*, Melbourne, Victoria, 16 May 1922, pp. 5

¹²¹ 'Influx of Mormon Elders Restricted', *The Herald*, Melbourne, Victoria, 16 May 1922, pp. 5

¹²² 'Mormon Elders', *Evening Post*, 31 May 1922, pp. 9; 'Mormon Elders', *Otago Daily Times*, 9 June 1922, pp. 8; 'Mormon Elders: Activities in Australia', *Bay of Plenty Times*, 1 June 1922, pp. 4; 'Mormon Elders: Australian Restriction', *New Zealand Herald*, 30 May 1922, pp. 9

Further key themes emerge from the sources about the representation and perception of Mormons and their religion within Australian society during this period. One of these was the mystery surrounding the ordinances of the Temple. As Temples were being built outside of the United States for the first time, including in Canada and Hawai'i, indicative of a growth of the institutional Church globally, numerous newspapers published supposed exposés on what occurred within Temple walls.¹²³ One such was the 1923 article 'Mormon Temple Secrets', published by *The Tumut and Adelong Times*.¹²⁴ This was a supposed rewrite of an article from the *New York Standard*, in which 'secret photographs' of the interior of the Temple had been taken by an individual, who then blackmailed the Church.¹²⁵ This article claimed that the inside of the Salt Lake City Temple, 'outrivalled the magnificence of Solomon's Temple, and ... has never been entered by anyone except the Latter-day Saints.'¹²⁶

¹²³ 'A Mormon Temple: Dedicated in Canada', *Wairarapa Age*, 1 August 1913, pp. 5 ; 'Costly Mormon Temple', *The Express and Telegraph*, Adelaide, South Australia, 19 March 1920, pp. 2; 'First British Mormon Temple', *Press*, 27 December 1913, pp. 11; 'First British Mormon Temple', *Colonist*, 3 January 1914, pp. 5; 'General Cable News: Mormon Temple in Canada', *Gisborne Times*, Victoria, 1 August 1913, pp. 5; 'Mormons and Maoris', *Evening News*, Sydney, New South Wales, 1 July 1922, pp. 4; 'Mormons in Alberta', *New Zealand Herald*, 1 August 1913, pp. 7; 'Mormon Temple in Britain', *Press*, 28 May 1956, pp. 16; 'Mormon Temple in Canada', *Wanganui Chronicle*, 1 August 1913, pp. 5; 'Mormonism in Canada', *Ashburton Guardian*, 1 August 1913, pp. 5; 'Maoris Return: Pilgrimage to Hawaii', *Auckland Star*, 17 June 1929, pp. 8; 'Maoris Visit Hawaii', *Manawatu Times*, 2 August 1930, pp. 4; 'Maoris Visit Hawaii', *Sun (Auckland)*, 15 July 1930, pp. 1; 'Mormon Pilgrimage', *Evening Post*, 18 June 1929, pp. 8; 'Maoris and Mormonism: Visit to Honolulu', *Poverty Bay Herald*, 19 March 1925, pp. 7; 'When Maori Meets Maori: In His Legendary Home Linked Up By Ancestors Comparing Family Trees at Hawaii', *Auckland Star*, 10 August 1920, pp. 4

¹²⁴ 'Mormon Temple Secrets', *The Tumut and Adelong Times*, New South Wales, 20 July 1923, pp 5

¹²⁵ 'Mormon Temple Secrets', *The Tumut and Adelong Times*, New South Wales, 20 July 1923, pp 5

¹²⁶ 'Mormon Temple Secrets', *The Tumut and Adelong Times*, New South Wales, 20 July 1923, pp 5

Similar articles about the inside-workings of the Temple are more salacious and exaggerated in tone.¹²⁷ Many of these focussed on the ordinance of the 'sealing', in which spouses were married within Latter-day Saint Temples for time and eternity; these often included the caveat that whilst polygamy had technically been outlawed, spiritual 'plural marriage' was still an aspect of Mormon theology.¹²⁸ This interest with the Temple follows a long tradition of Australian media's continued fascination with perceived secret Latter-day Saint doctrines, as explored earlier in this chapter. Despite the lingering distrust, the interwar period of Australian Mormonism is underscored by an almost begrudging acknowledgement of the faith and its adherents.¹²⁹ Arguably, this correlated with the localisation of the Church during the twentieth century. Evidently, the Church and its members were known to the Australian government at this time. Moreover, the construction of chapels within various states had also begun to make the Church and its adherents a more permanent fixture within the broader community.

New Zealand's media likewise commented on different facets of Mormonism both within the country and abroad, though most were hostile. For instance, newspapers reported

¹²⁷ 'Among the Mormons: Rites in Underground Temple, Strange and Terrible Ordeal', *The Daily Mail*, Brisbane, Queensland, 07 January 1923, pp. 11; 'Among the Mormons: Rites in Underground Temple, Young Girls' Ordeal', *The Newcastle Sun*, New South Wales, 28 November 1922, pp. 6; 'Octopus of Utah: English Girls and the Mormons', *The Wingham Chronicle and Manning River Observer*, New South Wales, 13 June 1924, pp. 3; 'The Mormon Peril: Girl's Awful Ordeal – Blasphemous Rites, Remarkable Disclosures', *The Riverine Herald*, Echuca, Victoria and Moama, New South Wales, 2 May 1922, pp. 4

¹²⁸ 'Mormon Marriages', *Geraldton Guardian*, Western Australia, 26 March 1922, pp. 4; 'Mormon Marriages', *The Daily News*, Perth, Western Australia, 3 April 1922, pp. 3

¹²⁹ 'Mormons and Polygamy: How the Practice Originated', *Gisborne Times*, 29 September 1930, pp. 2; 'Mormons and Polygamy: Reason for its Adoption, Not Now Practiced', *Waikato Times*, 27 November 1935, pp. 9; 'Mormon Centenary: Rich and Powerful Sect', *Timaru Herald*, 27 November 1930, pp. 16; 'Mormon Church: Australian Leader – Theological Beliefs', *Auckland Star*, 29 June 1935, pp. 10; 'News and Notes', *Timaru Herald*, 8 July 1935, pp. 2; 'North Otago: Salt Lake City', *Otago Daily News*, 2 February 1929, pp. 8; 'Religious World: Present-Day Outlook', *Auckland Star*, 10 January 1931, pp. 2; 'Young Mormons Arrive', *Sun (Auckland)*, 15 December 1927, pp. 34

that the Church had been officially acknowledged by the Victorian parliament in 1923.¹³⁰ Moreover, one 1927 article from the *Northland Age* discussed the centenary of the publishing of the Book of Mormon.¹³¹ The author claimed that Smith ‘had a revelation sanctioning polygamy. A revolt was led by a doctor who suspected Smith of coveting his wife, and Joseph Smith and his brother, after being imprisoned, were shot by the mob.’¹³² Numerous other articles similarly note this occurrence in their report of the centenary. It appears the institution of polygamy and Smith’s murder were as important to Mormonism’s representation, as to the historical centenary of the Book of Mormons’ publication.¹³³ Another prominent article that mentioned Latter-day Saint polygamy was printed in multiple newspapers in 1926. This widely circulated editorial emphasised the multiple marriages of Smith’s ecclesiastical successor, Brigham Young, and glibly claimed he was ‘a dictator in Utah – a sort of much-married Mussolini’, a reference to Benito Mussolini’s recent political success in Italy.¹³⁴

As well as various Mormon doctrines, stigmas, and occurrences, New Zealand media throughout this interwar period reported on the existence and prominence of the Latter-

¹³⁰ ‘Australian News: Mormons in Victoria’, *Hokitika Guardian*, 19 October 1923, pp. 3; ‘Mormons in Victoria: Getting a Hold’, *Grey River Argus*, 19 October 1923, pp. 5; ‘Mormon Faith: Recognised in Victoria’, *Timaru Herald*, 19 October 1923, pp. 7; ‘“Latter-day Saints” Recognition in Victoria’, *New Zealand Times*, 19 October 1923, pp. 6; ‘Mormon Marriages: Recognition in Victoria’, *Evening Post*, 19 October 1923, pp. 7; ‘Mormon Marriages: Recognition in Victoria’, *New Zealand Herald*, 19 October 1923, pp. 7; ‘Mormonism in Victoria: Legislation of Marriage’, *Press*, 19 October 1923, pp. 8

¹³¹ ‘Centenary of the Book of Mormon’, *Northland Age*, 7 December 1927, pp. 7

¹³² ‘Centenary of the Book of Mormon’, *Northland Age*, 7 December 1927, pp. 7

¹³³ ‘Mormon Centenary: A Vanished Book’, *Evening Post*, 19 November 1927, pp. 20; ‘Mormon Centenary: A Vanished Book’, *Ashburton Guardian*, 2 December 1927, pp. 3

¹³⁴ ‘The Master Mormon: Brigham Young in Love’, *Ellesmere Guardian*, 26 January 1926, pp. 7; ‘The Master Mormon: Brigham Young in Love’, *Thames Star*, 5 March 1926, pp. 5; ‘The Master Mormon: The Life of Brigham Young’, *Taranaki Daily News*, 23 January 1926, pp. 14; ‘The Master Mormon: When Brigham Young Fell in Love’, *Horowhenua Chronicle*, 7 January 1926, pp. 4; ‘The Master Mormon: When Brigham Young Fell in Love’, *New Zealand Times*, 9 January 1926, pp. 11; ‘The Master Mormon: When Brigham Young Fell in Love’, *Otaki Mail*, 25 January 1926, pp. 1

day Saint *Hui Taus*. The *Hui Tau* was a roving gathering of Mormons in New Zealand, particularly amongst the Māori. It was hosted by different *iwis*, or tribes, each year, and was heavily discussed in the press newspapers.¹³⁵ There were a number of controversies surrounding these conferences. For example, in 1937, the Health Minister at Wairoa, the area that was to hold that year's Hui Tau, prohibited the gathering.¹³⁶ It was thought that the Hui Tau, which was projected to have over two thousand Māori Mormons in attendance, would lead to an outbreak of 'infantile paralysis.'¹³⁷ In response, the Church, 'at great financial loss', indefinitely postponed the Hui Tau in accordance with the Health Ministers' directives.¹³⁸

Individual Māori Mormons still went forward with the gathering. This caused quite the furore in the press to the extent that the Church had to publish an official statement:

It is the wish of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints to make it quite clear that this gathering is in no way connected with their Church, and that the gathering was neither arranged by the Church nor in any way held under their auspices...¹³⁹

According to another article regarding this event, the police were instructed to intervene, but the Māori members resisted the authorities' instructions to return to their homes.

¹³⁵ 'Hui at Nuhaka: Further Competitions', *Poverty Bay Herald*, 27 March 1934, pp. 10; 'Mormon Conference: Maori Mission Work', *Auckland Star*, 29 March 1932, pp. 3; 'Mormon Church Hui', *Poverty Bay Herald*, 22 September 1936, pp. 14; 'Mormon Hui: A Great Success', *Poverty Bay Herald*, 1 April 1935, pp. 12; 'Mormon Hui Occasion at Pipiwai', *Northern Advocate*, 7 May 1934, pp. 4; 'Mormon Hui: Big Attendance at Nuhaka', *Gisborne Times*, 4 April 1932, pp. 7; 'Mormon Hui: Well Attended Gathering', *Poverty Bay Herald*, 2 April 1932, pp. 13; 'Mormons at Nuhaka', *Gisborne Times*, 11 April 1908, pp. 1; 'Off to the Hui: North Maoris for Mormon Gathering', *Northern Advocate*, 26 March 1935, pp. 7; 'Northland Mormon Hui at Maromaku', *Northern Advocate*, 13 October 1938, pp. 9; 'Untitled', *Thames Star*, 28 March 1930, pp. 4

¹³⁶ 'Mormon Hui Cancelled: Precautions Against Paralysis', *Pahiatua Herald*, 22 March 1937, pp. 3; 'Mormon Hui: Forbidden by Minister', *Otago Daily Times*, 22 March 1937, pp. 13; 'Hui Prohibited: Maoris' Easter Gathering', *Auckland Star*, 20 March 1937, pp. 13; 'Outbreak at Hastings: Maoris Barred from Hui', *Northern Advocate*, 18 March 1937, pp. 3

¹³⁷ 'Mormon Hui: Forbidden by Health Minister', *Evening Star*, 20 March 1937, pp. 17

¹³⁸ 'Native Gathering: Not a Mormon Hui', *Auckland Star*, 25 March, 1937, pp. 8

¹³⁹ 'Native Gathering: Not a Mormon Hui', *Auckland Star*, 25 March, 1937, pp. 8

Tensions were heightened until the Health Minister stated that as an assembly had already taken place before the actual planned *Hui Tau*, any risk of exposure had already occurred. As such, the newspapers reported that 'what threatened to be an exciting incident closed quietly.'¹⁴⁰

Despite this incident, newspapers were usually almost exclusively positive in relation to the Mormon *Hui Tau*'s. They described the ways in which these events blended Latter-day Saint religiosity, Māori culture, spirituality, and recreation. Athletic competitions were held, Māori dancing and song were performed, and taught to younger generations, all of which was reported positively by the press. As such, the *Hui Tau* was an important institution not only for the Māori Mormons, but for the public image of the religion. It was also essential for the entanglement and localisation of the Church within the country; this syncretism of Indigenous culture with a foreign spirituality was embodied and reinforced by the *Hui Tau*.

By the end of the 1930s, newspapers in Australia began to discuss Mormonism in much more measured ways. The clearest example of this occurred in 1940. As the United States had not officially entered the Second World War, missionaries stationed in both Australia and New Zealand were evacuated to America due to the increased tensions throughout the world.¹⁴¹ Newspapers around the country were very benign, if not compassionate, in

¹⁴⁰ 'Refused to Leave: Hawke's Bay Maori Party at Rangitukia Hui', *Gisborne Times*, 30 March 1937, pp. 5

¹⁴¹ 'Evacuate at Once: Message to Mormon Elders', *Leader*, Orange, New South Wales, 18 October 1940, pp. 2; 'Mormon Church: Missionaries Recalled', *Townsville Daily Bulletin*, Queensland, 18 October 1940, pp. 6; 'Mormon Elders Leaving Australia', *The Telegraph*, Brisbane, Queensland, 17 October 1940, pp. 4; 'Mormon Elders Returning to America', *The Canberra Times*, Australian Capital Territory, 18 October 1940, pp. 4; 'Mormon Missionaries Recalled', *Advocate*, Burnie, Tasmania, 21 October 1940, pp. 2; 'Mormon Missionaries Recalled', *Barrier Miner*, Broken Hill, New South Wales, 16 October 1940, pp. 1; 'Mormon

their reporting of this evacuation; there was no hostility or maliciousness in the tone of the writing. The articles noted that the telegrams received from Salt Lake City did not mention the reason for the withdrawal, but both missionaries and journalists suggested ‘the order is due to the unsettled conditions in the Pacific.’¹⁴² As within Australia, the news of the evacuation of missionaries from New Zealand was printed throughout the country. There was again speculation about what this evacuation meant in the wider context of the Second World War.¹⁴³ Newton has posited was a turning point in Australian and New Zealand Mormon history as it forced a more thorough localisation of the religion.¹⁴⁴ Particularly, this occurred as Australian and New Zealand Latter-day Saints were thrust into the lay ecclesiastical leadership positions that had traditionally been held by American missionaries, who did not return until the end of the decade; this will be discussed more fully below.¹⁴⁵ Nevertheless, it is evident that throughout the interwar period, there were a number of different ways in which the Church was represented by Australian and New Zealand media. Throughout the 1920s, there was a hostile and derisive tone taken by the press, but this began to mellow throughout the 1930s until the outbreak of World War II.

Missionaries Recalled from Australia’, *The Northern Miner*, Charters Towers, Queensland, 18 October 1940, pp. 3; ‘Mormons Recalled to America’, *The Albany Advertiser*, Western Australia, 28 October 1940, pp. 4

¹⁴² ‘Mormon Elders Leaving Australia’, *The Telegraph*, Brisbane, Queensland, 17 October 1940, pp. 4

¹⁴³ ‘Mormon Elders’, *New Zealand Herald*, 23 October 1940, pp. 8; ‘Mormon Elders Recall to America’, *Evening Post*, 23 October 1940, pp. 12; ‘Mormon Elders Recalled from Australia and New Zealand’, *Nelson Evening Mail*, 23 October 1940, pp. 8; ‘Mormon Elders Recalled’, *Pahiatua Herald*, 24 October 1940, pp. 3; ‘Mormon Elders Return to America’, *Ashburton Guardian*, 23 October 1940, pp. 3; ‘Mormon Elders Return to America’, *Timaru Herald*, 23 October 1940, pp. 6; ‘Mormon Missionaries Withdrawal from New Zealand’, *Otago Daily Times*, 23 October 1940, pp. 8; ‘Mormons Returning to America’, *Manawatu Times*, 24 October 1940, pp. 9; ‘Return to America Mormon Church Elders’, *Gisborne Herald*, 23 October 1940, pp. 4

¹⁴⁴ Newton, *Southern Cross Saints*, pp. 188-89

¹⁴⁵ Newton, *Southern Cross Saints*, pp. 186

Early Māori-Mormon Activism, 1930s – 1950s

From the introduction of Mormonism to New Zealand, there have been numerous stalwart Māori Latter-day Saints who have been community leaders and activists. As there are numerous academic and faith-promoting sources that discuss these men and women, this section of the dissertation will only briefly cover this syncretism between the Church and Māori activism in the mid-twentieth century. Three such sources have been edited by Selwyn Katene (Ngāti Toa Rangatira, Ngāti Tūwharetoa, Ngāruahine, Ngāti Tama). Katene is assistant Vice-Chancellor Māori at Massey University, near Auckland, and the director of the MANU AO Academy, which seeks to advance Māori-led and Māori-centred academia across New Zealand.¹⁴⁶ These three volumes are entitled *Turning the Hearts of the Children*, *By Their Fruits You Will Know Them*, and *Let Their Light So Shine*.¹⁴⁷ The first two volumes focus on the lived experiences, spirituality, and political activism of Māori Mormons from the early days of the Church in New Zealand; the third is about both Māori and non-Māori prominent Latter-day Saints. Most of the entries are written by descendants or other family of the individual being discussed. These invaluable sources offer insights not only into the localisation of the Church within New Zealand, but also explore how individual Māori Mormons utilised their religion in order to help those around them. Some of these Latter-day Saint Māori have also been immortalised in Ngā Tāngata Taumata Rau, the *Dictionary of New Zealand Biography*.

¹⁴⁶ 'Selwyn Katene', *Huia Bookshop and Publishing*, viewed 23/05/2022, <https://huia.co.nz/huia-bookshop/authors/author/42>

¹⁴⁷ Katene (ed.), *Turning the Hearts of the Children*; Katene (ed.), *By Their Fruits You Will Know Them*; Katene (ed.), *Let Their Light So Shine*

For instance, the life and experiences of Hārata Ria Te Uira Parata (later Solomon), a Māori activist whose efforts were recognised throughout the world, illustrates the connectiveness between Mormonism and Māori politicisation during the twentieth century. Born at Otaki in January 1925, Hārata was a leader in both Church callings and marae traditions, as well as a member of the Māori Women's Welfare League, the Otaki and Porirua Trusts Board, Porirua Māori committee, and the Māori Education Foundation.¹⁴⁸ Hārata was also a singer, poet, and writer, and was a member of the Māori Writers and Actors Association and New Zealand International Festival of the Arts. She was a renowned expert on *whakapapa* (genealogy) and tribal history, contributing to the *Dictionary of New Zealand Biography* from the project's inception in the 1990s. However, as well as strengthening her people and their culture within New Zealand, Hārata also travelled internationally to present and preserve Māori in various capacities; for instance, she was representative of her iwi in the 1986 Te Māori exhibition at the Field Museum of Natural History in Chicago, Illinois. In 1990, three years before her passing, she was made a companion of the Queen's Service Order. Though Hārata has been remembered within faith-promoting literature and the broader New Zealand Mormon Church for her faithfulness to the Church, she is remembered more broadly within New Zealand history as a staunch Māori activist.

¹⁴⁸ Eleanor Ria Solomon. 'Solomon, Hārata Ria Te Uira', *Dictionary of New Zealand Biography*, first published in 2000. Te Ara - the Encyclopedia of New Zealand, accessed 8 June 2022 <https://teara.govt.nz/en/biographies/5s33/solomon-harata-ria-te-uirā>

Moreover, other prominent Māori Mormons such as Hirini Whaanga Christy,¹⁴⁹ Stuart Meha,¹⁵⁰ Puti Tipene Wātene,¹⁵¹ and Manahi Nītama Paewai,¹⁵² amongst others, have been well documented, and were revered in life and death for their dedication to both their religion and their political activism.¹⁵³ The thorough localisation of the Church within New Zealand would undoubtedly not have been as successful without these individuals, who were leaders within Indigenous communities, activist organisations, and the Church. Through their roles in both Church and Māori activism, these Māori Mormons furthered the syncretism of the Church and Māoridom, and indeed broader New Zealand society. For some, the Church provided a vehicle for their activism as they attempted to assist their fellow Māori. Thus, whilst the Church as an institution was not directly involved in the political improvement of the Māori, individual members, who indisputably found solace and identity within Mormonism's broad cosmology, were able to enact tangible political change within New Zealand, particularly amongst the nations' Indigenous peoples.

¹⁴⁹ Huia Koziol. 'Christy, Hirini Whaanga', Dictionary of New Zealand Biography, first published in 1998. Te Ara - the Encyclopedia of New Zealand, accessed 8 June 2022

<https://teara.govt.nz/en/biographies/4c20/christy-hirini-whaanga>

¹⁵⁰ Peter J. Lineham. 'Meha, Stuart', Dictionary of New Zealand Biography, first published in 1998. Te Ara - the Encyclopedia of New Zealand, accessed 8 June 2022

<https://teara.govt.nz/en/biographies/4m50/meha-stuart>

¹⁵¹ Manuka Henare. 'Wātene, Puti Tipene', Dictionary of New Zealand Biography, first published in 2000. Te Ara - the Encyclopedia of New Zealand, accessed 8 June 2022

<https://teara.govt.nz/en/biographies/5w12/watene-puti-tipene>

¹⁵² Manahi Paewai. 'Paewai, Manahi Nitama', Dictionary of New Zealand Biography, first published in 2000. Te Ara - the Encyclopedia of New Zealand, accessed 8 June 2022

<https://teara.govt.nz/en/biographies/5p1/paewai-manahi-nitama>

¹⁵³ In particular, Selwyn Katene's edited volume *By Their Fruits You Shall Know Them: Early Māori Leaders in the Mormon Church*, chronicles the lives of politically-involved Māori-Mormon such as Henare Potae, Rangikaweā Hoani Puriri, Pere Wihongi, Pepene Eketone, Haana Cootes Wineera, Alice Matewai Mataiea, Henare Hamon, Hemi Whautere Witehira, Mereana Hall Bean, Pera Ihimeara Smile, Whakahe Tui Matenga, and Sydney Hutana Crawford.

Katene (ed.), *By Their Fruits You Shall Know Them*

Post-War Pivot – A Time of Societal Ambiguity, Late 1940s – 1960s

During the 1940s, the Church in both Australia and New Zealand grew slowly but significantly; however, as missionaries had been recalled, this growth was due to the localisation of the institution and natural increase rather than evangelistic efforts. Due to the prominence of the Second World War and its aftermath in the press, Mormonism did not feature heavily in the newspapers of either Australia or New Zealand until the end of the 1940s, when discussion of Latter-day Saints and the religion re-emerged. One key example was the return to the familiar theme of Australians leaving the country in order to marry faithful Mormons in the United States. Fifty-year-old Mrs. Lydia Crane of Adelaide was interviewed in 1949 on her way to Cardston, a Latter-day Saint settlement in Canada.¹⁵⁴ When questioned about how she felt leaving Adelaide, Mrs. Crane stated ‘it’s only our belief in the Mormon religion which is making us move. We didn’t want to leave Australia.’¹⁵⁵ According to the article, Mrs. Crane was travelling to Cardston alone, her three sons and two daughters would follow sometime later. Mrs. Crane was quoted as stating that due to the small number of Latter-day Saints within Australia, her children had ‘no chance of marrying.’ As explored previously, whilst faithful Mormons had at one time been encouraged to migrate to Zion, this had not been official Church practice for over fifty years; as such, this was likely an individual family’s desire to live with a larger community of Latter-day Saints. Mrs Crane’s story was reprinted in multiple newspapers, including the *Kalgoorlie Miner*, Hobart’s *The Mercury*, and Melbourne’s *The Herald*.¹⁵⁶

¹⁵⁴ ‘Why Mormon Woman Quit South Aust.’, *The Mail*, Adelaide, South Australia, 12 February 1949, pp. 3

¹⁵⁵ ‘Why Mormon Woman Quit South Aust.’, *The Mail*, Adelaide, South Australia, 12 February 1949, pp. 3

¹⁵⁶ ‘A Mormon Mother’, *Kalgoorlie Miner*, Western Australia, 14 February 1949, pp. 5; ‘Australian Mormons in Search of Romance’, *The Herald*, Melbourne, Victoria, 14 February 1949, pp. 1; ‘No Chance of Marrying in Australia’, *The Mercury*, Hobart, Tasmania, 14 February 1954, pp. 7

Another example of this theme of Australian Mormon women marrying American Mormons was the 1953 announcement of the marriage of Brisbane woman, Edith Eardley, to Duane Eggert, from Bountiful, Utah.¹⁵⁷ The article itself was not hostile but printed a quote from Edith Eardley that ‘there is now no difference between marriages in a Mormon and other Christian religions.’¹⁵⁸ She also emphasised that polygamy had been discontinued. Eardley’s defensiveness here arguably reveals that the representation of the Church’s history and doctrines was still a concern for contemporary Latter-day Saints. Nonetheless, these articles highlight a number of things; perhaps most evident is that Mormonism at this time was still a small, marginal religion in Australia, which made marrying within the religion, a prerequisite for true salvation, very difficult. They also show that the attitude towards Latter-day Saints, particularly women, had begun to shift; unlike in previous decades, there was little, if any, hostility evident. This is likely since the Salt Lake City-led recruitment of religious emigres to build Zion had ceased, and it was instead emigration decisions were made by individuals or families to pursue their own faith interests. However, what is crucial is that these articles highlight the beginning of the pivot in Australian media taking a less belligerent approach to reporting on the Latter-day Saints.

In New Zealand, the press reported on the extensive building programs that the Church initiated within the country, particularly after the Second World War. Numerous articles note the construction of chapels, education institutions, and other Church buildings, as well as the varied reactions to the physical localisation of the Church within New Zealand.

¹⁵⁷ ‘Brisbane Bride and Utah Groom’, *Truth*, Brisbane, Queensland, 5 July 1953, pp. 3

¹⁵⁸ ‘Brisbane Bride and Utah Groom’, *Truth*, Brisbane, Queensland, 5 July 1953, pp. 3

For instance, one 1958 article from the newspaper *Press*, argued that ‘residents of the Springvale [Whanganui] area, where the Mormon Church plans to build, are opposing the project.’¹⁵⁹ Reportedly a ‘deputation of residents’ protested to the Waitotara County Council, where representatives of the Church then had to defend their application. Such was the reaction by the citizens that the Council who had approved the project temporarily rescinded the permit. The residents voiced their objection to the construction not to the Chapel itself, but to ‘a group of buildings... which would turn the area into a Mormon settlement.’¹⁶⁰ This concern was undoubtedly in response to the recent creation of Temple View; the reactions and representation of this will be discussed in the next chapter. Spokesman for the Church, R. R. Evans, attempted to sooth the fears of the residents by stating ‘we have built several churches [chapels] through the country and they have not detracted from the surrounding land value – they have helped increase values.’¹⁶¹ This objection in 1958 to the construction of a Chapel within New Zealand indicates that although the Church was entrenched and localised, there was nonetheless still a marginalisation of the religion. This tension is worth emphasising, as the Church had a long history within the country, and was even at this time building the Temple in Hamilton, North Island. As such, from a cultural and even legal perspective, the Church was well-established. Thus, this example of resistance towards the Church building program indicates a complicated existence within New Zealand.

Other newspapers throughout the 1950s were more measured and neutral when reporting the massive construction program of the Church following the Second World

¹⁵⁹ ‘Mormon Church at Springvale: Objections by Residents’, *Press*, 12 July 1958, pp. 8

¹⁶⁰ ‘Mormon Church at Springvale: Objections by Residents’, *Press*, 12 July 1958, pp. 8

¹⁶¹ ‘Mormon Church at Springvale: Objections by Residents’, *Press*, 12 July 1958, pp. 8

War. Most discussed the cost of these programs, with an estimated total of over £3 million spent within New Zealand just in this decade.¹⁶² The press did not report major concern from broader New Zealand society, although there were some minor, more localised objections, such as the citizens of Springvale discussed above. The mass building program, which included not only the Temple, Church College, and other buildings at Temple View, but also chapels throughout the country, was well publicised in New Zealand's press.¹⁶³ Interestingly, at least one 1955 *Press* article contextualised this mass program, by noting that it was being propagated throughout Oceania:

The present Mormon building project in the Pacific includes 38 chapels in Australia, 20 chapels and a high school in Samoa, 28 chapels and a college in Tonga, an additional 15 chapels in New Zealand, and a chapel and school in Fiji.

All this building is being carried out by voluntary labour supervised by missionaries from Mormon headquarters in the United States. The funds... have been subscribed by the Church's "tithing fund" - 10 percent of the net income of every Mormon Church in the world.¹⁶⁴

The building scheme throughout the Pacific would be completed through a combination of funds donated by the Church, but more importantly by the volunteer labour of members. This unique feature of the Church's program, arguably had a two-fold affect. Not only did the Church become strengthened locally through the spiritual dedication of its adherents, as shown by their physical labour, but it also enjoyed a level of publicity through the volunteerism that helped to build its sacred spaces.

¹⁶² 'Mormon Chapels for N.Z. Voluntary Labour to be Used', *Press*, 4 November 1958, pp. 2; 'Mormon Chapel to be Built at "Mona Vale"', *Press*, 2 August 1960, pp. 14; 'Mormon Church: Ambitious Building Scheme', *Otago Daily Times*, 14 October 1950, pp. 3; 'Mormon Church's Building Plans', *Press*, 10 December 1959, pp. 14

¹⁶³ 'Mormon Church in New Zealand: Building Programme Planned', *Press*, 14 October 1950, pp. 2; 'Mormon Church in N.Z.', *Press*, 23 November 1951, pp. 3; 'Mormon Church to Spend \$500,000 on Building in N.Z.', *Gisborne Herald*, 14 October 1950, pp. 7; 'New Mormon Chapel' *Press*, 18 April 1952, pp. 3; 'New Mormon Chapel', *Press*, 25 August 1960, pp. 18; 'Southernmost Chapel', *Press*, 13 1965, pp. 16

¹⁶⁴ 'Mormon Building Programme of £2,539,000 Started in N.Z.', *Press*, 30 December 1955, pp. 3

Mormon Yankees, 1950s-1960s

Perhaps the greatest improvement to the perceptions and representations of the Church in Australia was the success and popularity of the 'Mormon Yankees' basketball team. After the return of missionaries following the end of World War Two, the Church created a travelling basketball team of missionaries to play across the continent; these missionaries worked in parallel with more traditional proselytisation efforts.¹⁶⁵ This was done in an effort to be more appealing to the Australian public, who had an established fascination with sport, and at this point was largely unaware of the popularity of basketball in the United States and other parts of the world.¹⁶⁶ This strategy was not only utilised in Australia, as Mormon missionaries throughout the world incorporated athletic activities, such as baseball and basketball, into their proselytising efforts.¹⁶⁷ For some broader context, this was happening at a time when New Zealand and Australian attitudes towards the United States had begun to drastically shift in a more positive direction. In 1951, the three countries signed the ANZUS Treaty, which bound each of the signatories to a joint military protection of the Pacific.¹⁶⁸ As well as this, United States mass media

¹⁶⁵ Newton, *Southern Cross Saints*, pp. 66

¹⁶⁶ Newton, *Southern Cross Saints*, pp. 66

¹⁶⁷ David Noyce and Peggy Fletcher Stack, 'This Week in Mormon Land: Apostle Warns Against Letting Converts Join the Church Before They Are Ready', *The Salt Lake Tribune Website*, 11 July 2019, viewed 27/10/2020

<https://www.sltrib.com/religion/2019/07/11/this-week-mormon-land/>

Michael D. Quinn, 'The Mormon "Baseball Baptism" Era', *Sunstone Magazine*, Volume 16, Issue 7, December 1993, pp. 30-44

¹⁶⁸ Andrew Kelly, *ANZUS and the Early Cold War: Strategy and Diplomacy Between Australia, New Zealand, and the United States, 1945-1956*, Open Book Publishers, 2018; Andrew Kelly, 'Discordant Allies: Trans-Tasman Relations in the Aftermath of the ANZUS Treaty, 1951-1955', *Journal of Australian Studies*, Volume 41, Issue 1, 2017, pp. 81-95; Thomas Robb and David Gill, 'The ANZUS Treaty During the Cold War: A Reinterpretation of U.S. Diplomacy in the Southwest Pacific', *Journal of Cold War Studies*, Volume 17, Issue 4, 2015, pp. 109-157

and soft power had begun to infiltrate both Australia and New Zealand, and general cultural attitudes towards the US had started to positively pivot.¹⁶⁹

The Mormon Yankees basketball team was hugely successful in Australia, which garnered positive publicity for the Church, particularly when they assisted the Australian basketball team in preparation for the 1956 Melbourne Olympics.¹⁷⁰ The Mormon Yankees continued to tour the country until the 1960s; Brigham Young University Professor Fred E. Woods has argued that as a result of this there was a host of new conversions to the Church.¹⁷¹ These events have been memorialised in Australian history, with a film about the team, as well as written histories.¹⁷² The attitudes expressed in newspapers at the time were largely encouraging towards the team and the work of the Church to bring basketball to Australia.¹⁷³ For example, a 1953 article in Adelaide's *The News* playfully notes that a local team will 'test the strength of the American "invaders" the Mormon Yankees in the match of the night. The Mormons' entry into the league competition will give the game its greatest fillip since the new Australians arrived in

¹⁶⁹ Phillip Bell and Roger Bell (eds.), *Americanization and Australia*, Sydney: University of New South Wales Press, 1998; Ross Melnick, 'Part II: Banking on Australasia (1930-1982): Global Banks and U.S. Cinema Ownership in Australia and New Zealand' in *Hollywood's Embassies: How Movie Theaters Projected American Power Around the World*, New York: Columbia University Press, 2022, pp. 93-129

¹⁷⁰ Newton, *Southern Cross Saints*, pp. 67

¹⁷¹ Newton, *Southern Cross Saints*, pp. 205

¹⁷² 'Mormon Yankees', *ABC Radio National Website*, 20 May 2012, viewed 27/10/2020

<https://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/archived/spiritofthings/mormon-yankees/4010260>;

'Story of the Mormon Yankees Basketball Team Told in New Movie', *Church Newsroom Website*, 28 October 2016, viewed 27/10/2020

<https://news-au.churchofjesuschrist.org/article/story-of-the-mormon-yankees-basketball-team-told-in-new-movie?imageView=Spirit-of-the-Game-1.jpg> ; Darran Scott (writer and director), *Spirit of the Game*, October 2016, viewed 27/10/2020

<https://www.imdb.com/title/tt4947738/> ; Fred E. Woods, *Mormon Yankees: Giants on and Off the Court*, Utah: Cedar Fort, Inc., May 2012

¹⁷³ Newton, *Southern Cross Saints*, pp. 67, 205

1949.’¹⁷⁴ Likewise, a 1960 article in *The Canberra Times* states ‘the Mormon Yankees are reputed to be amongst the best ball handlers to tour Australia.’¹⁷⁵

Significantly, Mormon missionaries were the first to bring basketball to the Torres Strait Islands in 1960.¹⁷⁶ The importance of this has been discussed not only in contemporary news reports at the time but in later reminiscences.¹⁷⁷ For instance, a 2011 article in *The Torres News*, published on Thursday Island, discussed the release of the documentary *Mormon Yankees: Giants On and Off the Court*:

The local teams [helped] break down the racial barriers that existed in sport at the time... in the documentary, Hassan Bin Tahal tells how at that time white people were not allowed to play with Islanders. “No one had ever coached us because whites couldn’t play with us,” Mr. Bin Tahal said. Then in 1961 Thursday Island made its mark in sporting history when T.I. sent two men’s and women’s basketball teams, coached by the missionaries, to an Australian basketball tournament in Cairns. Mr Bin Tahal said Gary Blacker was one missionary who trained the locals. “We weren’t allowed to mix with white people much but when Gary came Gary broke that administration norm by teaching us.”¹⁷⁸

It is also interesting that these missionaries are remembered for breaking down ethnic divides within Australia, especially considering the long, complex history of racial hierarchies in Mormonism. Perhaps a reason the Church was willing to break these taboos was the fact that only two years earlier, Native Fijians were deemed by the First

¹⁷⁴ ‘Mormons to be Tested’, *The News (Adelaide, South Australia)*, Wednesday 28 April 1954, pp. 31

¹⁷⁵ ‘Yankees Play A.C.T. Tonight’, *The Canberra Times (Canberra, ACT)*, Friday 07 October 1960, pp. 24

¹⁷⁶ ‘Basketball History Preserved’, *The Torres News (Thursday Island, Queensland)*, Wednesday 11 May 2011, pp. 9

¹⁷⁷ ‘American Basketballers’, *The Torres News (Thursday Island, Queensland)*, Tuesday 21 March 1961, pp. 11 ; ‘Basketball History Preserved’, *The Torres News (Thursday Island, Queensland)*, Wednesday 11 May 2011, pp. 9; ‘1960s Team Theme for Motion Picture’, *Torres News (Thursday Island, Queensland)*, Wednesday 27 June 2007, pp. 14

¹⁷⁸ ‘Basketball History Preserved’, *The Torres News (Thursday Island, Queensland)*, Wednesday 11 May 2011, pp. 9

Presidency as ‘not of the negroid race’, and granted the right to the Priesthood.¹⁷⁹ It would be another four years before Indigenous Australians were permitted this, and not until 1978 that the ban on African people was lifted.¹⁸⁰ However, the fact that missionaries were beginning to proselyte, as well as teach basketball, to Torres Strait Islanders arguably indicates the Church was beginning to see Indigenous Australians as part of a broader Pacific ancestry, rather than a branch of the African diaspora, and thus eligible for full participation in the Church.

This pivot is important for several reasons. First, it shows a more thorough localisation of the Church to emerge within Australia, one which included First Nations people. Second, it shows a more staggered breaking of Mormonism’s strict racial hierarchies, one which featured Indigenous Australians within these more nuanced cosmological changes. Third, it presents the Church as somewhat more racially progressive than more mainstream Australian society during this period, particularly as the Church has been remembered by Torres Strait Islanders for their role in the integration of the basketball league, something previously undone.¹⁸¹ This situates the Mormon Church in a unique

¹⁷⁹ Barber, “Faith Across Cultures: Research on Mormonism in Oceania,” *Mormon Studies Review*, Volume 6, 2019, pp. 64

Griffin, ‘Indigenous Australians and Mormonism’, *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Volume 54, Issue 2, pp. 16

¹⁸⁰ Griffin, ‘Indigenous Australians and Mormonism’, *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Volume 54, Issue 2, pp. 17-19

¹⁸¹ As an important aside, Chris Dixon has emphasised the complexities of American race-relations within Australia, particularly the Second World War. Although a further discussion of Dixon’s work is outside of the scope of this dissertation, Dixon’s astutely claims that Australia was condemned by African American soldiers as ‘the bulwark of white supremacy’ due to its overt cultural and legal racism. Please see: Christ Dixon, ‘Confronting the ‘Bulwark of White Supremacy’: the African American Challenge to White Australia, 1941-1945’, *The Journal of African American History*, Volume 106, Issue 1, pp. 78-102; Chris Dixon, *African Americans and the Pacific War, 1941-1945: Race, Nationality, and the Fight for Freedom*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018

position given the broader eugenicist and segregationist nature of Australian society that was rampant during this period.

Religious-Based Anti-Mormonism, 1940s-1960s

This more positive publicity mirrors the steady growth and consolidation of the Church throughout Australia, especially through building programs and steady conversion rates. It should be noted, however, that going hand in hand with the new goodwill towards Mormons, due to the publicity garnered through the Mormon Yankees, was a lingering distrust and hostility towards the Church, missionaries, and Latter-day Saints expressed in the newspapers. This is evident in the tone taken in many unfriendly articles about the Church, its history, and doctrines. Continuing a trend from the nineteenth century, the most aggressively hostile depictions of the Latter-day Saints were either printed in the religious press or written by denominational preachers in mainstream media. For example, a 1953 article in *The Advocate*, the official newspaper of the Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne, contained a poem entitled 'The Ballades of the Heresiarchs.'

This read:

John Calvin, whose peculiar fad it was to call God murderous
Which further led that feverish cad, to burn alive the Servetus.
The horrible Bohemian Huss, the Tedious Wycliffe, where are they?
But where is old Nestorius? The wind has blown them all away.
The Kohen out of Novgorod, who argued from the Roman Jus
"Privata Fasta nihil ad Rem nisi sint de sacribus."
And Hume, who made a dreadful fuss, about the Resurrection Day
And said it was ridiculous – the wind has blown them all away.
Of Smith the gallant Mormon lad, that took of wives an over-plus
Johanna Southcott who was mad, and nasty Nietzsche who was worse.

Of Tolstoy, the Eccentric Russ, our strong Posterity shall say:

“Lord Jesus What are those to us? The wind has blown them all away!” (emphasis added)¹⁸²

Joseph Smith was here ranked with other so-called ‘heresiarchs’, those whose teachings have challenged mainstream Christianity throughout history and who, according to the author, was doomed to be consigned to the broader history of heresies. Smith’s place here, with the emphasis on polygamy, shows a view of the Latter-day Saints as heretics who did not belong to the broader Christian faith.

More concerned with debating and critiquing Mormon theology, however, were newspapers such as *Catholic Weekly*, published in Sydney. One such article from July 1952, states that Smith’s belief that he had seen God in vision and translated the Book of Mormon was a ‘fantastic claim, and it is impossible to take his word for it.’¹⁸³ Another was the 15th of May 1952 iteration of ‘The Question Box’ with Dr. Leslie Rumble, who also had a corresponding radio program. In this article, Rumble declares:

the Book of Mormon is a fraud imposed... by an American would-be evangelist named Joseph Smith... amongst its many other absurdities, it declares that, in 600 B.C., Israelite migrants found horses in America on arrival there... It is a shame that such good people should be so deceived and robbed of their true Christian inheritance.¹⁸⁴

As well as these critiques, and many more, Dr. Rumble claimed that ‘the Latter-day Saints are not above falsifying scripture.’¹⁸⁵ It is important to note here, however, that Dr. Rumble was an avid anti-Mormon campaigner, and published a plethora of pamphlets

¹⁸² ‘Ballade of the Heresiarchs’, *The Advocate*, 30 July 1953, pp. 10

¹⁸³ Dr. Leslie Rumble, ‘Claims of Mormons’ Founder “Fantastic”, *Catholic Weekly*, Sydney, New South Wales, 24 July 1952, pp. 3

¹⁸⁴ Dr. Leslie Rumble, ‘The Question Box: Unscientific Claim on Horses Exposes the “Book of Mormon”’, *Catholic Weekly*, 15 May 1952, pp. 2

¹⁸⁵ Dr. Leslie Rumble, ‘The Question Box: Unscientific Claim on Horses Exposes the “Book of Mormon”’, *Catholic Weekly*, 15 May 1952, pp. 2

that sought to discredit Church doctrines, history, and controversies.¹⁸⁶ Dr. Rumble was active for decades, and published his denouncements of Mormonism in various forums, including in newspapers and as tracts for the Catholic Truth Society of Britain and the Australian Catholic Truth Society; he was also a renowned lecturer, travelling to various Catholic congregations to condemn Mormonism.

As well as the work of Dr. Rumble, there were numerous other articles from newspapers such as Brisbane's *The Catholic Advocate* and Sydney's *The Catholic Freeman's Journal* and *The Catholic Press* that unceasingly criticised the Church and its adherents.¹⁸⁷ Thus, it is evident that whilst the Latter-day Saint Church and its members began to become more established in Australia, there were still those who were hostile to the faith, predominantly those writing in the Catholic Press. It could have perhaps been Catholicism's own non-majority existence within Australia that led to such open and public derision. As has been addressed by Geraldine Vaughan, Bruce Duncan, and Colin Fowler, anti-Catholic sentiment was existent in the Australian colonies and later federated nation.¹⁸⁸ Within this context, the aggressive denouncement from Dr. Rumble

¹⁸⁶ An enormous thank you to Dr. David Hilliard for both collecting these pamphlets and for his assistance in finding these sources at the Adelaide Theological Library.

Dr Leslie Rumble, *The Mormons*, London, England: Catholic Truth Society, Publication Date Unknown; Dr Leslie Rumble, *The Mormons, Or Latter-day Saints*, Melbourne, Victoria: The Australian Catholic Truth Society, April 1953; Dr. Leslie Rumble, *The Mormons (The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints)*, Melbourne, Victoria: The Australian Catholic Truth Society, January 1967

¹⁸⁷ 'A Stupid Nation', *The Catholic Press*, Sydney, New South Wales, 01 March 1923, pp. 19; 'Eve and the Elders', *The Catholic Advocate*, Brisbane, Queensland, 21 August 1924, pp. 23; 'The Book of Mormon', *Catholic Weekly*, Sydney, New South Wales, 8 February 1945, pp. 13; 'A Mormon's Challenge', *Catholic Weekly*, Sydney, New South Wales, 18 February 1943, pp. 10

¹⁸⁸ B.F. Duncan, *Crusade or Conspiracy: Catholics and the Anti-Communist Struggle in Australia*, Sydney, Australia: University of New South Wales Press, 2001; Colin Fowler, 'Anti-Catholic Polemic at the Origins of Australia's First Catholic Newspaper', *Journal of the Australian Catholic Historical Society*, Volume 37, Issue 2, 2016, pp. 147-160; Geraldine Vaughan, *Anti-Catholicism and British Identities in Britain, Canada, and Australia, 1880s-1920s*, Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2022

and the broader Catholic media could have been to align themselves with the wider Christian community within Australia, and reduce their own marginalisation.

Growth of the Australian Church, 1940s-1960s

Perhaps most prevalent throughout the media's portrayal of Mormonism during this period, was a neutral discussion of the growth of the Church within Australia. Newspaper articles not only discussed the increase in converts and proselytes, but also the way in which the Church had become more physically entrenched into the Australian psyche and society through their massive building programs. In 1949, for example, Broken Hill's *Barrier Miner* noted that there were three thousand Latter-day Saints in Australia, leading the State Legislative Assembly of New South Wales to incorporate the Church, meaning that not only was it officially recognised by the State, but that it qualified for tax-exemption status.¹⁸⁹ Other articles mentioned when ecclesiastical leaders visited members of the Church, as well as how many Latter-day Saints were in various states.¹⁹⁰ Similarly, in 1954, it was announced in Brisbane's *Sunday Mail* that a Latter-day Saint chapel was to be built in Toowoomba, due to 'an intensive door-to-door evangelisation campaign since 1950 [that] had brought in many new members.'¹⁹¹ This same year, the *Brisbane Telegraph* reported that Church ecclesiastical leader F.H. Edwards had claimed that 'hospitals, homes for the aged and colleges would one day be formed... in

¹⁸⁹ '3000 Mormons in Australia', *Barrier Miner*, Broken Hill, New South Wales, 19 March 1949, pp. 4

¹⁹⁰ 'Church Leaders Visits 400 W.A. Mormons', *The West Australian*, Perth, Western Australia, 14 November 1952, pp. 7; 'Mormon Leader Flies In', *The Canberra Times*, Australian Capital Territory, 04 March 1965, pp. 10; 'Queensland has 400 Mormons', *Brisbane Telegraph*, Queensland, 4 January 1952, pp. 3; 'U.S. Mormon Leader to Visit Adelaide', *The Advertiser*, Adelaide, South Australia, 11 May 1949, pp. 7

¹⁹¹ 'Mormons to Build Here', *Sunday Mail*, Brisbane, Queensland, 14 February 1954, pp. 7

Australia.¹⁹² In 1954, Adelaide's *The Advertiser* wrote that the Church had announced the construction of two chapels in South Australia, 'financed from America.'¹⁹³

Another article published in August 1958 in *The Australian Women's Weekly*, noted that every week Latter-day Saint 'housewives swap their brooms and dust-pans for wheelbarrows, brick hods, and shovels to become builders' laborers for the day.'¹⁹⁴ This article further states that the £104,000 chapel was paid 70% by Salt Lake City and 30% donated by the Australian Saints; part of this would be paid by the volunteer labour of local members.¹⁹⁵ This article is important to emphasise as it contains the surprise that Latter-day Saint women would be involved with the physical construction of their place of worship; this image of women providing manual labour ran contrary to a hegemonic gendered image of Australian women, around the idealised 'nuclear family.'¹⁹⁶

This growth is reflected in two particularly insightful articles appear in the mid to later 1960s in *The Canberra Times*. In 1965, an article advertised that the chapel built in the Canberra suburb of O'Connor, which took two years to construct at a cost of £125,000, was open to the public for viewing.¹⁹⁷ This opening of Latter-day Saint sacred places to the broader public has been utilised by the Church in order to dispel hostilities and

¹⁹² 'Church's Big Plans', *Brisbane Telegraph*, Queensland, 277 November 1954, pp. 2

¹⁹³ 'Plan for Two Mormon Churches', *The Advertiser*, Adelaide, South Australia, February 1954, pp. 4

¹⁹⁴ Annette Fielding-Jones, 'Women Labor to Build Church', *The Australian Women's Weekly*, 6 August 1958, pp. 19

¹⁹⁵ Fielding-Jones, 'Women Labor to Build Church', *The Australian Women's Weekly*, 6 August 1958, pp. 19

¹⁹⁶ Catherine Kevin, 'Maternity and Freedom: Australian Feminist Encounters with the Reproductive Body', *Australian Feminist Studies*, Volume 20, Issue 46, 2005, pp. 3-15; Elaine Martin, 'Social Work, the Family, and Women's Equality in Post-War Australia', *Women's History Review*, Volume 12, Issue 3, 2003, pp. 445-447

¹⁹⁷ 'Around the Churches: Mormon Church Completed', *The Canberra Times*, 26 January 1965, pp. 15

suspicion. Though a chapel functions differently to a Temple in Latter-day Saint cosmology, with the former being open to the public and the latter having restricted access, the utilisation of open houses is nonetheless important. Moreover, in 1967 article from the *Canberra Times* illustrates this theme of Mormonism's ambiguous representation in Australia. Entitled 'The Mormons and Canberra', this article discusses that although the Church had only been present in the Canberra-Queanbeyan area for four years, due to extensive evangelism 'almost everyone in Canberra has... met a Mormon.'¹⁹⁸ The author claims that through the missionaries utilisation of door-to-door proselytising, as well as public 'archaeological' exhibits that discussed the link between the Book of Mormon and pre-Columbian Native Americans, it had become 'the most enthusiastically evangelical and rapidly developing religious phenomena.'¹⁹⁹ This article notes that in 1963 there were only two missionaries and three Latter-day Saint families in the Canberra-Queanbeyan area, four years later the number of converts had increased dramatically, with ten missionaries working the region and over one hundred faithful members. The construction of the first chapel in the ACT was similarly noted.

Yet, the author was also dubious about the Church, its history and doctrines; they wrote

The reasons for this momentum are hard to comprehend. Caught in the twentieth century with a theology which might well have been outmoded by even the last century's standards, Mormon thought is fundamentalist, blatantly anthropomorphic, and polytheistic. The stigma of Joseph Smith's golden plates and 'magic spectacles', and the refusal of the Church to grant the negro its priesthood or religious authority, add to the stereotype of the Mormon as anti-intellectual, fiercely independent of social responsibility, and racially discriminating...

¹⁹⁸ 'The Mormons and Canberra', *Woroni*, Canberra, Australian Capital Territory, 222 June 1967, pp. 3

¹⁹⁹ 'The Mormons and Canberra', *Woroni*, Canberra, Australian Capital Territory, 222 June 1967, pp. 3

Aboriginals, incidentally, are not excluded from the priesthood, and in fact, have joined the Mormon Church ... in northern Queensland and the country areas of New South Wales. Canberra Branch has one part-Aboriginal family...

Mormonism has become more of a public matter, and the many doctrinal points which have long been neglected have now become talking points at last...²⁰⁰

This excerpt shows a number of key themes. For one, it is evidence that the more controversial aspects of Mormonism were known to Australian media; the racially-charged doctrine of the 'curse of Cain' is discussed in detail. This article also notes the hierarchies of ethnic groups within Mormon cosmology; as well as mentioning Indigenous Australians, the author further examines the Church's interactions with Native Americans and Oceanic peoples. It comments that the first Australian Latter-day Saints had recently graduated from various universities, an important turning point in Australian-Mormon history. Yet, the author is quick to mention the fact that the Church's controversial doctrines and structure are well-known throughout Australia. This article is thus a key source for evaluating the Church's status by the end of 1960s Australia. While it was becoming more permanent through building programs, evangelisation efforts, and increased converts, there was still a broader societal and media-entrenched stigma surrounding Mormon theology, history, and contemporary controversies.

Conclusion

As this chapter has argued, from the beginning of the twentieth-century, Mormonism within Australia and New Zealand took vastly different trajectories. The Church struggled to gain a foothold within Australia, although chapels were built throughout the continent

²⁰⁰ 'The Mormons and Canberra', *Woroni*, Canberra, Australian Capital Territory, 222 June 1967, pp. 3

from the early 1900s. The activity of anti-Mormon clergy also featured in Australian newspapers in the early 1910s, further spreading distrust amongst the population. Contrastingly, in New Zealand, though the Church was not warmly received, its perception as a 'Māori Church' meant the representation of the organisation in the press and by broader society was more positive, though still tinged with hostility. As explored in the previous chapter, the view that Mormonism was part of a 'civilising' mission of Māori, though this was not necessarily how the Church or Māori Mormons saw themselves, meant New Zealand press begrudgingly had a neutral or positive view of the religion. More broadly speaking culturally, the attempted censorship and release of *A Mormon Maid* in 1917 further added to the agitated public sentiment within Australia and New Zealand. The sensationalist nature of the film, presented as historically accurate, drew large crowds to cinemas and resulted in a mass of reactions from the media and wider population. This movie, and the subsequent representation of Mormonism within Australia and New Zealand, is an important case study in the overarching themes of this chapter, that is the suspicion with which the Church was viewed by the general populace, print media, and other religions.

For these reasons, the Church struggled to grow within Australia, and to a lesser extent New Zealand, during the early twentieth century; despite this, there was some sustained increase. In particular, the building programs in the early twentieth century both represented and encouraged a solidification and localisation of Mormonism within these nations. This is even though there was still a plethora of anti-Mormon hostility that marginalised the Church and insisted on its status as an 'outsider' religion. This was further accentuated by the evacuation of missionaries due to World War Two, which once

again hindered the growth of the Mormon population but did make the Australian and New Zealand Church become more independent, as local Mormons were given leadership responsibilities that had previously been held exclusively by American proselytes.

After World War Two, the Church began to be more solidified once again through the construction of buildings and the resumption of evangelisation. The Church in Australia also became more known and recognisable due to the efforts of the 'Mormon Yankees' basketball team, a proselytising tool which gave the Church positive publicity and cemented it into the Australian popular consciousness. Despite this, it is evident that Australia was generally more hostile to the Latter-day Saints than New Zealand during this period. Nevertheless, the representation, perceptions, and reception of the Church was at-times similar, as shall be further discussed in the next chapter. Yet, by the 1960s, it is evident that the Church had become entrenched within both Australian and New Zealand national consciousness, albeit for different reasons. This pivot is important, as by the late twentieth century, Temples would be built throughout both Australia and New Zealand.

CHAPTER III

‘Let No Unclean Person Or Thing Ever Enter’¹:

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The First Temples: Hamilton, North Island &

Carlingford, Sydney, 1950s-2010s

Introduction

On the 20th of April 1958, Church President David O. McKay stood before thousands of Latter-day Saints from across New Zealand, Australia, and the Pacific, and dedicated the Hamilton, New Zealand Temple. Overjoyed Mormons saw this as a historical experience, the fulfilment of prophecy, and the result of financial sacrifice and physical commitment. As will be explored throughout this chapter, the construction of Temples in both New Zealand and later in Sydney, Australia represented a fundamental shift in the history of Mormonism in the antipodes. Members could now receive what is believed to be essential ordinances that would allow them to gain salvation in the next life. It was also a physical representation that the Church’s doctrine of the Gathering had officially come to an end. With this, a new era of Mormonism’s existence began, which emphasised the building of

¹ David O. McKay, ‘Dedicatory Prayer – Hamilton New Zealand Temple’, *Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* Website, Recorded 20 April 1958
<https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/temples/details/hamilton-new-zealand-temple/prayer/1958-04-20?lang=eng>

Zion wherever people were converted, rather than a migration to Utah. The following two chapters explore not only the construction of Temples and influence of this on the historical trajectory of Mormonism, but also how the building of Temples was represented by New Zealand and Australian society. As with the previous chapters, this will include looking at reactions from across a spectrum of religious leaders and institutions, as well as broader political, media, and grassroots responses. Throughout this, the themes of localisation, syncretism, and entanglement, in the stories of these physical structures, will be emphasised.

As the Temple is only accessible to members of the Church who align themselves with its teachings, there have been segments of society who have been unhappy with the closed nature of the buildings. To offset this public suspicion and hostility, the Church has conducted 'Open Houses' at completed Temples before the dedication by ecclesiastical leaders. These events have traditionally been advertised in newspapers and by missionaries. The following chapters will examine these advertising campaigns in the relevant New Zealand and Australian cities, as well as reactions to them. Similarly, it will contain interviews and accounts by non-Latter-day Saints who attended the Open Days. Although not in oral history form, the experiences of Latter-day Saints themselves will also be presented in order to understand how the building of Temples not only represented a pivot in the historical trajectory of Mormonism within Australia and New Zealand, but also how and why the Latter-day Saints view themselves as a religious minority within these nations. The reaction to the construction of Temples will indicate the complexities surrounding the changing Australian and New Zealand culture, especially in regard to religious plurality and secularisation. This chapter will thus seek

to address how broader Australian and New Zealand society has successfully or unsuccessfully adapted to the presence of this more visible, anchored religious minority.

Running parallel to this analysis will be an examination of how Temples and the sacred/secret ceremonies have been commented on by newspapers and other religious organisations after the temples were closed to the public. This is complimented by the most prominent theme across the next two chapters: how the physicality of the Temples represents a more thorough localisation of the Church within these nations. It should be noted, however that this Temple building could arguably be read as the Church's attempt to assert itself more forcefully into the increasingly secular, multicultural, and religiously pluralistic nations. As such, this chapter will seek to present not only the shift in lived identity of Australian and New Zealand Mormons due to the construction of Temples, but also how the solidification of the Church in these countries has been received by broader society.

This chapter contributes to two major discussions in Mormon history. The first is how the New Zealand and Australian Temples are unique within the broader history of Latter-day Saint Temples. These chapters will explore in detail how the construction of Temples within both New Zealand and Australia represents a fundamental pivot in the history, doctrine, and identity of the Latter-day Saints within these nations. These will similarly examine how Temples have been received by non-Mormon members of the public, as well as other religious groups and leaders. Scholarship regarding the Church's early Temples emphasises numerous key themes, including the symbolism of the Temple as a bridge between the divine and temporal, and the Temple as a physical manifestation of a

minority spiritual community.² Other literature explores the changing place of the Temple in Latter-day Saint history and experience, the decline of ritual nudity in ceremonies, the way in which Temple Garments are utilised as an object of identity cohesion, and the ‘sacred code’ of the Mormon Dedicatory Prayers.³ In particular, the way in which Dedicatory Prayers, which are uttered by some of the most senior ecclesiastical leaders, serve as a cultural text that can be analysed; this will be examined within both this chapter and the next. Moreover, the way in which the Temple becomes a physical intersection of Latter-day Saint community and broader society is articulated by David Scott, in his article ‘Constructing Sacred History: Multi-Media Narratives and the Discourse of “Museumness” at Mormon Temple Square.’⁴ This particular theme permeates this chapter; the way in which the Hamilton and Sydney Temples represent this dichotomy, of being a physical representation of the Church’s localisation and syncretism within these nations, but is also a flashpoint of marginalisation.

This chapter is also placed within the broader scholarship of sacred architecture within both New Zealand and Australia. Existing literature focusses on the way in which the sacred architecture of minority religions has, like Latter-day Saint Temples, become an

² See, for example:

Michael Homer, *Joseph’s Temple: The Dynamic Between Freemasonry and Mormonism*, Salt Lake City, Utah: The University of Utah Press, 2014; David J. Howlett, *Kirtland Temple: The Biography of a Shared Sacred Space*, Baltimore: University of Illinois Press, 2014; Nathan Jones, ‘The Ancient Order and the New Measures: Early Mormon Temple Worship and Finneyite Revivalism’, *Journal of Mormon History*, Volume 42, Issue 2, 2016, pp. 110-138; Melvin Johnson, ‘Kirtland, Nauvoo, and Zodiac: A Commentary on Early Mormon Temples’, *The John Whitmer Historical Association Journal*, Volume 39, Issue 2, 2019, pp. 52-74; V. Prilutskiy, ‘The Ideology of The Early Latter-day Saints and its Reflection in the Symbolism of the Mormon Temples in the 1830s and 1840s’, *Вестник Брянского государственного университета*, Volume 51, Issue 1, pp. 205-219

³ Powell, ‘Covenant Cloaks: Mormon Temple Garments in the Light of Identity Theory’, *Material Religion*, Volume 12, Issue 4, 2016, pp. 457-475

⁴ David Scott, ‘Constructing Sacred History: Multi-Media Narratives and the Discourse of “Museumness” at Mormon Temple Square’, *Journal of Media and Religion*, Volume 6, Issue 3, 2007, pp. 201-218

intersection of localisation and marginalisation. New Zealand scholarship of religious architecture, focusses on the way in which religious communities, in particular ethnic-religious minorities, have situated themselves within New Zealand society.⁵ Similarly, in Australia, the majority of this scholarship seeks to locate the complexities of the sacred places of non-Christian religions, such as Islam, Hinduism, and Judaism; the overall themes can be applied to the reaction to and reception of Latter-day Saint Temples.⁶ In particular, minority religions have utilised sacred architecture as a physical representation of their localisation and visibility within these multicultural nations. This is especially relevant after the end of the White Australia Policy, when multiculturalism became official government policy. As will be seen, there has been considerable hostility towards the building of Temples in New Zealand and Australia, just as with the construction of other minority-religious structures: the construction of later Temples will

⁵ See, for example:

Diedre Brown, 'The Māori Response to Gothic Architecture', *Architectural History*, Volume 43, 2000, pp. 253-270; Erich Kolig and Malcolm Voyce, *Muslim Integration: Pluralism and Multiculturalism in New Zealand and Australia*, Lanham: The Rowman and Littlefield Publishing Group, 2016; Bill McKay, 'Maori Architecture: Transforming Western Notions of Architecture', *Fabrications: The Journal of Architectural Historians, Australia and New Zealand*, Volume 14, Issue 1-2, 2004, pp. 1-12; Jeffrey Sissons, 'From Post to Pillar: God-Houses and Social Fields in Nineteenth-Century Rarotonga', *Journal of Material Culture*, Volume 12, Issue 1, 2007, pp. 47-63; Jeffrey Sissons, 'The Traditionalism of the Māori Meeting House', *Oceania*, Volume 69, Issue 1, 1998, pp. 36-46; Richard Sundt, 'Reconstruction of a Carved Māori Church: Controversy and Creativity at Manutuke, 1849-63', *Journal of the Polynesian Society*, Volume 117, Issue 3, 2008 pp. 223-266

⁶ See, for example:

Katharine Bartsch, 'Building Identity in the Colonial City: the Case of the Adelaide Mosque', *Contemporary Islam*, Volume 9, Issue 3, 2015, pp. 247-270; Jennifer Clark, "'The Special Shell": The Church Building and the Embodiment of Memory', *Journal of Religious History*, Volume 31, Issue 1, 2007, pp. 59-77; Elizabeth Coleman and Kevin White (eds.), *Negotiating the Sacred: Blasphemy and Sacrilege in a Multicultural Society*, Canberra, Australia: Australian National University Press, 2006; Ursula de Jong, 'Designing Australia's Sacred Spaces and Religious Buildings: Past, Present, and Future', *Architecture Australia*, Volume 108, Issue 3, 2019, pp. 13-24; Paul Hogben, 'Coal, Steel, and the Holy Cross: Post-War Churches and Chapels of the Hunter Region, NSW', *Fabrications: The Journal of Architectural Historians, Australia and New Zealand*, Volume 32, Issue 2, 2022, pp. 246-271; Nirukshi Perera, *Negotiating Linguistic and Religious Diversity: A Tamil Hindu Temple in Australia*, London, England and New York, New York; Routledge Publishing, 2022; Julie Rudner, Fatemeh Shahani, and Trevor Hogan, 'Islamic Architectures of Self-Inclusion and Assurance in a Multicultural Society', *Fabrications: The Journal of Architectural Historians, Australia and New Zealand*, Volume 30, Issue 2, 2020, pp. 153-175; Peter Scriver, 'Mosques, Ghantowns, and Cameleers in the Settlement History of Colonial Australia', *Fabrications: The Journal of Architectural Historians, Australia and New Zealand*, Volume 13, Issue 2, 2004, pp. 19-41

thus be placed within the broader history of religious architecture. The construction of Latter-day Saint Temples will be contextualised within broader disdain and protest directed towards the construction of places of worship for other religious minorities.

Hamilton Temple and Church College, North Island, New Zealand

Completed 1958

On the 20th April 1958, the first Latter-day Saint Temple in the Southern Hemisphere was completed in Hamilton, North Island of New Zealand. Built almost entirely by volunteer labour, particularly Māori and Pacific Islander members, it was dedicated by then Prophet of the Church David O. McKay. Although clouds threatened to break, the rain did not pour on the thousands of Latter-day Saints gathered to hear the voice of their prophet, to consecrate their sacred space. Within the Dedicatory Prayer, President McKay stated ‘we express gratitude that to these fertile Islands Thou didst guide descendants of Father Lehi, and has enabled them to prosper... and become associated in history with leading and influential nations among mankind.’⁷ McKay further prayed that God would ‘look with favour upon the Governor-General representing as he does the Crown and Parliament of the British Government. Guide also the Prime Minister and members of the General Assembly. Enlightened by Thy spirit, may they.... see Mormonism in the true light of the Gospel.’⁸ McKay further expressed thanks ‘for the Constitution of the United States

⁷ McKay, ‘Dedicatory Prayer – Hamilton New Zealand Temple’, *Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints Website*, Recorded 20 April 1958

⁸ McKay, ‘Dedicatory Prayer – Hamilton New Zealand Temple’, *Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints Website*, Recorded 20 April 1958

of America', which he professed was the only country in which the restoration of the gospel could have occurred.

This was a momentous occasion for members of the Church in the Pacific. No longer would faithful members have to travel to Hawai'i in order to receive Temple ordinances for themselves and deceased loved ones. Previously, the distance and cost of travelling to Hawai'i meant that the majority of Latter-day Saints within Oceania were unable to make the journey. Thus, according to Mormon cosmology, the necessary ordinances of salvation were not readily available for either themselves or their deceased family. Cosmologically, this meant that the opportunity for full salvation, with the attendant blessings and sanctity, would not be able to be granted until the next life. With the building of the Hamilton Temple, however, the distance for Oceanic members of the Church greatly decreased; now the pilgrimage, whilst still a struggle for most Australian and Pacific Islander members, was much more achievable. In the succeeding decades, Latter-day Saints from New Zealand, Australia, Samoa, Tonga, the Cook Islands, Vanuatu, and New Caledonia made pilgrimage to the New Zealand Temple.

It is important here to note that even in the decade just before the Temple was announced and construction began in Hamilton, a handful of New Zealanders travelled to either the United States or Hawai'i in order to receive their Temple ordinances. For instance, Henry and Rangie Davies sold their home to finance their pilgrimage to Utah.⁹ Newton notes that in early 1951, New Zealand Latter-day Saint Mick Stinson

⁹ Newton, *Tiki and Temple*, pp. 238

asked [Mission] President Young his attitude towards Latter-day Saints moving permanently to the States. Young advised him to go and receive his temple ordinances but then return to serve in the mission. President Young reported to the First Presidency that he was discouraging immigration to America, and was assured that this policy accorded with instructions given by the First Presidency in all presidents of foreign missions. The literal phase of the Mormon gathering was over, and the missions needed to grow and gain strength in the nations of the world.¹⁰

This information reveals several significant themes. Though there were still members of the Church in New Zealand who desired to immigrate, this was discouraged by the mission president, who was reassured by higher-up ecclesiastical leaders that this was the correct position to take. Although grassroots members desired to continue ‘the Gathering’ in Zion, this was explicitly halted by American-based Church leaders as part of a worldwide policy.¹¹

While the Temple is the major building that will be discussed in this section, the account will extend to the construction of the broader Temple View Village, which included a school, chapel, residential accommodation, and a grocer. This is not the first historical attempt to understand the importance of the Latter-day Saint Temple in New Zealand. In 2014, Newton published *Tiki and Temple* which describes, from a faithful Latter-day Saint perspective, the more minute details of the construction of the Temple. This includes the Church’s announcement of the Temple, demographics of labour missionaries during the 1950s, government policies, council approval, the Open House, and the eventual dedication of the sacred site. I build on Newton’s work, bringing fresh evidence to her account. Whilst Newton’s book provides essential information and is ground-breaking in

¹⁰ Newton, *Tiki and Temple*, pp. 238-9

¹¹ Newton, *Tiki and Temple*, pp. 239

its scope, it is written as a largely faith-promoting, though certainly not polemical, historical narrative for the Mormon community.

In *Tiki and Temple*, Newton details the struggles that the New Zealand Saints had in getting approval from the government. She argues that after World War II there was a concentrated New Zealand media campaign against the Church.¹² This was based on newspaper articles published in the United Kingdom, but reprinted in New Zealand, about the apparent institution of 'white slavery' that existed amongst the British Mormons.¹³ This concern about 'white slavery' amongst the Latter-day Saints was a common paranoia in broader Australian and New Zealand society from the late nineteenth century, as discussed previously.¹⁴ As explored in the previous chapter, it is likely this fear around sexual slavery was fuelled or at least contextualised by the high profile campaign against the perceived threat in the United States. Duque and Merodio articulate that this fervour was indeed international, with anti-sexual trafficking of women becoming a prominent social issue in the United Kingdom during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century; thus, this projection onto Mormonism of white slavery is better understood in this historical moment.¹⁵

¹² Newton, *Tiki and Temple*, pp. 155

¹³ Newton, *Tiki and Temple*, pp. 155

¹⁴ 'Mormon Slavery', *Newcastle Morning Herald and Miners' Advocate (New South Wales)*, Monday 10 March 1884, pp. 4; 'Mormon Slavery', *The Albury Banner and Wodonga Express (New South Wales)*, Friday 09 May 1884, pp. 5

'Slavery and Mormonism', *The Inquirer and Commercial News (Perth, Western Australia)*, Wednesday 05 June 1861, pp. 3; 'The Mormons', *Williamstown Chronicle (Victoria)*, Saturday 04 July 1874, pp. 3; 'The Mormon Difficulty', *South Australian Register (Adelaide, South Australia)*, Friday 14 May 1858; 'The Mormon Exodus', *Bell's Life in Sydney and Sporting Reviewer (New South Wales)*, Saturday 24 November 1855, pp. 2; 'The Mormon Question', *The Launceston Examiner (Tasmania)*, Wednesday 02 March 1881, pp. 1

Newton, *Tiki and Temple*, pp. 155

¹⁵ Merodio and Duque further argue that this anti-trafficking movement combined with and was informed by the success of the Civil War in the United States as well as the rise of feminism in both America and Britain

Such claims, although vehemently denied by members of the Church, particularly through letters to the editors of prominent newspapers, did have an effect on the everyday lives of Latter-day Saints in New Zealand.¹⁶ Police officers attended meetings, and demanded lists of members from ecclesiastical leaders to compare to migration patterns. By the turn of the 1950s, anti-Mormon fervour died down, but an understanding of this affair is important for a sense of the atmosphere in which the Church sought to build a Temple.¹⁷ Though the construction of the Temple would anchor the Latter-day Saint community in New Zealand to their religion and nation, and result in a more thorough localisation of the religion, this occurred amidst suspicion and hostility that the Church approached the New Zealand government to establish a Temple.

Due to the air of mistrust around Latter-day Saints, permission to construct the Temple took several years to obtain. One of the major reasons was that the Church struggled to find appropriate land for the Temple. Ideally, ecclesiastical leaders wanted to build the Temple close to the already existing Church College of New Zealand, which had been constructed near Hamilton on the North Island in the early 1950s. However, the land surrounding the College was owned by the Murray family, who had already declined to sell the land.¹⁸ When President David O. McKay visited New Zealand in 1955 to consecrate the Church College, he and Elder Mendenhall visited the area. According to Brian Hunt,

Guiomar Merodio and Elena Duque, 'Sex Trafficking of Women: Civil Society Activism Against Sexual Slavery Between the 19th and Early 20th Century', *Historia Social y de La Educacion*, Volume 10, Issue 2, 2021, pp. 109-133

¹⁶ Newton, *Tiki and Temple*, pp. 155-6

¹⁷ Newton, *Tiki and Temple*, pp. 156

¹⁸ Brian W. Hunt, *Zion In New Zealand: A History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in New Zealand 1854 – 1977 (Masters Thesis)*, Church College of New Zealand, Temple View, New Zealand, 1977, pp. 81

President McKay reportedly stated to Mendenhall ‘in an almost prophetic tone’ that ‘this is the place to build the Temple.’¹⁹ Following McKay’s’ departure, an agreement was reached for the Church to purchase the land.²⁰ However, the local council rejected the proposed sale. Although Brian Hunt, in his Masters Thesis about the Church’s history in New Zealand, does not expand on this event, it can be assumed that this hostility was part of a general lack of trust towards the Church.²¹

Although the local land council rejected the sale, the Minister for Land personally approved the project after touring the area.²² It is not clear why the Temple was initially rejected whilst the College was approved, yet it is arguably due to the secretness of the Temple in comparison to the openly educational aims of the College. Furthermore, the College had always aimed, and succeeded in, providing education to primarily Māori and Pacific Islander youth.²³ As explored by Tereapii Solomon in his Masters Thesis for The University of Waikato, Māori and Pacific Islander youth who attended Church College performed at higher levels in various pedagogical metrics and graduated at higher rates compared to their ethnic counterparts in secondary education throughout New Zealand.²⁴ Furthermore, the success of the previously-operational Māori Agricultural College, discussed in the previous chapter, arguably tempered the hostility towards the new

¹⁹ Hunt, *Zion in New Zealand*, pp. 81

²⁰ Hunt, *Zion in New Zealand*, pp. 81

²¹ Hunt, *Zion in New Zealand*, pp. 81

²² Hunt, *Zion in New Zealand*, pp. 81

²³ Tereapii Solomon, ‘A Life-History Analysis of Achievement of Māori and Pacific Island Students at the Church College of New Zealand (Thesis, Maste of Education (Med)), The University of Waikato, Hamilton, New Zealand, retrieved from <https://researchcommons.waikato.ac.nz/handle/10289/2272>

²⁴ Solomon, ‘A Life-History Analysis of Achievement of Māori and Pacific Island Students at the Church College of New Zealand’ (Thesis, Maste of Education (Med)), The University of Waikato, pp. 1-2, 10-12

Church College, whilst the exclusivity of the Temple likely made the local council initially hostile.

After the successful purchase of the land, the Church announced the proposal to build to the New Zealand Latter-day Saints during the April 1955 *Hau Tui*.²⁵ According to Hunt, when Elder Beisinger presented the plans to the gathered members of the Church, he requested their assistance in building the sacred edifice.²⁶ Over four thousand members raised their right hand in support of the proposal, pledging their time, labour, and resources to help build the Temple.²⁷ By the end of 1955, plans for the Temple had been sent from Church headquarters and approved by the New Zealand government.²⁸ The ground-breaking occurred early the next year attended by multiple ecclesiastical and political leaders within New Zealand, as well as from Church headquarters.²⁹

At the ground-breaking, McKay blessed the land, workers, and materials, as well as laid a cornerstone with historically relevant artefacts.³⁰ Within the Temple, a bronze box was placed. This contained the Holy Bible, English and Māori translations of the Book of Mormon, the Doctrine and Covenants and Pearl of Great Price (other Latter-day Saint scriptures), four issues of the Church's Māori newspaper *Te Karere*, and a newspaper article about President McKay's visit.³¹ This box also had information about the ground breaking ceremony, an issue of *The Improvement Era* (a previously published monthly

²⁵ Hunt, *Zion in New Zealand*, pp. 81

²⁶ Hunt, *Zion in New Zealand*, pp. 81

²⁷ Hunt, *Zion in New Zealand*, pp. 81

²⁸ Hunt, *Zion In New Zealand*, pp. 82

²⁹ Hunt, *Zion In New Zealand*, pp. 82

³⁰ Hunt, *Zion In New Zealand*, pp. 82

³¹ Hunt, *Zion In New Zealand*, pp. 82

Church magazine), the history of the Church College, and a chronological report that detailed the development of the Temple.³² These artefacts, that have been preserved within the physical edifice of the building, indicate a number of key elements. Most significantly, it shows the duality of the Church within New Zealand: whilst still a fundamentally American Church, the localisation of the Church is also clear, as evidenced by the inclusion of numerous Māori-language items, including scripture. It also showed the connection between the Church and broader New Zealand society, as can be gleaned from the newspaper article regarding the Temple's ground-breaking. The actual ceremony itself had multiple prayers, including from Alex Wishart and Oliver Ahmu, who represented the Latter-day Saints in Tonga and Samoa respectively; again, this speaks to the broader Pacific-Mormon connection, anchored by the New Zealand Temple.³³

As well as the response of Church members around the construction of the Temple, there were also numerous newspaper articles within New Zealand that announced the construction of the sacred site. These sources are essential in examining how the construction and Open Day of the Temple were received by broader society. For instance, an article for *New Zealand Truth* in November 1956 recorded that the Temple cost nine-and-a-half million dollars; the cost of the building was critically reported upon.³⁴ The author described in vivid detail the construction of the Temple:

³² Hunt, *Zion In New Zealand*, pp. 82

³³ Newton, *Tiki and Temple*, pp. 251

³⁴ 'Building Project Is Costing 9.5m. Dollars', *New Zealand Truth*, Tuesday 20 November, 1956, pp. 24

It is built, like all Mormon tabernacles, on what is believed to be the ancient temple of King Solomon. One of its chief features will be a huge stainless steel baptismal font suspended from 12 bronze oxen. The building will be five storeys high and contain 25 separate rooms and chambers.³⁵

They argued that 'the Church is well endowed, not through gifts, but because of the self-denial of its members.'³⁶ The article explored the fact that the Church had continued to grow in New Zealand, claiming the general population was largely unaware of this growth:

Today one-twelfth of the Māori population are Mormons and there are over 14,500 adherents of the Church in New Zealand, one-third of them Europeans. Mormon missionaries in New Zealand admit they find many Māori's peculiarly receptive to their teaching. One explanation is that the Mormon gospel, and the way Mormon missionaries go about their work, are in accordance with ancient Māori prophecy and belief.³⁷

It detailed Mormon cosmology in relation to Māori and other Polynesian peoples, including the way in which Latter-day Saint cosmology links these groups with Native Americans and Ancient Israelites.³⁸ However, they were quick to critique this: 'leaders of the Mormon Church who are here have... only an elementary knowledge of the old Māori traditions.'³⁹

This article finished with the author asking Church leader Ariel S. Ballif, who had agreed to be interviewed, 'how has New Zealand treated the Mormons?' Ballif replied that 'he has only one complaint. The Mormons are not allowed to broadcast. The [New Zealand]

³⁵ 'Building Project Is Costing 9.5m. Dollars', *New Zealand Truth*, Tuesday 20 November, 1956, pp. 25

³⁶ 'Building Project Is Costing 9.5m. Dollars', *New Zealand Truth*, Tuesday 20 November, 1956, pp. 24

³⁷ 'Building Project Is Costing 9.5m. Dollars', *New Zealand Truth*, Tuesday 20 November, 1956, pp. 24

³⁸ 'Building Project Is Costing 9.5m. Dollars', *New Zealand Truth*, Tuesday 20 November, 1956, pp. 24

³⁹ 'Building Project Is Costing 9.5m. Dollars', *New Zealand Truth*, Tuesday 20 November, 1956, pp. 24

authorities who control Church broadcasting have ruled that Mormon teaching is “not in the broad stream of Christian tradition.”⁴⁰ Even though Mormonism had a long history within New Zealand, had a strong membership, and had been permitted to build a Temple, there was nonetheless continued systemic marginalisation of the Church within the 1950s. This extended to a certain amount of censorship of the Church within New Zealand, where it was not accepted as a mainstream Christian denomination.⁴¹

Before the opening of the Temple, numerous tensions and accommodations emerged surrounding the inclusion of Māori cultural elements at the Dedication. For example, the First Presidency appointed prominent Māori Mormon Stuart Meha to travel to the Hawai'i Temple for the purpose of translating Temple ordinances into Māori.⁴² After completing this, Meha travelled to Salt Lake City; here, a committee of Māori-speaking members, including returned missionaries and mission presidents, met with Meha in an upper-room of the Salt Lake Temple to ensure he had done so appropriately.⁴³ That Māori Latter-day Saints travelled to the headquarters of the Church in order to translate the sacred ordinances of the Temple is an important example of both the thorough localisation and syncretism of the Church within New Zealand, as well as the transnational interconnectedness of the religion.

⁴⁰ ‘Building Project Is Costing 9.5m. Dollars’, *New Zealand Truth*, Tuesday 20 November, 1956, pp. 25

⁴¹ As an aside, it should be noted that during the building of the Temple, a Māori burial site was found where the Temple was being constructed. Despite this discovery, the building of the temple went on unhindered: Hunt, *Zion In New Zealand*, pp. 82

⁴² Newton, *Tiki and Temple*, pp. 257

⁴³ This included Dr. Nitama Paewai, the first Mormon Māori to graduate in medicine; his wife Hinepa, the daughter of Stuart and Ivory Meha, acted as stenographer for this essential project: Newton, *Tiki and Temple*, pp. 257

Also of importance to the Dedication was the planned cultural celebrations that Māori and Pacific Islander members desired to present at the dedication.⁴⁴ In New Zealand, American Church leader Ariel Ballif directed the 'Māori Cultural Program' that was to accompany the Temple's dedication. According to Newton, the inclusion of the haka was particularly interesting, as it had been a topic of contention as to whether the dance would be appropriate for the dedication of a holy site. This followed a long-existing 'cultural tension', as highlighted by Newton, as to Church leaders' ambivalence, and at times hostility, towards the iconic cultural dance.⁴⁵ Throughout the years, terms such as 'evil', 'wild', and 'offensive' had been employed by American Mormon leaders to describe the haka.⁴⁶ Ecclesiastical leaders had discouraged, and by the 1950s banned, the haka at Church functions, as well as for endowed members of the Church.⁴⁷ This spiritual colonialism failed to recognise, however, that the haka is not a 'wild war dance' but a complicated, nuanced welcome, as also articulated by Newton.⁴⁸ It should here be noted, that at various times the New Zealand government and other Christian denominations, since the early nineteenth century, have similarly attempted to ban the haka.⁴⁹ Despite the Church's prohibition, the haka was performed for David O. McKay when he came to dedicate the Temple in 1958, indicating the cultural pride of Māori members overcame the reticence of the American and pākehā New Zealand ecclesiastical leaders.⁵⁰

⁴⁴ Newton, *Tiki and Temple*, pp. 259

⁴⁵ Newton, *Tiki and Temple*, pp. 259

⁴⁶ Newton, *Tiki and Temple*, pp. 260-1

⁴⁷ Newton, *Tiki and Temple*, pp. 260

⁴⁸ Newton, *Tiki and Temple*, pp. 261

⁴⁹ Brendan Hokowhitu, 'Haka: Colonized Physicality, Body-Logic, and Embodied Sovereignty', in Laura R. Graham and H. Glenn Penny (eds.), *Performing Indigeneity: Global Histories and Contemporary Experiences*, Lincoln: University of Nebraska, 2014, pp. 280

⁵⁰ Newton, *Tiki and Temple*, pp. 261

By the end of March 1958, the Temple was ready to be opened.⁵¹ Before the sacred site was dedicated, the Church allowed the population of New Zealand to tour the building over the course of several Open Days. Due to the perceived secrecy of the temple, which once dedicated can only be attended by faithful Latter-day Saints, the Church has attempted to demystify its holy sites in the eyes of the public; this has been standard practice since the Open House for the Salt Lake Cit Temple in 1893.⁵² For three weeks before the dedication of the Hamilton Temple, the Church held Open Days allowing the public to view the inside of the sacred site. According to Newton, 'almost 113,000 people, three times the population of Hamilton... filed through the multi-million-dollar, seven storey, seventy-five-room building.'⁵³ Latter-day Saints from all over New Zealand, Australia, and Oceania made pilgrimage to Hamilton to be present for the dedication, again indicating both the localisation of Mormonism, but also its transnational links.⁵⁴

As an illustrative aside, when McKay and his accompanying party arrived at the Auckland airport on the 17th of April 1958, he was welcomed by hundreds of Oceanic Saints, including a Samoan brass band.⁵⁵ This is important to note, as from 1914 to 1962, Samoa was a Mandate C United Nations protectorate of New Zealand; as argued by Dylan Beatty, the invasion of their home by New Zealand in the context of the First World War was a

⁵¹ Hunt, *Zion In New Zealand*, pp. 85

⁵² 'Salt Lake Temple', *Church News*, updated May 2020, viewed 23/08/2023

<https://www.thechurchnews.com/almanac/temples/salt-lake> ; 'Temple Open House', *The Church of Jesus Christ Latter-day Saints Website*, viewed 06/08/2021

<https://newsroom.churchofjesuschrist.org/article/temple-open-house>

Kim Ostman, 'Esotericism Made Exoteric? Insider and Outsider Perspectives on the 2006 Mormon Temple Open House in Espoo, Finland', *Scripta Instituti Donneriani Aboensis*, Volume 20, January 2008, pp. 125-6

⁵³ Newton, *Tiki and Tempe*, pp. 261

⁵⁴ Hunt, *Zion In New Zealand*, pp. 85

⁵⁵ Newton, *Tiki and Temple*, pp. 261

difficult time for Latter-day Saints in what was then German Samoa.⁵⁶ They navigated the colonial geopolitics of this era, even whilst official Church press, though largely ambiguous and vague, were in favour of the colonisation of Samoa; there was a significant silence or even renouncement of Samoan independence movements during this period.⁵⁷ Since the early 1920s, the Samoan *Mau* independence movement had garnered widespread support in the archipelago.⁵⁸ This movement had been heavily repressed by New Zealand authorities, and had included mass arrests, exiles, and killings of *Mau* in clashes with imperial authorities.⁵⁹ As Dylan Beatty outlined in his article 'Mamona and the Mau', the Latter-day Saint Church in Samoa was in an uncomfortable position during this independence movement, as it relied on New Zealand authorities for its existence.

More importantly, according to Beatty, the 'relationship between the larger *Mau* movement and the Samoan Latter-day Saints was complex, being contingent on multiple loyalties and identities.'⁶⁰ Part of this was the proliferation of *Mau* ideologies in sections of the Samoan Latter-day Saint community, which in turn led to hostility against the predominantly American ecclesiastical authorities on the islands. This culminated, at times, with verbal disparagement and threats of violence against *Papālagi* (white) Latter-day Saint leadership in the archipelago from both Mormon and non-Mormon Samoans. Beatty notes that in the 1920s and 1930s, American missionaries were threatened with

⁵⁶ Dylan Beatty, 'Sacred Geopolitics: Latter-Day Saints in German Samoa During New Zealand's Invasion. *Pacific Studies*. Apr-Aug2019, Vol. 42 Issue 1/2, pp. 45-74.

⁵⁷ Beatty, 'Sacred Geopolitics: Latter-Day Saints in German Samoa During New Zealand's Invasion. *Pacific Studies*. Apr-Aug2019, Vol. 42 Issue 1/2, pp. 53-58

⁵⁸ Dylan Beatty, 'Mamona and the Mau: Latter-day Saints Amidst Resistance in Colonial Samoa', *Pacific Studies*, Volume 37, Issue 1, 2014, pp. 48-49

⁵⁹ Beatty, 'Mamona and the Mau: Latter-day Saints Amidst Resistance in Colonial Samoa', *Pacific Studies*, Volume 37, Issue 1, 2014, pp. 54-55

⁶⁰ Beatty, 'Mamona and the Mau: Latter-day Saints Amidst Resistance in Colonial Samoa', *Pacific Studies*, Volume 37, Issue 1, 2014, pp. 63

stoning and beatings from *Mau*-orientated Latter-day Saint Samoans.⁶¹ Thus, the inclusion of the Samoan brass band at the dedication of the Hamilton Temple is a peculiar indicator of the interwoven, complex existence of the Church in the Pacific. Moreover, it shows that whilst Samoan Latter-day Saints welcomed the permanent representation of their faith in New Zealand, evidenced by their presence at the dedication and subsequent pilgrimages, violent imperial realities of New Zealand and Samoa was a lingering spectre.

On the 20th of April, McKay's party, stood before the ecclesiastical authorities of the South Pacific.⁶² Here, the prophet officially dedicated the sacred building, the thirteenth Latter-day Saint Temple to be built, closing it to the public.⁶³ Due to the vast number who journeyed to see the opening of the Temple, there was a total of nine dedicatory sessions over six days.⁶⁴ Each session involved sermons by ecclesiastical leaders, which also included aspects of the history of Mormonism in New Zealand, as well as the dedicatory prayer, repeated by David O. McKay. This prayer provides a valuable insight into the Temple-centric cosmology and beliefs of the Church, but also serves as an important historical artefact in relation to the history of Mormonism within New Zealand; this will be analysed below, but is reprinted in full in the appendix. It is important to note here, that the dedication was remembered as a significant theological event within Mormon cosmology. Then Apostle Gordon B. Hinckley, in the Church publication *The Improvement Era*, remarked on the combination of 'two great strains of the house of Israel – the children of Ephraim from the isles of Britain, and the children of Lehi in the isles of the

⁶¹ Beatty, 'Mamona and the Mau: Latter-day Saints Amidst Resistance in Colonial Samoa', *Pacific Studies*, Volume 37, Issue 1, 2014, pp. 60

⁶² Newton, *Tiki and Temple*, pp. 262

⁶³ Newton, *Tiki and Temple*, pp. 262

⁶⁴ Newton, *Tiki and Temple*, pp. 262

Pacific.⁶⁵ This emphasis on the ethno-cosmological heritage of both the British and Pacific Islanders, reiterated through the narratives of the Book of Mormon, is evidence of the further syncretism and entanglement of New Zealand and the institutional Church.

Following the almost week-long services at the Temple, the Church College, in the same location, was similarly dedicated.⁶⁶ According to Newton, this was attended by three thousand people, including

Governor-General, Lord Cobham; Prime Minister... Walter Nash; the American ambassador to New Zealand... Francis R. Russell; Dame Hilda Ross, Member of Parliament for Hamilton; ... Keith J. Holyoake, former Prime Minister; Her Majesty Queen Salote Tupua of Tonga, and Their Highnesses Prince Tungi and Princess Mata-aho.⁶⁷

At the opening of the Church College, there were speeches presented by the Prime Minister, Dame Ross, and the Superintendent of the Auckland School District, L. Ensor.⁶⁸ This attendance of dignitaries indicates the way in which the opening of the Temple, College, and general village was received not only by New Zealand officials, but also others throughout the Pacific. In particular, the presence of Queen Salote of Tonga is significant, as enormous growth of the Church within Tonga was occurring during this time.⁶⁹ It also shows the integration of the New Zealand Church into the society and culture of Oceania, with the new Temple as a physical symbol of that connection. As shall

⁶⁵ Gordon B. Hinckley, 'Temple in the Pacific', *The Improvement Era*, Volume 61, Issue 7, July 1958, pp. 508 (found in Newton, *Tiki and Temple*, 262)

⁶⁶ Newton, *Tiki and Temple*, pp. 263

⁶⁷ Newton, *Tiki and Temple*, pp. 263

⁶⁸ Newton, *Tiki and Temple*, pp. 263

⁶⁹ 'Tonga's Liahona High School Turns 70', *Church News (New Zealand) Website*, 12 September 2017, viewed 06/08/2021

<https://news-nz.churchofjesuschrist.org/article/tonga-s-liahona-high-school-turns-70>

be discussed, this same aligning of the Australian Church within the broader geographic region was yet to occur.

The dedicatory prayer for the Hamilton Temple was given by David O. McKay, then-Prophet of the Church, and mentions several important doctrines. McKay emphasised theologically that Māori and other Polynesian peoples were descendants of the Book of Mormon prophet Lehi, conveying the clear idea that Oceania was populated through Divine ‘guidance.’ This again led to the reiteration that Pacific Islanders are ethnically and cosmologically related to Native Americans, and thus the Biblical House of Israel. Yet, the Prophet also notes that it is only through European colonisation that it has been able to ‘develop’ and become ‘associated’ with more important nations. However, there is still a sense of American-exceptionalism evident in his claim that the restored Gospel was only able to be established in the United States.⁷⁰

McKay’s dedicatory prayer similarly makes oblique references to global events and politics. This Temple was dedicated as Cold War tensions between the Soviet Union and the United States became more evident.⁷¹ For instance, he seeks the Lord’s blessing upon the leaders of the world that there would be an end to warfare, prejudices, and gluttony. The building itself is also singled out within the prayer. McKay’s emphasis on American

⁷⁰ According to Latter-day Saint beliefs, the Constitution of the United States was divinely inspired by Deity, and was instrumental in the eventual founding of the Church by Joseph Smith.

Dallin H. Oaks, ‘The Divinely inspired Constitution’, *The Ensign*, February 1992, viewed 23/07/2021 available at:

<https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/ensign/1992/02/the-divinely-inspired-constitution?lang=eng>

⁷¹ Anne-Marie Brady, ‘The Curious Case of Two Australasian ‘Traitors’, or, New Zealand, Australia, and the Cold War’, *New Zealand Journal of History*, Volume 35, Issue 1, 2001, pp. 85-110; Andrew Kelly, *ANZUS and the Early Cold War: Strategy and Diplomacy Between Australia, New Zealand, and the United States, 1945-1956*, Open Book Publishers, 2018

exceptionalism should thus be viewed in this context. However, McKay also proclaims New Zealand as 'a free nation', and thus a Temple was able to be constructed there; within the propaganda of the Cold War, this is important to emphasise.⁷² McKay then blessed the various colonial and local political powers, indicating their sovereignty and efforts in allowing the Temple to be built. The Dedicatory Prayer further discusses dogmatic aspects of the Church. Here, he emphasised the centrality of the Temple to Mormon thought: the rituals and teachings available within the sacred building essential to Latter-day Saint cosmology where the 'immortality and eternal life of man' can be realised. Moreover, McKay asserts that the ultimate aim of the Church, as stated by Joseph Smith, was to enact a 'divine government among men' in preparation for the return of Jesus Christ. This is related to Smith's belief and plan that eventually, through God's assistance, there would be the establishment of a 'theo-democracy', in which the ecclesiastical leaders of the Church would also be elected political officials throughout the world.⁷³

McKay similarly blessed the sacrifices and work of the labour missionaries, who 'consecrated their all upon the altar of service.' Related to the idea of sacred materiality and physicality, McKay sought God to protect the Temple against the elements and natural upheaval. McKay further claimed, as in all Temple dedications, that the Temple would be spiritually polluted and the Spirit of the Lord would retreat if its walls were breached by the unworthy: 'let no unclean person or thing ever enter.' This warning to Church members emphasises the sanctity of this edifice, to the extent that those who are not Latter-day Saints were prohibited, and faithful Latter-day Saints must pass the

⁷² Alexander Trapeznik, "'Agents of Moscow" at the Dawn of the Cold War: The Comintern and the Communist Party of New Zealand', *Journal of Cold War Studies*, Volume 11, Issue 1, 2009, pp. 124-149

⁷³ D. Michael Quinn, *The Mormon Hierarchy: Origins of Power*, Salt Lake City: Signature Books Publishers, 1994, pp. 124-25

worthiness requirements of the Church. The opening of the Temple thus represented a fundamental pivot in the history of Mormonism in Oceania, as now Australian and South Pasifika members were able to make pilgrimage to this sacred site in order to take part in the cosmologically necessary rites and ordinances for salvation.

However, as has been explored in other scholarship, and confirmed by oral history, the New Zealand Temple was still difficult to reach for many Latter-day Saints throughout the Pacific. For example, Richard Cowen, writing in the *Mormon Pacific Historical Society* in 1990, reported anecdotal experiences that emphasised this struggle.⁷⁴ He wrote:

With the construction of the New Zealand Temple, Pacific Saints from other areas still had to make substantial sacrifice to get there. For instance, a man from Western Australia had to sell his car and furniture in order to make the journey which was longer than the distance from San Francisco to New York.

“What matter the price of these earthly things in comparison with the blessings here to be gained?”

A Tongan family sold their livestock, went without new shoes or other necessities, the children worked and saved for two years, and the father rode a bicycle, rather than driving a car, so that they could go to the New Zealand Temple to be sealed.⁷⁵

Although the actual experiences of members, especially in the face of poverty and distance, is important and revealing, of greater significance for this thesis is the way in which these stories have been remembered in Mormon scholarship. Tales of personal sacrifice are essential in the memorialisation of Latter-day Saint history, culture, and identity. Moreover, these narratives are still central in the history of the Church in the

⁷⁴ Richard Cowen, ‘Temples in the Pacific: A Reflection of Twentieth Century Mormon History’, *Mormon Pacific Historical Society*, Volume 11, Issue 1, 1990, pp. 114-17

⁷⁵ Cowen, ‘Temples in the Pacific’, *Mormon Pacific Historical Society*, pp. 115

Pacific, particularly as the Temple became a centre for the pilgrimage of Latter-day Saints throughout Oceania.

These pilgrimages were similarly noted by at least one New Zealand newspaper in the early 1960s. An article published in *The Press* in December 1960, stated that ‘a party of 20 Mormons from Western Australia’ were to travel from Perth to Hamilton, by train and ship, in order to ‘remarry’ in the Temple.⁷⁶ There is an emphasis in this article on the ordinance of the sealing, of marriage for ‘time and eternity’ being at the forefront of this pilgrimage. A second article in 1962, from the same newspaper, acknowledged the pilgrimage via ‘chartered Qantas’ flight of another group of one hundred Australian Latter-day Saints to the Temple. This article noted that one member bemoaned that there was ‘no temple of our own in Australia... and the Hamilton temple is the closest. Some of our ordinances cannot be carried out other than in a temple.’⁷⁷ The article noted that members would be staying for several days in order to perform sacred ordinances for the dead via proxy in the Temple. This pilgrimage to the New Zealand Temple, from both Australia and the broader Pacific, was an essential aspect of the Mormon experience for decades, until the construction of additional Temples in Oceanic countries. These pilgrimages were framed by New Zealand press as a bemusing pursuit by zealous Australian Mormons, albeit with sympathetic tones.

Changing of Temple View Council, 2004

⁷⁶ ‘Journey to N.Z. for Weddings: Mormons to Remarry at Hamilton’, *The Press*, 22 December 1960, pp. 2

⁷⁷ ‘Chartered Flight: Mormons From Australia’, *The Press*, 17 December 1962, pp. 14

Though the Hamilton Temple had existed for almost half a century, tensions between the Church and local New Zealand councils occurred by the turn of the century. In 2004, for example, the village of Temple View, which had until this time been a part of the Waipa District Council, was formally grafted into the City of Hamilton.⁷⁸ According to a 2002 article by Mary Anne Gill, this was initiated by the Temple View Residents Association, a non-Church entity that was nonetheless almost exclusively Latter-day Saints.⁷⁹ The majority of Temple Views' 1500 citizens, the vast majority of whom were Mormon, worked, shopped, and spent their leisure time in Hamilton, only three kilometres away, rather than in Cambridge or Te Awamutu, the main urban centres of Waipa District.⁸⁰ However, there was considerable resistance from the Hamilton City Council, who 'rejected the community's advances' as early as 1972.⁸¹ As reported by Gill

Hamilton City Council's strategic planning committee has decided bringing the largely Mormon community into the city's boundaries would end up costing Temple View ratepayers too much money and be of little benefit to Hamilton...

HCC general manager... Michael Theelan said in a report to the council that Temple View's existing infrastructure was poor and would require a lot of work to bring it up to the city's standards.

However, it appears that over time Hamilton softened towards Temple View. Within two years of this article's publication, Temple View had joined Hamilton City.⁸² This was marked by 'two civic joining ceremonies... held in council chambers.'⁸³ After this, '500 people attended an event at Temple View... at which a plaque was unveiled' to

⁷⁸ 'City to Welcome New Flock', *Waikato Times*, Hamilton, New Zealand, 28 June 2004, pp. 11

⁷⁹ Mary Anne Gill, 'Plans to Join City Stalled', *Waikato Times*, Hamilton, New Zealand, 25 February 2002, pp. 3

⁸⁰ Gill, 'Plans to Join City Stalled', *Waikato Times*, Hamilton, New Zealand, 25 February 2002, pp. 3

⁸¹ Gill, 'Plans to Join City Stalled', *Waikato Times*, Hamilton, New Zealand, 25 February 2002, pp. 3

⁸² 'City Welcomes Temple View', *Waikato Times*, Hamilton, New Zealand, 02 July 2004, pp. 3

⁸³ 'City Welcomes Temple View', *Waikato Times*, Hamilton, New Zealand, 02 July 2004, pp. 3

commemorate the occasion.⁸⁴ After this ceremony, Denise Irvine of *The Waikato Times* wrote of Hamilton's new suburb, emphasising the unique demographics of the area. She wrote 'the city's latest suburb is unusual in that most residents... follow the teachings of American founder, Joseph Smith.'⁸⁵ Irvine further noted that of the almost three hundred houses in Hamilton 'only a handful are owned by non-Church members.'⁸⁶ Another article for the same publication noted that the entire village had been constructed with volunteer labour and settled by Latter-day Saints who desired to live near the Temple.⁸⁷ Due to the reorganisation of the area, the fifteen-hundred Latter-day Saints in Temple View joined an equal number of members already living Hamilton, making the new Mormon community three thousand strong; six chapels serviced these members.⁸⁸

Temple View was soon welcomed by the broader Hamilton community. As part of this, in 2009, the Temple was granted official heritage status by the city, a significant mark of official recognition.⁸⁹ Ironically, whilst the Church had sought to dissuade the City Council from heritage listing Temple View, for reasons that are more thoroughly explored below, this indicates a further localisation and syncretism of the Church within New Zealand. Jeff Neems of popular news website *Stuff New Zealand* stated that

Five years after it became part of Hamilton, Temple View is now officially covered by the same development rules as other historic parts of the city... The suburb of Temple View... will be treated

⁸⁴ 'City Welcomes Temple View', *Waikato Times*, Hamilton, New Zealand, 02 July 2004, pp. 3

⁸⁵ Denise Irvine, 'Hamilton's Latter-day Suburb', *Waikato Times*, Hamilton, New Zealand, 02 July 2004, pp. 7

⁸⁶ Irvine, 'Hamilton's Latter-day Suburb', *Waikato Times*, Hamilton, New Zealand, 02 July 2004, pp. 7

⁸⁷ 'City Set To Welcome New Flock', *Waikato Times*, Hamilton, New Zealand, 28 June 2004, pp. 11

⁸⁸ 'City Set To Welcome New Flock', *Waikato Times*, Hamilton, New Zealand, 28 June 2004, pp. 11

⁸⁹ Jeff Neems, 'Temple View Joins City's Heritage Fold', *Stuff New Zealand Website*, 30 November 2009, viewed 2/08/2021

<https://www.stuff.co.nz/waikato-times/news/3109118/Temple-View-joins-citys-heritage-fold>

the same as the city's other historic and special character areas in terms of redevelopment and new housing.⁹⁰

However, then-Mayor of Hamilton Bob Simcock emphasised that this did not 'necessarily prevent the demolition of college buildings sought by the Church... but ensures the area's look and character are preserved.'⁹¹

The Church was abjectly opposed to the City Council placing Temple View under the same regulations as other historic and heritage-listed buildings within Hamilton.⁹² Neems noted, however, although the Church opposed this ruling,

the [Church] board did not send a representative to speak at the meeting... [Councillor Dave] MacPherson said it was 'quite indicative' that the Church hierarchy had not sent a representative, while several members of the Temple View and Hamilton Mormon communities were present.⁹³

That the Hamilton council desired to have control over Temple View was concerning for the Church, especially as there were already plans from the hierarchy to demolish Church College. Yet, the attendance of local members, without official Church representatives, indicates a division forming within the Temple View community that will be more thoroughly discussed below. Thus, although the Church and Temple had undoubtedly been integrated into the broader New Zealand community, underlying tensions persisted. These focussed primarily on the fact that the Church did not want to be hindered by New Zealand heritage laws with the planned remodelling of Temple View. This tension

⁹⁰ Neems, 'Temple View Joins City's Heritage Fold', *Stuff New Zealand Website*, 30 November 2009, viewed 2/08/2021

⁹¹ Neems, 'Temple View Joins City's Heritage Fold', *Stuff New Zealand Website*, 30 November 2009, viewed 2/08/2021

⁹² Neems, 'Temple View Joins City's Heritage Fold', *Stuff New Zealand Website*, 30 November 2009, viewed 2/08/2021

⁹³ Neems, 'Temple View Joins City's Heritage Fold', *Stuff New Zealand Website*, 30 November 2009, viewed 2/08/2021

between the Church hierarchy and local members even spilled into academia with the publication of Scott Esplin's 'Closing the Church College of New Zealand: A Case Study in Church Education Policy' in the *Journal of Mormon History*.⁹⁴ Esplin, who is the now Dean of Education at the Church's Brigham Young University, argued in an overtly biased account that the closing of the Church College of New Zealand was a 'positive step in the forward movement of both the Church and education in New Zealand.'⁹⁵ He cites a pattern of the Church to construct educational institutions in countries in which there was a perceived lack of public education, and then close these once these were no longer needed. The article ignores the significant sacrifices of the labour missionaries, and the connection contemporary Māori Mormons feel towards the institution and Temple View in general.

Temple View Renovations, Announced 2008

In 2006, almost fifty years after the dedication of the Church College, leaders in Salt Lake City announced that it would no longer accept new students.⁹⁶ Despite speculation by both press and residents, for two years the Church was silent on the status of the College

⁹⁴ Scott Esplin, 'Closing the Church College of New Zealand: A Case Study in Church Education Policy', *Journal Of Mormon History*. Winter 2011, Vol. 37 Issue 1, pp. 86-114

⁹⁵ Esplin, 'Closing the Church College of New Zealand: A Case Study in Church Education Policy', *Journal Of Mormon History*. Winter 2011, Vol. 37 Issue 1, pp. 87

⁹⁶ Justine Turner, 'Mormon Families in Shock', *Waikato Times*, Hamilton, New Zealand, 30 June 2006, pp. 1

and greater Temple View area.⁹⁷ However, in 2008, the announcement came that the College, numerous houses, and other buildings would be demolished in order to create a renovated Temple View.⁹⁸ The New Zealand media, particularly in Waikato, followed the Church's plans for renovation with great interest. This announcement was fervently opposed by the general public, as evidenced by numerous hostile editorials; this even extended to one local branding the Church hierarchy a 'fascist dictatorship.'⁹⁹ Reporter for the *Waikato Times* Jeff Neems noted that submissions against the proposed plans had been submitted from as far-stretched places as Western Australia, the United States, and Singapore.¹⁰⁰

More significantly, however, this led to a fracturing in the Temple View community, as even faithful members rejected the orders of Church leaders, whilst other members were angered at the supposed lack of obedience to God's supposed will.¹⁰¹ As shall also be discussed, this occurred despite the fact that promises were made by the Church that these buildings would not be destroyed.¹⁰² As a result, in 2008, the Hamilton City Council

⁹⁷ Rebecca Harper, 'Church to Return College to Pasture', *Waikato Times*, Hamilton, New Zealand, 26 July 2008, pp. A.4

⁹⁸ Jeff Neems, 'Church Insists Its Will Be Done', *Waikato Times*, Hamilton, New Zealand, 09 July 2009, pp. 5

⁹⁹ 'Don't Demolish City's History', *Waikato Times*, Hamilton New Zealand, 06 October 2008, pp. 4
 Jeff Neems, 'Church Plans for School Upsets Builders', *Waikato Times*, Hamilton, New Zealand, 23 May 2009; Jeff Neems, 'Mormon Leaders Tagged Fascist Over College Issue', *Waikato Times*, Hamilton, New Zealand, 07 September 2009, pp. 1

¹⁰⁰ Neems, 'Mormon Leaders Tagged Fascist Over College Issue', *Waikato Times*, Hamilton, New Zealand, 07 September 2009, pp. 1

¹⁰¹ Jeff Neems, 'New Groups Fights Demolition', *Waikato Times*, Hamilton, New Zealand, 06 July 2009, pp. 3

¹⁰² Ra Puriri, 'Submission 1', *Hearing Evidence and Submissions – The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints Trust Board*, pp. 6-10

<https://www.hamilton.govt.nz/our-services/planningguidanceandresourceconsents/publicly-notified-applications/Documents/LDS%20Hearing%20Evidence%20and%20Submissions%20-%20Submitter%20Statement%20-%20Ra%20Puriri%20-%20first%20document.pdf>

sought to curb the Church's plans to renovate the area.¹⁰³ The Council sought to prohibit the demolition of these buildings, citing heritage, historical, and spiritual connections to the region.¹⁰⁴ The Church's lawyer David Kilpatrick stated that the proposed rule was 'ludicrous and pointless.'¹⁰⁵ Similarly, David Hay, who spoke on behalf of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints Trust Board in New Zealand, stated that if approved, it would grant 'too much power to the Historic Places Trust.'¹⁰⁶

Despite heavy resistance from members, locals, and heritage groups, Hamilton Council soon assented to these proposals, and the Church began its renovations in 2009. The first labour missionary-constructed home was not demolished and has remained a heritage site. However, this was the exception, and families who had lived for generations in houses built by their ancestors were soon evicted.¹⁰⁷ According to a *Waikato Times* article by Jonathon Carson, the Church provided letters to residents in June of 2012, three years after the announcement, and informed them that they had to leave their homes.¹⁰⁸ Carson described this as 'heartbreaking news', and quoted Kerin Hague, a Church member, who said there was a sense of 'sadness' and 'heartache' at being told they had to leave their home of fifteen years.¹⁰⁹ Even though the Church had demolished the homes of Temple

¹⁰³ Warwick Rasmussen, 'New Rule Ludicrous: Church', *Waikato Times*, Hamilton, New Zealand, 24 September 2008, pp. 3

¹⁰⁴ Rasmussen, 'New Rule Ludicrous: Church', *Waikato Times*, Hamilton, New Zealand, 24 September 2008, pp. 3

¹⁰⁵ Rasmussen, 'New Rule Ludicrous: Church', *Waikato Times*, Hamilton, New Zealand, 24 September 2008, pp. 3

¹⁰⁶ Rasmussen, 'New Rule Ludicrous: Church', *Waikato Times*, Hamilton, New Zealand, 24 September 2008, pp. 3

¹⁰⁷ Jonathon Carson, 'Church to Evict Families From Homes', *Waikato Times*, Hamilton, New Zealand, 08 October 2012, pp. 1

¹⁰⁸ Carson, 'Church to Evict Families From Homes', *Waikato Times*, Hamilton, New Zealand, 08 October 2011, pp. 1

¹⁰⁹ Carson, 'Church to Evict Families From Homes', *Waikato Times*, Hamilton, New Zealand, 08 October 2011, pp. 1

View residents, new ones were constructed, with members who had their homes demolished given the first option to purchase the new houses, though many were unable to afford these.¹¹⁰ However, the first home to be built was for the Mission President, not displaced local members.¹¹¹

In January of 2017, the Hamilton City Council asked for submissions for and against the remaining planned renovations.¹¹² Although only given a month, there were over two dozen submissions from members of the Church, former members, and community individuals and groups.¹¹³ One of the most prominent advocates against the plan was Ra Puriri. An ex-member of the Church, Puriri was infuriated by what he saw as the gentrification of Temple View at the expense of cultural and spiritual heritage.¹¹⁴ He formally submitted two documents which outlined the Church's supposed reasons for the renovations with detailed counterarguments. One telling example was that the Church responded 'Nil' to the statement 'The extent to which the place has spiritual importance.'¹¹⁵ To Puriri, whose ancestors had helped with the construction of the buildings at Temple View, this response was not considerate of the sacrifices made by faithful Latter-day Saints, nor of the spiritual significance that later generations had given

¹¹⁰ 'First Temple View Development Homes Complete', *Waikato Times*, Hamilton, New Zealand, 30 January 2015, pp. 5

¹¹¹ 'First Temple View Development Homes Complete', *Waikato Times*, Hamilton, New Zealand, 30 January 2015, pp. 5

¹¹² 'Hearing Evidence and Submissions - The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints Trust Board', *Hamilton City Council*, 20th February 2017
<https://www.hamilton.govt.nz/our-services/planningguidanceandresourceconsents/publicly-notified-applications/Pages/The-Church-of-Jesus-Christ-of-Latter-Day-Saints-Trust-Board.aspx>

¹¹³ 'Hearing Evidence and Submissions - The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints Trust Board', *Hamilton City Council*, 20th February 2017

¹¹⁴ Puriri, 'Submission 1', *Hearing Evidence and Submissions – The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints Trust Board*, pp. 6-10

¹¹⁵ Puriri, 'Submission 1', *Hearing Evidence and Submissions – The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints Trust Board*, pp. 11-14

to these buildings.¹¹⁶ This division in the community over the memory and meaning of Temple View would continue to grow, as will be seen. However, what is most significant here is the complex localisation and entanglement of Mormonism and broader New Zealand due to this site. Whilst the Church leadership in Salt Lake City had ordered the renovation, Mormons and non-Mormons in New Zealand were resistant to these, indicating a sense of attachment to Temple View by the broader Hamilton community, and a division of views amongst Mormons.

In a separate submission, Puriri claimed that due to his vocal opposition to the planned renovations, he had had his Temple Recommend revoked.¹¹⁷ Puriri's 'request for a hearing to appeal this decision in New Zealand was denied, and 'Church leaders... in Salt Lake City refuse[d] to meet' him.¹¹⁸ Puriri felt that this was because the 'Church [was] trying to use my Temple recommend as a weapon to coerce me into compliant, unquestioning silence and support.'¹¹⁹ Within this submission, Puriri also claimed that the Church was breaking a promise it had made with two Māori leaders, Heme Witehira and his brother, who had converted to the Church as adults. According to Puriri, the Church received '2 million board feet of native timber' from the Witehira brothers 'from their ancestral lands [the Mataraua Forest near Kaikohe] without payment to them.'¹²⁰ This

¹¹⁶ Puriri, 'Submission 1', *Hearing Evidence and Submissions – The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints Trust Board*, pp. 13-14

¹¹⁷ Ra Puriri, 'Submission 2', *Hearing Evidence and Submissions – The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints Trust Board*, pp. 2

<https://www.hamilton.govt.nz/our-services/planningguidanceandresourceconsents/publicly-notified-applications/Documents/LDS%20Hearing%20Evidence%20and%20Submisisons%20-%20Submitter%20Statement%20-%20Ra%20Puriri%20-%20second%20document.pdf>

¹¹⁸ Puriri, 'Submission 2', *Hearing Evidence and Submissions – The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints Trust Board*, pp. 5

¹¹⁹ Puriri, 'Submission 2', *Hearing Evidence and Submissions – The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints Trust Board*, pp. 6

¹²⁰ Puriri, 'Submission 2', *Hearing Evidence and Submissions – The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints Trust Board*, pp. 17

gifting was on the condition that the Church would ‘never demolish’ the buildings that were built with the lumber, as it was given as a sacrifice to God and His Church.¹²¹

Another submitted denunciation to the plans came from Pita Witehira, who ‘held high positions in the Church and also served as an LDS missionary to the Cook Islands.’¹²² Witehira, his wife, and five of his seven children attended the Church College campus, and were founding members of the Temple View New Zealand Heritage Society. The Witehira’s ‘played a significant role in efforts to retrieve early LDS missionary diaries and recordings’, especially from those involved with the construction of Temple View.¹²³ When the plans to demolish Church College were first announced in 2009, the Witehira’s conducted surveys which showed ‘around 75% rejection by Temple View residents of the plan to demolish the campus and faculty houses.’¹²⁴ In order to attempt to save the campus, the Temple View New Zealand Heritage Society contacted then-Prime Minister Helen Clark to develop a plan ‘to save the CCNZ campus by moving the Koromatua Primary School into the CCNZ campus and establish a Year 1 to 13... school under a lease agreement with the LDS Trust Board.’¹²⁵ According to Witehira, ‘this plan was initially encouraged by the head of the LDS Church in New Zealand... however soon after, his

¹²¹ Puriri, ‘Submission 2’, *Hearing Evidence and Submissions – The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints Trust Board*, pp. 15

¹²² Pita Witehira, ‘Submission’, *Hearing Evidence and Submissions – The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints Trust Board*, pp. 1

<https://www.hamilton.govt.nz/our-services/planningguidanceandresourceconsents/publicly-notified-applications/Documents/LDS%20-%20Hearing%20Evidence%20and%20Submissions%20-%20Submitter%20Statement%20-%20Pita%20Witehira.pdf>

¹²³ Witehira, ‘Submission’, *Hearing Evidence and Submissions – The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints Trust Board*, pp. 2

¹²⁴ Witehira, ‘Submission’, *Hearing Evidence and Submissions – The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints Trust Board*, pp. 2

¹²⁵ Witehira, ‘Submission’, *Hearing Evidence and Submissions – The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints Trust Board*, pp. 2

replacement... flatly rejected the proposal.¹²⁶ Witehira also claimed at this time that he and his wife were sent a cease and desist letter by the Church, 'effectively trying to bully us into not making submissions against the Church's proposed demolition.'¹²⁷ These plans thus pitted the Church leadership in Salt Lake City, who had instructed the renovations and local New Zealand leaders, who were enforcing this order, against New Zealand Latter-day Saints and sympathetic locals.

Similarly, Meshweyla-Kusheyla Harata Alexander MacDonald, who represented the Temple View New Zealand Heritage Society, was strongly against the gentrification.¹²⁸ MacDonald submitted a seventy-four-page rebuttal of many of the Church's claims in their report, especially that the building only had significance to the Latter-day Saint community. Although MacDonald is or was a member of the Church, she stated that:

I wish to add to and clarify for your understanding that what was achieved was not limited to LDS church members. My grandfather was a Labour Missionary. He travelled from his farm in the Bay of Islands, leaving his wife and eight children, every half week for a number of years to be a part of a building project that would create, from nothing, a world class educational facility targeted towards educating Māori youth. He saw the value in steering them towards greatness while in their impressionable teens.

My grandfather was a member of the *non-LDS* public at large who believed in the cause, and sacrificed much so he could donate his labour to contribute to what has been coined as 'quite

¹²⁶ Witehira, 'Submission', *Hearing Evidence and Submissions – The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints Trust Board*, pp. 2

¹²⁷ Witehira, 'Submission', *Hearing Evidence and Submissions – The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints Trust Board*, pp. 2

¹²⁸ ¹²⁸ Meshweyla-Kusheyla Harata Alexander MacDonald, 'Statement on Behalf of the Temple View New Zealand Heritage Society – 17 May 2017', *Hearing Evidence and Submissions – The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints Trust Board*, pp. 1

<https://www.hamilton.govt.nz/our-services/planningguidanceandresourceconsents/publicly-notified-applications/Documents/LDS%20-%20Hearing%20Evidence%20and%20Submissions%20-%20Submitter%20Statement%20-%20Meshweyla%20Macdonald.pdf>

remarkable.' Thus you can see that belief, engagement, and a willingness to contribute extended *beyond* the stated LDS Church members. It extended *beyond* Temple View residency. It extended *beyond* the American architects, planners and Church leaders. It extended *beyond* the limits of Hamilton City. [Italics in original]¹²⁹

From these statements, it is evident the Church had been perceived, at least by some Māori, in the 1950s and 1960s, as promoting Indigenous rights within New Zealand. This was not only based on the theological framework that grafted Māori into Mormon cosmology, but also on the emphasis of Māori culture within the institutional Church. Most significantly, this was at a time when Māori people were severely marginalised by broader New Zealand society.¹³⁰ Yet many Māori Mormons felt that the decision to renovate Temple View did not respect the sacrifices of their ancestors.

Meshweyla MacDonald also spoke to the *Waikato Times* expressing her frustration at what she claimed were the 'blurred... lines between the Church and the trust board' in order to 'justify corporate activity.'¹³¹ She further provided a part of a letter that Temple View members received in July 2009:

We have made clear all along that these are prophetic decisions and not merely corporate physical facilities determination. The time has come to make a choice – your will, or the Prophets' will.¹³²

This letter shows that at the very beginning of the gentrification process there was an attempt to intimidate members into accepting the Church's plans. This ultimatum of 'your

¹²⁹ MacDonald, 'Statement on Behalf of the Temple View New Zealand Heritage Society – 17 May 2017', *Hearing Evidence and Submissions – The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints Trust Board*, pp. 7

¹³⁰ Aroha Harris, 'Concurrent Narratives of Maori and Integration in the 1950s and 60s', *Journal of New Zealand Studies*, Volume 6/7, 2008, pp. 139-155

¹³¹ Thomas Manch, 'Church Member Takes Last Stand', *Waikato Times*, Hamilton, New Zealand, 13 May 2017, A.2

¹³² Manch, 'Church Member Takes Last Stand', *Waikato Times*, Hamilton, New Zealand, 13 May 2017, A.2

will or the Prophets' is clearly intended to ensure that members did not resist; as has been shown, however, this did not occur. It is obvious from this that the plans to gentrify the Temple View area was not received well not only by faithful members, but also from others in the community.

Not all who were connected to Temple View opposed the demolition. For example, Hokikau and Lasalo Purcell, who, with their families, had worked as Labour Missionaries when in their youth, severely condemned those who protested the demolition and gentrification of Temple View.¹³³ In particular, Hokikau Purcell cited the numerous experiences and sacrifices of the Labour Missionaries, before submitting:

The school closed in 2009, 8 years ago and today we are still fuelling the fire. Get over it people. The prophet said the College was to close. Close it. All of it. So think about it. All things need to be in accordance with the will of the Lord. If there is any one group of people who should here be making submissions against it should be us, the LMs [Labour Missionaries] because we built it... On behalf of our LMs, Mr. Commissioner, we fully support Paul Coward, and those who lead alongside him in the demolition...¹³⁴

Hokikau's husband, Lasalo, also submitted in support of the Church's proposed plans. Lasalo Purcell was the Chairman of the New Zealand Labour Missionary Association

¹³³ Hokikau Purcell, 'A Spiritual Beginning', *Hearing Evidence and Submissions – The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints Trust Board*, pp. 4-5

<https://www.hamilton.govt.nz/our-services/planningguidanceandresourceconsents/publicly-notified-applications/Documents/LDS%20-%20Hearing%20Evidence%20and%20Submissions%20-%20Submitter%20Statement%20-%20Hokikau%20Purcell.pdf>

¹³⁴ Purcell, 'A Spiritual Beginning', *Hearing Evidence and Submissions – The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints Trust Board*, pp. 1-3

Charitable Trust.¹³⁵ He first described his experience as a Labour Missionary, followed with a condemnation:

I would like to say that I am very surprised at some of the active members of the Church who blatantly stand up against the Prophet of the Church, who through his servants announced the closure of CCNZ. The standard for LDS members is to follow the President of the Church... Some members of the Church who held prominent positions in CCNZ are actively opposing the closure of the [David O. McKay] building.¹³⁶

Another supporter of the changes was the President of the Temple View Stake of the Church, John Kendall. Kendall had been a long-time resident of Temple View and had held numerous ecclesiastical positions within the Church.¹³⁷ Although his statement was brief, he did claim that he ‘fully supported the direction the Church is going with the repurposing of the [Church College] site... [and that] these sentiments are reflected by the majority of the Temple View Stake members.’¹³⁸ This, however, conflicted with the report of Pita Witehira. Thus, it is evident that the renovation of Temple View, particularly the destruction of the David O. McKay and Church College buildings, was divisive for the Church community in Temple View and beyond, as well as for non-members. As one

¹³⁵ Lasalo Owen Purcell, ‘Submission’. *Hearing Evidence and Submissions – The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints Trust Board*, pp. 1

<https://www.hamilton.govt.nz/our-services/planningguidanceandresourceconsents/publicly-notified-applications/Documents/LDS%20-%20Hearing%20Evidence%20and%20Submissions%20-%20Submitter%20Statement%20-%20Lasalo%20Purcell.pdf>

¹³⁶ Purcell, ‘Submission’. *Hearing Evidence and Submissions – The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints Trust Board*, pp. 3

¹³⁷ John Kendall, ‘Submission’, *Hearing Evidence and Submissions – The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints Trust Board*, pp. 1

<https://www.hamilton.govt.nz/our-services/planningguidanceandresourceconsents/publicly-notified-applications/Documents/LDS%20-%20Hearing%20Evidence%20and%20Submissions%20-%20Submitter%20Statement%20-%20John%20Kendall.pdf>

¹³⁸ Kendall, ‘Submission’, *Hearing Evidence and Submissions*

newspaper article aptly summarised, 'they thought they were building for eternity' but 'eternity [ran] out.'¹³⁹

Several important conclusions can be gleaned from the responses to the gentrification of Temple View. Most evidently, it was a divisive issue. It is essential here to note that the Church was avidly pushing for the unquestioning acceptance of the planned renovations. This was not only through instruction from local leaders from the pulpit, but also Church headquarters, who sent ecclesiastical leaders from Salt Lake City to quell the disquiet.¹⁴⁰ This created tensions within the New Zealand Latter-day Saint community, as many were disappointed that the sacrifices of their ancestors were being disregarded. Conversely, there were those who were eager to follow the directives of Church hierarchy and rebuked those who were against the proposal. As well as internal tensions, the public was largely hostile to the demolition of the original Temple View buildings, seeing them as a significant heritage site for the broader community; this was reported repeatedly throughout New Zealand media. The representation of this issue by the press indicated that although the Church has become more entrenched, underlying hostilities have arisen. These hostilities, however, do not appear to arise from a distrust of the Church as a minority religion, as in the period examined in Chapters 1 and 2, but instead due to the perceived disregard of the church for its own members in New Zealand. Moreover, the Church was seen as unconcerned with the physical history and spiritual heritage of Temple View. These renovations have thus been a polarising issue, not only within the

¹³⁹ Chris Gardner, 'Eternity Runs Out at Temple View', *Waikato Times*, Hamilton, New Zealand, 17 January 2014, pp. 3

¹⁴⁰ Manch, 'Church Member Takes Last Stand', *Waikato Times*, Hamilton, New Zealand, 13 May 2017, A.2

local Mormon community, but also as perceived by broader New Zealand society. The succeeding representation of the Church by the press reflects these tensions.

Rededication of the Hamilton Temple, 2022

In 2018, the Church announced the closure of the Hamilton Temple for extensive renovations.¹⁴¹ This created a reversal of the previous phenomenon of Latter-day Saints throughout Oceania making pilgrimage to the Hamilton Temple, as now New Zealand Mormons had to travel to Australia in order to receive salvation-granting ordinances. After four years, the Hamilton Temple was reopened in October 2022. This was joyously received by New Zealand Mormons who again would have a Temple in their country; as will be seen in the next chapter, however, this occurred after the announcement of the new Auckland and Wellington Temples, both of which remain incomplete. Before the opening, however, the Temple was opened briefly to the public. In New Zealand, the Church advertised this Open House, and allowed media tours on the 22nd of August, private tours for invited guests (though who this exactly, cannot be clarified), and public tours from the 26th of August to the 17th of September. Though there was not extensive media coverage of this, the news articles are revealing of a number of themes of this thesis. Most importantly, the theme of secrecy was crucial. Journalist Leah Tebbutt, whose article was published by both *Radio New Zealand* and *The New Zealand Herald*,

¹⁴¹ Trent Toone, 'See Inside New Zealand's First Latter-day Saint Temple Following Its 4-year Renovation', *Deseret News* website, 24 August 2022, viewed 14/01/2023\
<https://www.deseret.com/faith/2022/8/23/23318340/see-inside-new-zealands-first-latter-day-saint-temple-hamilton-multiyear-renovation>

stated 'the inside of New Zealand's only Mormon Temple has been shrouded in secrecy. No-one from outside the Church has been inside for 64 years.'¹⁴²

Tebbutt articulated that she had imagined 'one large yet grand room where those of the Latter-day Saints faith would go to pray... [instead] it's a maze of tranquil spaces for different occasions.'¹⁴³ Tebbutt discusses some of the history of the original construction by the labour missionaries, the pilgrimages made by Mormons from Australia and the South Pacific, as well as the architectural and interior. She discussed the baptismal font on the twelve oxen and the 'beauty' of the celestial room. Tebbutt also notes the experience of former Hamilton MP and city councillor, Martin Gallagher, who had attended the original Open House as a six-year-old boy. Gallagher had a glowing view of the Latter-day Saints: 'their families, in many cases, have come to make huge contributions to our society at large. Genuinely, even though I am not a member of the... faith community, I absolutely honour them.'¹⁴⁴ These articles indicate the importance of the Open House in the Church's efforts to become more localised and visible within the cultures that they seek to build the religion. Though Tebbutt is generous in her review of the Temple, she does end her article by returning to this theme of the unknown: 'the temple will be formally dedicated... and the veil of secrecy will fall again.'¹⁴⁵

¹⁴² Leah Tebbutt, 'Secretive Mormon Temple to Open To Public For First Time in 64 Years', *Radio New Zealand* website, 31 August 2022, viewed 14/01/2023
<https://www.rnz.co.nz/news/national/473863/secretive-mormon-temple-to-open-to-public-for-first-time-in-64-years>

¹⁴³ Tebbutt, 'Secretive Mormon Temple to Open To Public For First Time in 64 Years', *Radio New Zealand* website, 27 December 2022

¹⁴⁴ Tebbutt, 'Secretive Mormon Temple to Open To Public For First Time in 64 Years', *Radio New Zealand* website, 27 December 2022

¹⁴⁵ Tebbutt, 'Secretive Mormon Temple to Open To Public For First Time in 64 Years', *Radio New Zealand* website, 27 December 2022

Another article that indicates the broader appeal of the Open House was written by Ann McEwan for New Zealand's *Architecture Now*. Calling the Temple a Hamilton 'landmark', McEwan also goes into a brief history of the Church in New Zealand, the construction of the Temple by labour missionaries, and the design of the building by Church architect Edward Anderson.¹⁴⁶ McEwan noted the evident 'links... to Māori culture and community through its internal ornamentation.'¹⁴⁷ The second Open House in New Zealand, whilst not drawing the crowds of 110,000 that occurred in 1958, is said to have seen 50,000 people walk through the sacred edifice before it was again closed to the public.¹⁴⁸

The rededication of the Temple took place on the 16th of October by German-born Apostle Dieter Uchtdorf. The re-dedicatory prayer was rather short but is nonetheless included in Appendix A. Uchtdorf included a blessing upon New Zealand's Latter-day Saints, as well as the broader population. He prayed that the Temple would serve as a beacon for non-Mormons to 'seek out the message of the restored gospel.' Uchtdorf acknowledged the dedication and work of earlier generations of Latter-day Saints and articulated that the 'holy temple opens the gates to eternity that these purposes may be fulfilled.' Uchtdorf's rededication ended with a reiteration of the original dedicatory prayer given by David O. McKay.¹⁴⁹ After the rededication, the Hamilton Temple is again now only a sanctuary for

¹⁴⁶ Ann McEwan, 'Modern Heritage', *Architecture Now*, 22 November 2022, viewed 14/01/2023

<https://architecturenow.co.nz/articles/modern-heritage/>

¹⁴⁷ McEwan, 'Modern Heritage', *Architecture Now*, 22 November 2022

¹⁴⁸ Toone, 'See Inside New Zealand's First Latter-day Saint Temple Following Its 4-year Renovation', *Deseret News* website, 24 August 2022

¹⁴⁹ 'Read Elder Uchtdorf's Blessing Upon Families, Youth and the Community in Hamilton Temple Rededicatory Prayer', *Church News* website, 20 October 2022, viewed 14/01/2023

<https://www.thechurchnews.com/temples/2022/10/19/23408794/hamilton-new-zealand-temple-rededicatory-prayer-elder-uchtdorf>

the Latter-day Saint community in New Zealand. Nevertheless, the common themes of this dissertation are apparent here: the sacred buildings were still viewed to be 'secretive' by the non-initiated, and Latter-day Saints saw their sacred site as a tool of further localisation, visibility, and proselytisation within New Zealand.

Carlingford, Sydney, New South Wales Temple

Completed 1984

Almost thirty years after the dedication of the Hamilton Temple, the Church announced there would be a Temple in Australia. This was a historic occasion for Australian Latter-day Saints, who no longer had to travel to New Zealand, at great expense, in order to receive salvation-granting ordinances. After deliberation, it was decided the Temple would be built in the North-Western suburb of Carlingford, Sydney. The construction of the Sydney Temple was a key indicator of not only the Church's international growth but, more significantly, its fundamental pivot towards a more localised and syncretic Mormonism within Australia. However, it was also built for the Latter-day Saint community to weather the supposed 'last days' before Jesus Christ's return. This could be interpreted as the Church building the edifice in order to become visible within an increasingly secular Australian society. Although this Temple was received with gratitude by members of the Church, others in the community were resistant. This included a Citizens Committee who opposed the construction. Moreover, the local government did not immediately give permits for the placing of the Angel Moroni statue atop the Temple. It is here argued that although the White Australia Policy had been officially ended by the mid-1970s, there was still a reticence from the broader Australian public to expand into multiculturalism. This has been argued to be the case in the construction of non-Christian religious buildings associated with Islam, Judaism, Buddhism and Hinduism, yet, arguably, also extended to Mormonism.¹⁵⁰ It should be noted, however, that the violence

¹⁵⁰ Laura Beth Bugg, 'Citizenship and Belonging in the Rural Fringe: A Case Study of a Hindu Temple in Sydney, Australia', *Antipode*, Volume 45, Issue 5, 2013, pp. 1148-1166; Laura Bugg and Nicole Gurrán, 'Urban Planning Process and Discourses in the Refusal for Islamic Schools in Sydney, Australia', *Australian Planner*, Volume 48, Issue 4, December 2011, pp. 281-291; Kevin M. Dunn, 'Representations of Islam in

towards these non-Christian religious buildings often came with more open pushback from the public, including violence, arson attacks, and even bombings.¹⁵¹ Though the Latter-day Saint Temple in Sydney was vandalised, there was no racially-charged violence; thus, whilst the Latter-day Saint Temple construction does sit within a broader history of antagonism against religious minorities in Australia, the hostility has not been as severe. Arguably, this is because Latter-day Saints during this period were mostly white Australians, with a somewhat sizeable minority of Indigenous Australians as well as Asian and Pacific Islander immigrants; thus the view of the Latter-day Saints as ‘other’ was based upon religious belief rather than ethnic or racial difference. This can be seen even after the completion of the Temple, as hostility in relation to its existence, particularly from other religious leaders and communities, was evident. This aspect of its history will be explored in detail as it shows that the Church’s relationships with the broader Sydney community are not static but evolving.

The plans to construct the Sydney Temple were announced at the April 1980 General Conference, a Salt Lake City-based biannual event where the Church hierarchy address members. According to Newton, the Church asked members to contribute \$1,000,000 AUD to the project; a contribution that exceeded this amount was made within six months.¹⁵² Shortly after the announcement in General Conference, reports of the

the Politics of Mosque Development in Sydney’, *Tijdschrift voor economische en sociale geografie*, Volume 92, 2001, pp. 291-30

¹⁵¹ Zena Chamas, ‘Muslims Attending Mosques During Holy Month of Ramadan Fear Ongoing Hate Crimes’, *ABC News*, 11 April 2021, <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2021-04-11/islam-australia-mosques-hate-crimes-amid-month-ramadan/100015436>; Julie Rudner, ‘Hijacking Democracy? Spatialised Persecution and the Planning Process’, in Mario Puecker and Debra Smith (eds.), *The Far-Right In Contemporary Australia*, Palgrave MacMillan, 2019, pp. 175-199; Suzanne Rutland, “Negotiating Religious Dialogue: A Response to the Recent Increase of Anti-Semitism in Australia.” In *Negotiating the Sacred*, 17–30. Canberra: ANU E Press, 2006.

¹⁵² Newton, *Southern Cross Saints*, pp. 42

construction of the Sydney Temple were printed in Australian media.¹⁵³ Significantly, an article in *The Canberra Times* announced the construction, and stated that members within Canberra had been requested to donate \$50,000 AUD; unlike the case of the New Zealand Temple, members were no longer required to provide physical labour.¹⁵⁴ This article stated that ‘plans to build the Temple were announced in April, and [it] is expected to cost between \$2 million and \$3 million.’¹⁵⁵ This report also noted that a Church spokesperson had claimed the building would be finished by the end of 1981, which of course did not occur.¹⁵⁶ Another article, also from *The Canberra Times*, discussed the significance of this Temple as it would be the first in Australia. This was reiterated several times, indicating that the importance of the structure to the Australian Mormon community was understood by the broader Australian media.¹⁵⁷ Despite the acknowledgement of its importance, this article also described the

Rowdy scenes at the Baulkham Hills Council meeting... as the application was approved with just one dissenting vote... A spokesman for the Carlingford Residents Action Group, Mr Larry Bolitho, said... that 1500 residents had signed a petition opposing the [Temple] or had already lodged their own opposition to the plans.¹⁵⁸

In response to this petition, then communications director for the Church in Australia, Mike Otterson, stated that ‘8,000 leaflets to local residents outlining the project’ had been delivered.¹⁵⁹

¹⁵³ David Elias, ‘Formula of Success is Prayer, Tax, and a lot of Work’, *The Age*, 11 October 1980, pp. 3

¹⁵⁴ ‘Mormons Raise \$50,000’, *The Canberra Times*, Wednesday 05 November 1980, pp. 22

¹⁵⁵ ‘Mormons Raise \$50,000’, *The Canberra Times*, Wednesday 05 November 1980, pp. 22

¹⁵⁶ ‘Mormons Raise \$50,000’, *The Canberra Times*, Wednesday 05 November 1980, pp. 22

¹⁵⁷ ‘Mormon Temple for Sydney’, *The Canberra Times*, Thursday 06 May 1982, pp. 16

¹⁵⁸ ‘Mormon Temple for Sydney’, *The Canberra Times*, Thursday 06 May 1982, pp. 16

¹⁵⁹ ‘Mormon Temple for Sydney’, *The Canberra Times*, Thursday 06 May 1982, pp. 16

The protests of the Carlingford Residents Action Group (CRAG) were also reported upon by Sydney newspapers. For example, in the *Sydney Morning Herald*, Richard Macey, stated that at a 'heated meeting, councillors and objecting residents hurled abuse at each other.'¹⁶⁰ Though there was much protest at this meeting, the Baulkham Hills Shire Council nonetheless voted in favour to proceed with the planned construction.¹⁶¹ More importantly, another article from 1981 indicated that Reverend Les Vitnell, of St. Paul's Church of England, which stands less than a half a kilometre away from the Temple, emphasised:

My church has been quiet on the matter lately because we did not want to make a holy war of the issue. [However] I would encourage the residents action group to pursue legal action to prevent the project which we believe will cause a traffic nightmare'.¹⁶²

Reverend Vitnell's comments signal two important issues here. First, that the reverend of a local Anglican parish officially encouraged legal action against the Church shows the hostility that still permeated certain segments of Australian society against the Latter-day Saints. Second, as the Reverend himself admitted, though the protest was ostensibly for practical reasons, for instance traffic concerns, there were still elements of interdenominational prejudice, evidenced by his reference to not wanting to stir a 'holy war' against the Mormons.

Despite the year-long campaign against the Temple being framed as a protest against the site for both aesthetic and infrastructure reasons, Baulkham Hills Shire President, Bernie

¹⁶⁰ Richard Macey, 'Rowdy Scenes Over Mormon Temple Go-Ahead', *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 05 May 1981, pp. 11

¹⁶¹ Macey, 'Rowdy Scenes Over Mormon Temple Go-Ahead', *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 05 May 1981, pp. 11

¹⁶² Ross Dunn, 'Residents and Rector Condemn Go-Ahead for Sydney Mormon Temple', *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 16 October 1981, pp. 2

Mullane, claimed that these protests were ‘nothing more than a heap of bigotry.’¹⁶³ Mullane further articulated that he was ‘sad our community is being divided. We should understand there is room for differences in religion.’¹⁶⁴ These numerous articles show that the hostilities around the Temple were well-known throughout Sydney. The protests against the planned construction of the Sydney Temple showed not only the actions of local residents, but also how the Church sought to turn opinion in its favour. It is also telling that the Church did not accept that hostility from the community really existed, as they claimed to have only received ‘one strong objection.’¹⁶⁵ It is further indicative of a changing Australia that despite quite concentrated objections from the community, the local council nevertheless voted in favour of the Temple’s construction in Carlingford.

However, although the Baulkham Hills Shire Council agreed to the plans, CRAG ‘appealed to the council, the traffic authorities and finally to the minister, claiming that the proposed development plans for the temple site... would create a major traffic hazard.’¹⁶⁶ The pressure of CRAG was so immense that the original plans to build a Stake Centre (chapel) on the same grounds as the Temple was eventually rejected by the Council.¹⁶⁷ Even after the building plans were approved in May 1982, members of the Residents’ Committee stood in local elections, with several winning seats based on plans to stop, alter, or hinder the construction of the Temple.¹⁶⁸ With their numbers in local government, when the Church applied for permission to erect the statue of the Angel Moroni on the completed

¹⁶³ ‘Opposition to Temple ‘Bigotry’, *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 06 May 1982, pp. 11

¹⁶⁴ ‘Opposition to Temple ‘Bigotry’, *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 06 May 1982, pp. 11

¹⁶⁵ ‘Mormon Temple for Sydney’, *The Canberra Times*, Thursday 06 May 1982, pp. 16

¹⁶⁶ Newton, *Southern Cross Saints*, pp. 83

¹⁶⁷ Newton, *Southern Cross Saints*, pp. 83

¹⁶⁸ Newton, *Southern Cross Saints*, pp. 83

Temple in 1984, approval was blocked.¹⁶⁹ The Church was forced to appeal to the Land and Environment Court, which eventually ruled in favour of the Church.¹⁷⁰

Despite the objections of CRAG, the groundbreaking of the Sydney Temple occurred in August 1982. This event was reported both within *The Sydney Morning Herald* and *The Canberra Times*.¹⁷¹ Both articles note the arrival of Mormon Apostle Bruce R. McConkie, who had previously served as the Mission President for the Southern Australian Mission, visited the site that had been purchased by the Church and officially commenced construction with the 'official turning of the sod.'¹⁷² Isabel Lukas of *The Sydney Morning Herald* observed that the event was attended by 150 Latter-day Saint leaders, from the United States and around Australia.¹⁷³ Lukas similarly noted that Australian Mormons who had wanted to 'be married for eternity' previously had to travel to New Zealand or beyond for this ordinance to be completed.¹⁷⁴ Lukas discussed the objections to the Temple from CRAG, and the support the Church had from the local government. The article in *The Canberra Times* emphasised that, once completed, the Temple would become the most sacred site and 'spiritual focus' for the 60,000 Latter-day Saints within Australia.¹⁷⁵ A year before the Temple was completed, *The Sydney Morning Herald* reported the progress of the structure, again emphasising the opposition. At this time, the plans to hoist the Angel Moroni atop the structure had still been denied.¹⁷⁶

¹⁶⁹ Newton, *Southern Cross Saints*, pp. 83

¹⁷⁰ Newton, *Southern Cross Saints*, pp. 83

¹⁷¹ 'In Brief: Temple Begun', *The Canberra Times*, Saturday 14 August 1982, pp. 3; Isabel Lukas, 'A Temple Where 'I Do' Is Forever', *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 14 August 1982, pp. 15

¹⁷² 'In Brief: Temple Begun', *The Canberra Times*, Saturday 14 August 1982, pp. 3

¹⁷³ Lukas, 'A Temple Where 'I Do' Is Forever', *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 14 August 1982, pp. 15

¹⁷⁴ Lukas, 'A Temple Where 'I Do' Is Forever', *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 14 August 1982, pp. 15

¹⁷⁵ 'In Brief: Temple Begun', *The Canberra Times*, Saturday 14 August 1982, pp. 3

¹⁷⁶ 'Church Gives Suburb a New Landmark', *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 14 December 1983, pp. 11

Following completion, the Church announced Open Days for Sydney Temple, beginning on the 6th of September 1984. This was announced as early as mid-August 1984, and the Church placed advertisements in the 5th and 10th September editions of *The Sydney Morning Herald*, though, ironically, they understated the existence of Mormonism in Australia by over a decade.¹⁷⁷

The Church was not subtle in attempting to pique public interest in attending the Open House. According to Alan Gill, of *The Sydney Morning Herald*, this campaign was largely successful, as 30,000 people toured the Temple walls in the two weeks in which they were opened to the public before the building was dedicated.¹⁷⁸ Gill, a journalist focused on religious issues, attended the very first tour of the Temple, and reported that it was 'full of surprises.'¹⁷⁹ Gill noted that this first group included other journalists, three MPs from New South Wales, two mayors, a Rabbi, and the public director of then-Premier of New South Wales.¹⁸⁰ This indicates the broad range of individuals who desired to see the Temple. Gill further claimed that a third of Australia's 60,000 Mormons were expected to attend the Open Days. Gill also emphasised that the issue surrounding Moroni had not

¹⁷⁷ '133 Years in the Making... Just 11 Days to See It', *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 05 September 1984, pp. 5; '133 Years in the Making... Just 11 Days to See It', *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 10 September 1984, pp. 169; Alan Gill, 'Foetus is a Person with Full Rights, Says Anti-Abortionist', *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 15 August 1984, pp. 15

¹⁷⁸ Alan Gill, 'Churches Made News in '84', *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 26 December 1984, pp. 17

¹⁷⁹ Alan Gill, 'Our Mormon Temple Opens Its Doors To All', *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 06 September 1984, pp. 2

¹⁸⁰ Gill, 'Our Mormon Temple Opens Its Doors To All', *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 06 September 1984, pp. 2

been resolved, and, 'with mouth to trumpet', was temporarily held in a box in the Temple's administration building; a cartoon of this accompanied the article.¹⁸¹

Following the Open Days, and despite earlier objections, the Carlingford, Sydney Temple was dedicated over four days from the 20th to the 23rd of September 1984, by then-Apostle of the Church Gordon B. Hinckley. The dedicatory prayer is likewise attached in Appendix A. The Dedicatory Prayer of the Sydney Temple is somewhat different from that of the Hamilton Temple. Most significantly, it includes more discussion of the role of Jesus Christ in the cosmology of the Church; this was interestingly absent from the Dedicatory Prayer of the New Zealand Temple. This could represent an attempt from the Church to appeal to more mainstream Christians than it had previously. Like McKay, Hinckley emphasised the restorationist origins of the Church, highlighting the First Vision. He mentioned the Latter-day Saint idea of the 'Great Apostasy', as referenced by the 'centuries of darkness.' He also mentioned the ecclesiastical hierarchy of the Church, thanking God for the re-establishment of prophets and apostles, including the Mormon doctrine of the divine link between deity and Mormon authorities. As with the New Zealand Temple, Hinckley noted the 'hospitality' of the Australian people; he also noted the longstanding existence of the Church within Australia, stating that missionaries had been in the nation for over a century. It is a relatively brief mention, however, and is not the glowing acknowledgement of the New Zealand people in the Hamilton Temple Dedicatory Prayer almost thirty years earlier. This perhaps indicates a recognition of the Church's comparative lack of reception and success within Australia contrasted with New

¹⁸¹ Gill, 'Our Mormon Temple Opens Its Doors To All', *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 06 September 1984, pp. 2

Zealand. Despite this, Hinckley invoked a divine blessing that Australian Latter-day Saints would be seen as loyal subjects; perhaps there was a fear on the part of the Church of a lingering suspicion of Latter-day Saints by the Australian people. In a similar vein, Hinckley stated ‘an ever-increasing number of truth seekers’, converts to the Church, were performing the necessary ordinances and rituals for salvation and prayed that the country would remain ‘free from bondage.’ Within the historical context of the time, it perhaps reveals enduring anxiety surrounding the Cold War, as discussed in the analysis of the New Zealand Temple’s dedication. However, Hinckley’s dedication can also be examined through the lens of United States President Ronald Reagan’s more hawkish diplomatic tendencies that had dictated the broader Cold War during this decade.¹⁸²

As with the Hamilton Temple, Hinckley emphasised the essential role of the Church in the salvation of humanity; this is particularly important as it shows how the Church viewed itself. Hinckley likewise blessed the physical aspects of the Temple, again cementing the belief that the Temple represents a connection between the spiritual and temporal. He also prayed that the Temple would be a ‘beacon’ to members of the Church throughout Australia, and that the construction of the sacred building was a gift to God. Hinckley again prayed that the Temple and its surrounds would be ‘a place of beauty’, not only for the Latter-day Saints in Australia, but also for the general population. Moreover, Hinckley blessed the Temple, asking that it would be a place in which God and Jesus Christ would be able to physically ‘visit’, again emphasising this building as a place in which the Divine melded with the physical. Finally, Hinckley sought the blessings of heaven to

¹⁸² Colin Dueck, ‘Ronald Reagan: Idealist as Hawk’, in *Hardline: The Republican Party and U.S. Foreign Policy Since WWII*, Princeton University Press, 2010, pp. 189-230

ensure that ‘the homes of the [Australian] people be opened’ to missionaries. This linked the building of the Temple with the desired growth of the Church within Australia.

Responses from the Broader Community After the Dedication

Even after the Temple was completed, it was vandalised on a number of occasions.¹⁸³ As this was the most sacred site of Mormonism in Australia, these episodes of vandalism deeply affected the Australian Latter-day Saint community. However, Newton writes that by the time of the publication of her book in 1989, vandalism had decline and ‘the temple now appears to be accepted in the community, perhaps reflecting a wider official and community acceptance of the LDS Church.’¹⁸⁴ As evidence of this, Newton wrote that at the diamond jubilee of the Bankstown Ward, a suburb of South-West Sydney, in March 1986, members of the congregation received ‘commendatory letters’ from then Prime Minister Bob Hawke and Mayor of Bankstown Alderman Kevin Hill.¹⁸⁵

Despite Newton’s optimism, it is clear from a number of newspaper articles that there were continued tensions that existed regarding the Temple and Latter-day Saints within Australia. For example, in 1998, ‘an unholy row ... erupted’ after Jon Kennedy, a radio presenter for Triple M, decided to make an ‘on-air invasion of the [Sydney] Temple.’¹⁸⁶ Kennedy instructed one of his listeners, as part of his ‘extreme games’ segment, to knock on the door of the Temple in Carlingford carrying a sign that read ‘I love Satan, Satan

¹⁸³ Newton, *Southern Cross Saints*, pp. 84

¹⁸⁴ Newton, *Southern Cross Saints*, pp. 84

¹⁸⁵ Newton, *Southern Cross Saints*, pp. 84

¹⁸⁶ Heather Chapman, ‘Temple Dare Causes Stir, On The Air’, *The Sydney Morning Herald*, Sydney, New South Wales, 23 November 1998, pp. 6

rocks.’¹⁸⁷ Kennedy stated that ‘they come knock on our doors when we’re at home relaxing so I want to give them a bit of their own medicine.’¹⁸⁸ According to this article, the listener was ‘politely but firmly escorted out.’¹⁸⁹ This act suggests that despite the fact the Temple had been in Sydney for fifteen years, segments of the Australian community were still hostile to the Latter-day Saint sacred site or were annoyed by aggressive proselytisation efforts. It also shows that although this was a clear intrusion of the sacred space, restraint was shown. Heather Chapman, who reported on this incident for the *Sydney Morning Herald*, stated an interesting coincidence: ‘the live broadcast was almost inaudible and had to be cut by Kennedy.’¹⁹⁰ One of the producers of the show, Jason Brookes, remarked ‘Jesus must have been on their side because we couldn’t get any reception through.’¹⁹¹ Although somewhat sympathetic to the Church, the news reports on this incident do not convey the gravity of this violation, and the disrespect the Latter-day Saint community would have felt.

The Church responded by having the Public Affairs representative, Alan Wakeley, a former ABC presenter and Federation of Australian Broadcasters executive, issue a statement:

We really have no desire to pursue this publicly, but can say that the ‘extreme games’ dare was a... misguided attempt at humour. It was certainly preferable to the quite dangerous comment about

¹⁸⁷ Chapman, ‘Temple Dare Causes Stir, On The Air’, *The Sydney Morning Herald*, Sydney, New South Wales, 23 November 1998, pp. 6

¹⁸⁸ ¹⁸⁸ Chapman, ‘Temple Dare Causes Stir, On The Air’, *The Sydney Morning Herald*, Sydney, New South Wales, 23 November 1998, pp. 6

¹⁸⁹ Chapman, ‘Temple Dare Causes Stir, On The Air’, *The Sydney Morning Herald*, Sydney, New South Wales, 23 November 1998, pp. 6

¹⁹⁰ Chapman, ‘Temple Dare Causes Stir, On The Air’, *The Sydney Morning Herald*, Sydney, New South Wales, 23 November 1998, pp. 6

¹⁹¹ Chapman, ‘Temple Dare Causes Stir, On The Air’, *The Sydney Morning Herald*, Sydney, New South Wales, 23 November 1998, pp. 6

'dismembered Mormons.' Unfortunately, during the dare they made the mistake of entering our most sacred building...¹⁹²

This was in reference to a segment in which Kennedy recollected:

We were using the talkback topic of what you would most like to have delivered to your door, like a pizza, and I used a very dark joke. I said a 'dismembered Mormon' ... they complained. They called my program director: they didn't call me, which I was a bit upset about. Next night I went on the air and I didn't apologise... but I spoke about how the Mormons had donated a lot of money to Wollongong flood victims.¹⁹³

According to Chapman, though this issue naturally 'died down', the tension between Triple M and the Church flared up again due to the 'on-air invasion.' These incidents, which occurred fifteen years after the construction of the Temple, show that even with the greater presence of the Church within Australia, and a more thorough localisation, there were still lingering hostilities from at least some in the media.

More evidence of the tension that exists within Australia in relation to Mormonism was the reaction of one local congregation, St. Paul's Church of England, in Carlingford. As Reverend Vitnell's response indicated, St. Paul's was hostile to the Temple and the continued Latter-day Saint presence that it represented in their neighbourhood. Vitnell had thrown his support behind the CRAG protests in the early 1980s, after the construction of the Temple had been announced. In 1998, St. Paul's began the Mormon Outreach Ministry, which sought to dissuade Latter-day Saints from their faith; by 2003,

¹⁹² Chapman, 'Temple Dare Causes Stir, On The Air', *The Sydney Morning Herald*, Sydney, New South Wales, 23 November 1998, pp. 6

¹⁹³ Chapman, 'Temple Dare Causes Stir, On The Air', *The Sydney Morning Herald*, Sydney, New South Wales, 23 November 1998, pp. 6

the Ministry had created a website to challenge Mormonism's claims.¹⁹⁴ According to its own words,

We respect Mormon culture and aim to present the Gospel in a way a Mormon can understand... We have studied the current official teaching manuals of the Mormon Church and compared them with the teaching of the Bible. There are three main sections in our website: directly addressed to Mormons, equipping Saints for the work of this ministry and preventing non-Mormons from joining the Mormon Church.¹⁹⁵

It is important to note that whilst the Ministry became defunct in July 2017, the website is maintained for 'edification.'¹⁹⁶

The St. Paul's Mormon Outreach Ministry had links to the Utah Lighthouse Ministry, which describes itself as a 'Christian non-profit organisation' run by Gerald (now deceased) and Sandra Tanner, founded in 1964.¹⁹⁷ The Tanners, who both come from famous Mormon families (Sandra is the great-great-granddaughter of Prophet Brigham Young), have been dedicated for the last five decades to challenging Mormonism by promoting a more 'mainstream' Christianity in Utah.¹⁹⁸ The Tanners have written over forty books on the subject of Mormonism, and have encouraged members of the Church

¹⁹⁴ 'What We Believe', *Mormon Outreach Ministries Sydney Website*, Last Updated 15 July 2017, viewed 23/03/2021

<http://momsydney.org.au/details.php>

¹⁹⁵ 'What We Believe', *Mormon Outreach Ministries Sydney Website*, Last Updated 15 July 2017, viewed 23/03/2021

¹⁹⁶ 'Welcome to Mormon Outreach Ministries', *Mormon Outreach Ministries Sydney Website*, Last Updated 15 July 2017, viewed 23/03/2021

<http://momsydney.org.au/details.php>

¹⁹⁷ 'General Information on Mormonism – Article List', *Mormon Outreach Ministries Sydney Website*, Last Updated 15 July 2017, viewed 23/03/2021

<http://momsydney.org.au/details.php>

¹⁹⁸ 'About Us', *Utah Lighthouse Ministry Website*, viewed 23/03/2021

<http://www.utlm.org/navaboutus.htm>

to carefully consider its history.¹⁹⁹ Widely labelled as anti-Mormons by faithful members, the Tanners have also supplied copies of original historical documents, greatly increasing their availability for the purposes of critically examining Mormon history.²⁰⁰ That the Sydney-based Mormon Outreach Ministry readily identified with the well-established Utah Lighthouse Ministries is significant, as it shows a transnational hostility to Mormonism within Australia.

As well as links to the Lighthouse Ministry, numerous original articles were published by the Mormon Outreach Ministry that are still available. For instance, there are letters from former members of the Church that outline their reasons for leaving Mormonism.²⁰¹ There is also a detailed explanation as to why, in the view of the Ministry, ‘the Mormon Church is not Christian.’²⁰² The site also has detailed analyses of Mormon doctrines and theology, albeit explored and challenged through an Anglican cosmological lens. Latter-day Saint teachings such as ‘the Great Apostasy’, ‘Priesthood Authority’, ‘more than one Heaven’, ‘Hell as Temporary Abode’, ‘Need for Modern-Day Prophets’, and the perceived fallibility of the Bible are discussed in detail.²⁰³ Though this Ministry was formed over a decade after the construction of the Carlingford Temple, it is arguable that the physical

¹⁹⁹ ‘About Us’, *Utah Lighthouse Ministry Website* 1

²⁰⁰ ‘About Us’, *Utah Lighthouse Ministry Website*

²⁰¹ ‘Letters of Urgency - Article List’, *Mormon Outreach Ministries Sydney Website*, Last Updated 15 July 2017, viewed 23/03/2021

<http://momsydney.org.au/details.php>

²⁰² ‘Are You Latter-day Saints? – Article List’, *Mormon Outreach Ministries Sydney Website*, Last Updated 15 July 2017, viewed 23/03/2021

<http://momsydney.org.au/details.php>

²⁰³ ²⁰³ ‘Are You Latter-day Saints? – Article List’, *Mormon Outreach Ministries Sydney Website*, Last Updated 15 July 2017

presence of the building served as a motivator for St Paul's Anglican Church to formalise such a program.

The Outreach Ministry was mentioned in a 2004 article written by Malcolm Brown in *The Sydney Morning Herald*, entitled 'Mormons Still To Meet the Neighbours After 20 Years.'²⁰⁴ Brown writes about how the Church has struggled to gain acceptance within Sydney, despite their efforts to be a broader part of the community. He describes the 20th anniversary of the Temple as being received 'amid Church rejoicing and the rest of Sydney moving grudgingly towards greater religious tolerance.'²⁰⁵ Brown also wrote of how St. Paul's Anglican Church had 'little or no contact with their neighbours' and that 'it employs a staff member to run an internet "Mormon Outreach", aimed at converting Mormons.'²⁰⁶ According to the article, St. Paul's similarly has a 'Word of Life Ministry', which seeks to bring Muslims to Christianity.²⁰⁷ Brown notes that 'the Church has worked hard at acceptance, contributing large sums annually to the Smith Family and putting a nativity scene on its front lawn each Christmas.'²⁰⁸ The efforts of the Latter-day Saint Church to be perceived as both the broader Christian community is revealing. It shows that the Church saw itself as needing to be part of these broader communities, whether societal or religious. It also indicates that these efforts had been recognised, and thus this attempt to be seen as part of larger Australian society had been somewhat successful.

²⁰⁴ Malcolm Brown, 'Mormons Still To Meet the Neighbours After 20 Years', *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 20 September 2004, pp. 4

²⁰⁵ Brown, 'Mormons Still To Meet the Neighbours After 20 Years', *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 20 September 2004, pp. 4

²⁰⁶ Brown, 'Mormons Still To Meet the Neighbours After 20 Years', *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 20 September 2004, pp. 4

²⁰⁷ Brown, 'Mormons Still To Meet the Neighbours After 20 Years', *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 20 September 2004, pp. 4

²⁰⁸ Brown, 'Mormons Still To Meet the Neighbours After 20 Years', *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 20 September 2004, pp. 4

Two further articles, written thirty years after the Temple was built, reflect the broader shifts in the place of Mormons in Australian life. These examples offer neutral reporting on the commemoration celebrations held by over one thousand Latter-day Saints.²⁰⁹ Joel Barrett's 'Mormon Faithful Celebrate 30 Years' for *Hills News*, quoted Temple patron Matthew Parsons, who stated 'it holds a special place in our hearts... it is a sacred spiritual strength for the thousands of Latter-day Saints in NSW.'²¹⁰ Another article, published in *The Hills Shire Times*, remarked that 'the Temple is a landmark [in] ... Carlingford.'²¹¹ These two articles stand in stark contrast to the previously cited articles and suggest the gradual, broader acceptance of Mormonism within Sydney. Thus, there is evidence of a shifting attitude towards Mormonism, which, as it shall be argued, is apparent across the country. This gradual tolerance towards the Church is an important indicator of the Church's localisation, as hostilities certainly did exist when the Temple in Sydney was first constructed.

Conclusion

As has been explored in this chapter, the reception and reaction to the first Temples in New Zealand and Australia were mixed. In both nations, the construction of these sacred edifices was frequently reported on before construction had even finished. In New

²⁰⁹ Joel Barrett, 'Mormon Faithful Celebrate 30 Years', *Hills News (Castle Hill, New South Wales)*, 02 October 2013, pp. 12

²¹⁰ Joel Barrett, 'Mormon Faithful Celebrate 30 Years', *Hills News (Castle Hill, New South Wales)*, 02 October 2013, pp. 12

²¹¹ 'Landmark Temple Celebrates 30 Years', *The Hills Shire Times (Parramatta, New South Wales)*, 30 September 2014, pp. 35

Zealand, the media and broader societal reception was much more positive than in Australia, though there was some commentary to indicate elements of displeasure at the Hamilton Temple's construction. One of the key indications of a shift to broader acceptance was the spectacle of the Hamilton Temple and Church College's Open House. Attended by thousands of New Zealanders, Samoans, Tongans, and Australians, both Latter-day Saints and those without connection to the Church, the Open House also attracted dignitaries and officials from various Pacific Island governments. Within the context of increasing Cold War tensions, in particular the signing of the ANZUS Treaty, it is possible that the attendance of New Zealand and Pacific politicians at the Open House of an American religion was a reflection of these anxieties.

More recently, the Church's decision to close and demolish most of the Church College buildings and the surrounding village, which were still inhabited by New Zealander Mormons, created a furore. The hierarchical nature of the Church has been criticised, with both dissident and faithful Latter-day Saints and the broader New Zealand public alike protesting the decision. This conflict became a matter of public discourse not only through New Zealand's media, but also through a heritage tribunal. This tension signifies an important aspect of the development of New Zealand Mormonism and its broader representation. Yet, the unflinchingly hierarchical nature of the Church and its heavy-handed attempt to mitigate member dissent were not enough for some labour missionaries and their faithful descendants to criticise the demolition. This has meant that as the Church has become more localised within New Zealand, tensions have erupted due to perceived overstepping of Church authority. Here, the College was perceived as

more New Zealand than Mormon, as numerous attempts to stop the Church on heritage grounds were attempted.

Conversely, the controversy surrounding the Carlingford, Sydney Temple was more associated with the marginal nature of the Church, and the perceived secrecy surrounding the sacred space. The hostility towards the Temple mobilised citizens to form the Carlingford Action Committee to formally protest the construction. This was not only a secular endeavour, however, as local clergy were also involved. Importantly, this hostility was not framed as anti-Mormon sentiment, but rather for aesthetic and infrastructural reasons. Though the sincerity of this claim is debatable, this is an important distinction; as the White Australia Policy had officially ended a decade earlier, legislation in Australia had shifted to enforce multiculturalism. However, the opposition to the Sydney Temple was so intense that the Angel Moroni, the pinnacle of Latter-day Saint Temples, was not allowed to be placed on the edifice for over a year. Only by legally challenging this decision was this decision reversed. Even after the construction of the Temple, however, there were a number of incidents that indicated broader Australian society's lack of acceptance of the Temple in Carlingford. This included not only vandalism, but also an unauthorised entry by media, and the creation of the 'Mormon Outreach Ministry' by St. Paul's Anglican Church in Carlingford. Thus, the Temples in Hamilton and Carlingford were built during a time of shifting anxieties, ideals, and realities for both New Zealand and Australia. Moreover, the reception of the Temples, which ranged from hostile to welcoming, was reflected in the way in which the Temples were represented by the media, other religious figures, and broader society. It is important to articulate that, once again, though the Temples represented a pivot and

anchoring of Latter-day Saint identity to these nations, this was arguably done in a response to increasingly secularised Australian and New Zealand societies.

CHAPTER IV

'You've Seen Their Temple, Now Back to the Bible'²¹²:

Later Temples in Australia & New Zealand, 2000-2022

Introduction

In the April 2022 General Conference, prophet of the Church Russell M. Nelson announced that a Temple in Wellington, New Zealand would be constructed. Though this Temple has not been built, nor are there any plans for its groundbreaking, the Church has purchased land in the Aotea neighbourhood of Porirua. This will be the third Temple in New Zealand, and represents a more solid localisation of the religion, through the building of a rooted, physical anchor point of the Latter-day Saints' faith. This chapter will examine the Temples that have been constructed in Adelaide, Melbourne, Brisbane, Perth, and Auckland; it will examine and contrast how these have been received by the broader Australian and New Zealand public. Though there has been some resistance to the Church buildings, particularly in Australia, this has not been to the same extent as the tensions around the earlier Temples, explored in the previous chapter.

This chapter will place the building of these so-called 'mini-Temples' within a broader discussion of an increased Temple building in Latter-day Saint history. Under Gordon B.

²¹² Peter Hackett, 'All God's Children and the Temple of Conflict', *The Advertiser*, Adelaide, South Australia, 15 June 2000, pp. 9

Hinckley, who was President from 1995 to his death in 2008, the number of Mormon Temples increased from 47 to 124.²¹³ The first of the so-called 'mini-Temples' built within Australia was in the Adelaide suburb of Marden, which was consecrated on the 15th June 2000.²¹⁴ It was dedicated only one day before the Melbourne Temple, which was built in Wantirna South, a suburb 34 kilometres south-west of Melbourne.²¹⁵ At this time, the construction of the Yokine, Perth and Kangaroo Point, Brisbane Temples was also underway, to be completed in 2001 and 2003 respectively.²¹⁶ The quick, successive building of 'mini-Temples' within all but two Capital Cities in Australia is important to examine within Oceania, but also within the greater context of the mass construction of Latter-day Saint Temples worldwide, initiated by Hinckley. The Temples built in Adelaide, Melbourne, Brisbane, and Perth were part of a broader push by the Church to localise, through physical representations of the religion, faith communities at each site across the globe. These Temples that were constructed later were similar in style, materials, and design to other temples built worldwide. Arguably, these Temples were created in reaction to the marginalisation of the religion, especially within the secular nations of Australia and New Zealand.

²¹³ Tad Walch, 'A Brief History of Latter-day Saint Temple Announcements', *Deseret News*, 08 October 2021, viewed 04/06/2023

<https://www.deseret.com/2021/10/7/22712932/churchbeat-newsletter-president-nelson-has-announced-a-record-83-temples#:~:text=Hinckley%20announced%2078%20temples%20during,which%20spanned%20nearly%2013%20years>.

²¹⁴ 'Spiritual Sanctuaries' for Faithful Adelaide, Melbourne Members', *Church News Archives* website, Updated 23 June 2000, viewed 12/01/2021

<https://www.thechurchnews.com/archives/2000-06-24/spiritual-sanctuaries-for-faithful-adelaide-melbourne-members-118669>

²¹⁵ 'Spiritual Sanctuaries' for Faithful Adelaide, Melbourne Members', *Church News Archives*, 20 June 2000

²¹⁶ 'Spiritual Sanctuaries' for Faithful Adelaide, Melbourne Members', *Church News Archives*, 23 June 2000

Temples finished during this same period stretched from the Dominican Republic, Japan, Fiji, Canada, Ghana, Bolivia, Denmark, and the United States, amongst numerous other countries. In all, the Church finished sixty-four Temples between 1999 and 2004.²¹⁷ This process of rapid, worldwide Temple construction was not haphazard. It was highly coordinated by the upper echelons of the Church, and announcements of new Temples were received by ecstatic members. When Hinckley became Prophet, there were only forty-seven Temples throughout the world, the majority within the United States. During Hinckley's tenure, there were more Temples constructed than under any previous or succeeding President.²¹⁸ The vast majority of these were built outside of the United States, and represent a globalisation of the Church. Part of this was to change the way Temples were constructed; rather than being based on a required number of Latter-day Saints in a geographic area, the Church built Temples where it was difficult for members to attend due to distance and cost. In Mormon cosmology, this allowed more Latter-day Saints to be able to obtain the necessary ordinances for salvation, as well as to provide it to those in the afterlife. This mass construction of Temples has continued under the current President, Russell M. Nelson, who has announced 133 new Temples since his tenure as leader of the Church began in January 2018.²¹⁹

This chapter will also explore the way in which Temples have been represented and received by broader Australian and New Zealand society. This chapter emphasises a pivot away from more overt hostility towards begrudging acceptance of the Church. However,

²¹⁷ Walch, 'A Brief History of Latter-day Saint Temple Announcements', *Deseret News*, 08 October 2021

²¹⁸ 'Temple Chronology', *Temples of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* website, viewed 4th April 2023

<https://churchofjesuschristtemples.org/temples/chronology/>

²¹⁹ Walch, 'A Brief History of Latter-day Saint Temple Announcements', *Deseret News*, 08 October 2021

as will be seen, there is evidence of lingering distrust of the Latter-day Saints and their Temples. Most importantly, however, the construction of the Temples has represented the Church's increased localisation and visibility within both nations, particularly Australia. As will be explored within the next chapters, this localisation of the Church has resulted in a more confident presence, which has manifested in a further enmeshment in the politics and popular culture of these countries. Despite this, the Church has remained marginal, and at times has come under criticism, for these attempts. This dichotomy, which was seen throughout the previous chapter, will again be a focal point.

Other sources will be utilised within this chapter to contextualise the overarching arguments of this dissertation. For example, the Dedicatory Prayers of each of the Temples will be analysed. These Prayers are invaluable for conveying the perception of the Church's hierarchy towards the Temples in Australia. As with the Hamilton and Sydney Temples, these Dedicatory Prayers are printed in full in Appendix A. Moreover, I closely examine the advertisements the Church placed within various newspapers to promote the Open Days of the Temples. These sources provide important insight into how the Church has presented itself to the broader Australian and New Zealand public. Though this chapter is mostly original research, as there are no academic sources that discuss the construction of the mini-Temples in Australia or New Zealand, themes that have been identified by Marjorie Newton about the Hamilton and Sydney Temples in *Southern Cross Saints* and *Tiki and Temple* will be explored throughout this chapter.

Themes that were examined within the previous chapter will similarly be explored in relation to the Adelaide, Melbourne, Brisbane, Perth, and Auckland Temples. Most

significantly, the tensions that exist when Temples are constructed in hostile or apathetic societies; the way in which media presents the Temple, especially in regards to perceived secrecy; the importance of Open Days for demystifying the religion; how members have reacted to the construction of Temples; and whether public perception of the Church has shifted after the Temples' completion. The importance of the materiality and physicality of the Temple, its coordinated style and feel, and its position in Latter-day Saint cosmology as the blending between the spiritual and temporal, will be foregrounded. Scholarship that illuminates the contradictory role that sacred spaces play in both the marginalisation and localisation of minority religions within the multicultural nations of Australia and New Zealand, is important here, as it was in the previous chapter.

Marden, Adelaide, South Australia Temple

Completed 2000

Unlike the Carlingford Temple in Sydney, where there was organised opposition from local citizens, the announcement that a Temple would be constructed in Adelaide drew relatively little opposition, though there were numerous newspaper articles that mentioned the announcement, progression, and completion of the Temple. For the most part, the reporting was relatively neutral, but often commented on the price that the Church had paid in both Adelaide and Melbourne, over 7,000,000 AUD per structure, and highlighted the importation of Italian Marble for the buildings.²²⁰ The sheer expense of

²²⁰ Peter Goers, 'Sinner in the House of Latter-day Saints', *The Sunday Mail (Adelaide)*, 11 June 2000, pp.

the buildings was the most common theme in the media coverage of the Adelaide and Melbourne Temples; as with other temples, the Church ran a mass-publicity campaign for the Open House.²²¹

The intrigue over what occurs within Temple walls was nevertheless noted by South Australian newspapers.²²² The first South Australian article to note the construction was published in February 2000; author Shane MacGuire notes the expense of the building, confirmed by site manager of the project, Vince Hatch of Baulderstone Hornibrook.²²³ Hatch claimed that the building would be one of the 'most expensive properties in Australia on completion.'²²⁴ This article also quoted South Australian Church leader Philip Howes, who stated that 'after the few days of public viewing, the Temple would become what it is intended to be, an extremely sacred place.'²²⁵ A few months later, to announce the Open House and dedication, the Church placed an advertisement and lift-out that addressed the perceived secrecy, in a section entitled 'Why These Temples', written by then-prophet of the Church Gordon B. Hinckley:

The designation of certain buildings for special ordinances, as distinguished from regular places of worship, is not new. This was the practice in ancient Israel, where the people worshipped regularly in the synagogues. Their more sacred place was, first, the tabernacle in the wilderness with its Holy

Stuart Innes, '\$8million marble temple is Bob's New Mission', *The Advertiser (Adelaide, South Australia)*, 03 June 2000, pp.

²²¹ 'Granite Glory', *The Advertiser (Adelaide, South Australia)*, 24 May 2000, pp. 118; Appendix B

²²² Goers, 'Sinner in the House of Latter-day Saints', *The Sunday Mail (Adelaide)*, 11 June 2000, pp. 41

²²³ Shane MacGuire, "'Special' House of the Lord Hand-crafter and on of the Dearest in Australia - \$9million Temple the Best Yet', *Sunday Mail*, Adelaide, South Australia, 27 February 2000, pp. 31

²²⁴ MacGuire, "'Special' House of the Lord Hand-crafter and on of the Dearest in Australia - \$9million Temple the Best Yet', *Sunday Mail*, Adelaide, South Australia, 27 February 2000, pp. 31

²²⁵ MacGuire, "'Special' House of the Lord Hand-crafter and on of the Dearest in Australia - \$9million Temple the Best Yet', *Sunday Mail*, Adelaide, South Australia, 27 February 2000, pp. 31

of Holies, and then a succession of temples and where only those who met the required qualifications could participate in these ordinances.

So it is today. Prior to the dedication of a temple, the Church ... invites the public to go through the building... But when it is dedicated it becomes the house of the Lord, vested with a character so sacred that only members of the Church in good standing are permitted to enter. It is not a matter of secrecy. It is a matter of sanctity.²²⁶

This lift-out further provided a 'Brief History' of the Church in general and within South Australia. It also contained responses to frequently asked questions, two official documents of the Church 'The Family: A Proclamation to the World' and 'The Living Christ', and a discussion on the core beliefs of the religion. The Church's emphasis on its limited openness is significant, as it showed that concerns of the Temple's secrecy had guided this paid-for insert.

This limited openness was further emphasised in another article, published by *The Advertiser* in May 2000, in which Howes was again interviewed. Howes would later become President of the Adelaide Temple, before being assigned as President of the Sydney North Mission.²²⁷ This article mused 'the Adelaide public will soon have a rare look inside one of the grandest religious buildings in Australia', before quoting Howes:

I expect between 40,000 – 50,000 people will tour the Temple in that week. There is a lot of curiosity in the community about our temples because they are something different. This is a good opportunity for people to see what it looks like inside before it is closed to the public forever.²²⁸

²²⁶ Please see Appendix B

²²⁷ 'Australian Mormon Leader Lauds Creation of 100th Peruvian Stake', *Church Newsroom Australia* Website, 26 July 2013, viewed 03/08/2021

<https://news-au.churchofjesuschrist.org/article/australian-mormon-leader-peruvian-stake>; 'Granite Glory', *The Advertiser (Adelaide, South Australia)*, 24 May 2000, pp. 118

²²⁸ 'Granite Glory', *The Advertiser (Adelaide, South Australia)*, 24 May 2000, pp. 118

This acknowledgement that the Temple would be ‘closed to the public forever’ is significant to note, as it indicates not only the Church’s position on the exclusive sacredness of the Temple, but also that this is what is more broadly known about these structures.

A separate article from *The Advertiser* on the 24th of May, which corresponded with the beginning of the Open Days at the Adelaide Temple, discussed the construction and interior of the building. Howes was again quoted, who stated that ‘only the finest materials have been used.’²²⁹ This article also describes the inside of the Temple, including the various rooms and their purposes:

There is a series of special rooms within the temple. The *Celestial Room* is an ornate chamber where worshippers can meditate on Church teachings. It features paintings, etched windows, and a spectacular 263kg chandelier.

The *Baptistry Room* houses a small pool of water and is used for proxy baptisms by immersion.

The *Sealing Room* is reserved for marriage and sealing ceremonies... Symbolising the eternity of the sealing ceremony, two mirrors on opposite walls are arranged so an individual’s image fades into the depths of the mirror.

The *Endowment Room*, which resembles a small theatre, is where Church members learn the purpose of life and how to serve Jesus Christ.²³⁰

This vivid description accurately describes the interior of the Temple, and its functions in relation to Mormon cosmology. As an aside, the double-mirror affect is utilised in order to symbolise the immortality of the human soul, and the eternal nature of the family; both

²²⁹ ‘When Only the Finest Materials Will Do’, *The Advertiser (Adelaide, South Australia)*, 24 May 2000, pp. 118

²³⁰ ‘When Only the Finest Materials Will Do’, *The Advertiser (Adelaide, South Australia)*, 24 May 2000, pp. 118

tenets are central to Latter-day Saint theology.²³¹ This article was under the ‘Advertising Feature’ of the newspaper and thus was another paid advertorial by the Church to alleviate concerns over being perceived as ‘secretive’. On this same page, numerous contractors that worked on the Temple placed advertisements also expressing their support of the sacred site; see below. It is unlikely these were Church-owned or associated businesses, as the contractors’ supportive advertisements did not use the correct name of the Church. Instead, it is likely that these contractors placed such announcements in order to be associated with the expensive and expansive project. It is also possible that the Church, desiring to be more fully integrated and recognised with the wider Adelaide community, encouraged the contractors to place these sympathetic declarations.

Well-known journalist Peter Goers, who wrote an article titled ‘Sinner in the House of the Latter-day Saints’ for *The Saturday Advertiser*, recorded his observations, thoughts, and experience of the Adelaide Temple’s Open House on the 11th of June 2000. This source is important, as it reveals how a non-member felt within the Temple. Goers wrote extensively, noting not only the structure of the Temple but also making some wry critiques; his dichotomy of being a self-professed ‘sinner’ is an indication of the secular space that the Temple, as holy site, had temporarily become. At one point, he stated:

The interior is a crucible of kitsch; a place of peace, tranquillity, gaping gentiles, rubber-necking “harlots from hell”, wealth, fake flowers, and lace-covered boxes. We had to talk in a hushed ‘temple voice’ in sepulchral tones as befits a crematorium. It seems spiritually icy, but then it’s meant for

²³¹ Gerrit W. Gong, ‘Temple Mirrors of Eternity: A Testimony of Family’, *Semi-Annual General Conference*, 2010, Available at: <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/2010/10/temple-mirrors-of-eternity-a-testimony-of-family?lang=eng>

the pure with all their inner glow rather than for sinners. It is glorious, but unlovely. Lightshades bear plastic covers and one feels humanity will easily besmirch this place of worship.

This comment on the 'harlots from hell' refers to a quote from famous nineteenth-century Mormon theologian Orson Pratt, who stated 'the Gates of hell have prevailed over the Catholic Mother of Harlots and over all her Protestant daughters...'²³² Following this quote, Goers mused that the

The well-known "harlot from hell", Vini Ciccarello MP, and I... had a tour of the temple with thousands of the faithful and faithless. Vini is the local member whose constituency includes the temple... Vini and I were politely asked to extinguish our cigarettes at the gate. We were forewarned to wear our "Sunday Best"... [but were required] to put on white plastic booties over our disgustingly filthy shoes.'²³³

Several analyses can be drawn from Goers' extensive observations. For one, it is evident the Temple was discussed throughout the state, and was localised through the inclusion of not only a well-known journalist, but also local politician, Vini Ciccarello. It also shows a division between the secular and sacred when the Temple was discussed: although not overtly hostile to the building, or to the Latter-day Saints themselves, Goers does nonetheless represent an important non-religious viewpoint of the holy site.

These reactions, however, are somewhat similar to those from Dutch and Finnish non-members who attended the Open Houses in 2003 and 2007 respectively. According to Kim Ostman, who published an article on the Open House of the Espoo, Finland Temple in 2007, claimed that the Finnish people were largely unimpressed with the design and

²³² Peter Goer, 'Sinner in the House of Latter-day Saints', *The Sunday Mail (Adelaide)*, 11 June 2000, pp. 41

²³³ Goer, 'Sinner in the House of Latter-day Saints', *The Sunday Mail (Adelaide)*, 11 June 2000, pp. 41

architecture of the Latter-day Saint edifice.²³⁴ Ostman claimed that devoutly religious people were the most critical of what was touted as the most sacred site for Latter-day Saints in Finland. For instance, Ostman claimed

Some of the visitors found the temple to be a strange place. For some the place too American... The Americanness could be connected to things such as plastic flowers, deep carpets, and other decorations. One religious person remarked that 'for me it would take some getting use to calm down in the holiest room that, with regards to its furnishings and style, reminds one of many Yankee hotel lobbies and meeting rooms.'²³⁵

Temples that were built within this period are all very similar in design and architecture, with almost no local adaptations within the construction of 'mini-Temples' across the world. Walter Van Beek, whilst discussing the Zoetermeer Temple in the Netherlands, confirms this with a personal experience

I once suggested moving a chair in one of the rooms of the temple, and received the dry comment "Brother, you do not comprehend how things work here." All details come from America and are not allowed to change. In all practical matters, Dutch ownership of "their" temple is very limited indeed.²³⁶

These secondary sources help to contextualise Goers' response in Adelaide, as he emphasised his lukewarm response to the Temple. Interestingly, this reaction was somewhat comparable to other responses from various other non-members internationally.

²³⁴ Kim B. Ostman, 'Esotericism Made Exoteric? Insider and Outsider Perspectives on the 2006 Mormon Temple Public Open House in Espoo, Finland', *Scripta Instituti Donneriani Aboensis*, Volume 20, pp. 133-4

²³⁵ Ostman, 'Esotericism Made Exoteric?', *Scripta Instituti Donneriani Aboensis*, Volume 20, pp. 134

²³⁶ Walter E. A. Van Beek, 'The Temple and the Sacred: Dutch Temple Experiences', *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Volume 45, Issue 4, pp. 39

I interviewed Peter Goers in 2021, which led to a greater understanding of not only his view of the Latter-day Saints in Australia but also his memory and thoughts on the Adelaide Temple Open Day. It also offered insights into how the Church reacts to public reporting. After Goers published his recollections of the Open Day in 2000, the Church sent him a letter. Goers claimed that he was concerned when he received it, as he did not think he had been overly kind to the Church or the Temple.²³⁷ However, although Goers claimed the Church 'took great interest in [the piece],' the letter was not overly condemning of the article.²³⁸ They took issue with one particular comment: he labelled the Church a cult. This shows that the Church is keenly aware of information published about it by non-members, confirmed not only by Goers' recollection but also from official statements by Church hierarchy and indeed Latter-day Saint scripture. In particular, this was likely the work of the Strengthening Church Members Committee.

This organisation came into existence in the early days of the Church and is currently headed by leaders of the Church hierarchy. Although the main objective of this Committee is internal, seeking to quell heresy and apostasy within the Church, its scriptural basis explicitly states that it is also for external statements. This is found in a canonised letter written by Joseph Smith in 1839, when he was imprisoned in Liberty Jail, Missouri. Part of this letter reads:

We would suggest for your consideration the propriety of all the Saints gathering up a knowledge of all the facts, and sufferings and abuses put upon them...

²³⁷ Brenton Griffin (interviewer), *Interview With Peter Goers*, 12 June 2021

²³⁸ Griffin (interviewer), *Interview With Peter Goers*, 12 June 2021

And also the names of all persons that have had a hand in their oppressions, as far as they can get hold of them and find them out.

And perhaps a committee can be appointed to find out these things, and to take statements and affidavits; and also to gather up the libellous publications that are afloat.

And all that are in the magazine, and in the encyclopedias, and all the libellous histories that are published, and are writing, and by whom, and present the whole concatenation of diabolical rascality and nefarious and murderous impositions that have been practiced upon this people - ²³⁹

For context, this Committee was established during a time in Mormon history when the Latter-day Saints were essentially in a constant state of siege, both metaphorically and literally. In 1839, the Latter-day Saints had already been moved from various places by force, resulting in the deaths of thousands of adherents, and their prophet had been arrested numerous times. Under this siege mentality, their desire to remember wrongs committed against the Church and its adherents is understandable. However, in 1991 the Strengthening Church Members Committee controversially came to international attention. After a spate of Mormon academics were fired from the Church-owned Brigham Young University in Utah, and subsequently excommunicated, newspaper articles reported that these academics were investigated by the Committee.²⁴⁰

Church spokesperson at the time Don LeFevre responded by stating that this organisation 'receives complaints from Church members about other members who have made statements that conceivably could do harm to the Church... and pass[es] information to...

²³⁹ Joseph Smith, Doctrine and Covenants, 123: 1-5

²⁴⁰ Eugene England, "'No Cause, No Cause": An Essay Toward Reconciliation', *Sunstone Magazine*, Issue 121, pp. 39; Katrina M. Hermanson, 'The September Six: Deployments and Disruptions of the Secular/Religious Binary in latter-day Saints Rhetoric', *Arizona Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies*, Volume 5, Autumn 2016, pp. 47-63

ecclesiastical leaders.’²⁴¹ In 1993, Apostle Dallin H. Oaks went on to describe the committee as a ‘clipping service... [that] monitored speeches, writings, and activities of those suspected of apostasy and passed on material to Church officials.’²⁴² A more recent example of this occurred in 2012 when the Church sent Public Affairs representatives to BBC offices in London after it aired a documentary by journalist John Sweeney, which it claimed was ‘an ambush.’²⁴³ It is unclear whether this Committee was responsible for the letter received by Peter Goers. Instead, it may have been local Church leaders, or even the Church’s Public Relations department. Regardless, what we can glean from this response to Goers’ article is that the Church is aware of what is published by outsiders about the Temple and religion more broadly, and is willing to contact and correct those it sees as hostile or misrepresentative.

In addition to Goers, in the Saturday 3 June 2000 edition of *The Advertiser* columnist Stuart Innes wrote about his experience at the Open House and about the first President of the Adelaide Temple, Bob Wilmott. Innes wrote of Wilmott:

He’s boss of the most extravagant new building Adelaide has seen for years – a rare temple that cost \$8 million to build but which few people will qualify to enter... After [the dedication], entry is strictly limited to “church members in good standing” who all wear white when inside...

The temple is clad in Italian marble and is lavishly furnished... People must have an entry recommendation from their local church leader and be people who practice chastity before

²⁴¹ ‘Mormon Church Keeps Files On Its Dissenters’, *The Tampa Bay Times* Website, 12 October 2005, viewed 16/08/2021

<https://www.tampabay.com/archive/1992/08/15/mormon-church-keeps-files-on-its-dissenters/>

²⁴² Paul Brinkley-Rogers, ‘Cracks in the Temple: Mormon Unity in Peril’, *The Arizona Republic*, Sunday 10 October 1993, pp. 1

²⁴³ Ben Dowell, ‘BBC Employee Criticised After PRs Hand Deliver Mormon Documentary Complaint’, *The Guardian* Website, Wednesday 28 March 2012, viewed 16/08/2021

<https://www.theguardian.com/media/2012/mar/27/bbc-mormon-prs-complaint>

marriage and abstinence after marriage, do not smoke or drink alcohol and who give a tenth of their income to the church.²⁴⁴

Innes further quoted another Church leader in Australia, Bruce Hafen, who emphasised “the temple is not secret, it’s sacred”, in justification for the Church’s restricted access to these buildings.²⁴⁵ As in other newspaper articles, Innes wrote of the Church’s belief in ‘eternal marriage and family, even in the after-life.’²⁴⁶ He also noted the interior of the structure, recording ‘the temple has special rooms for “sealing” marriages and a large font for baptising, by proxy, [their] ancestors.’²⁴⁷ Such recounting is important, as it shows a neutral discussion of the Adelaide Temple within public newspapers and stands in contrast to Peter Goers’ somewhat derisive recount of his experience during the Open House. Nonetheless, what is essential in these instances is the ways in which the media was interested in the purpose of the Temple, particularly in relation to the perceived secrecy. Whilst the Open Days sought to create a sense of trust and transparency with the broader Adelaide community, no Latter-day Saint rituals or ceremonies were performed until after the Temple had been dedicated.

In order to understand how the Latter-day Saint Temples were received by the broader Australian community, I interviewed Dr. David Hilliard, OAM, about his experiences in regard to the Adelaide Temple Open House.²⁴⁸ Hilliard, a renowned scholar of religious

²⁴⁴ Stuart Innes, ‘\$8million marble temple is Bob’s New Mission’, *The Advertiser (Adelaide, South Australia)*, 03 June 2000, pp. 19

²⁴⁵ Innes, ‘\$8million marble temple is Bob’s New Mission’, *The Advertiser (Adelaide, South Australia)*, 03 June 2000, pp. 19

²⁴⁶ Innes, ‘\$8million marble temple is Bob’s New Mission’, *The Advertiser (Adelaide, South Australia)*, 03 June 2000, pp. 19

²⁴⁷ Innes, ‘\$8million marble temple is Bob’s New Mission’, *The Advertiser (Adelaide, South Australia)*, 03 June 2000, pp. 19

²⁴⁸ Brenton Griffin (interviewer), ‘Interview with David Hilliard’, 21 April 2022

history in Australia, had some fascinating insights as an academic who has spent a lifetime studying religion. While he was intrigued by the font, placed upon the oxen symbolising the Twelve Tribes of Israel,²⁴⁹ he thought the inside of the Temple was overall underwhelming; he described the deep carpets and beige and white interior as ‘Texas millionaire style’, evoking the descriptions by Finnish observers as published by Ostmann.²⁵⁰ Interestingly, this is comparable to the view of Peter Goers, as well as those reported by Ostmann in Finland. Dr. Hilliard stated that he had heard of the Open House either through advertisements in the newspaper or the efforts of missionaries, who distributed pamphlets about the Temple prior to the public viewing. Hilliard had previously seen various Latter-day Saint Temples in Hamilton, Hawai’i, and Salt Lake City; with these, however, he was only able to view the outsides.²⁵¹ As such, he was eager to participate in the Open House in order to have a better grasp of the interior of Mormonism’s sacred buildings. It is interesting to note, however, that Dr. Hilliard stated that over his decades of research he had not been overly concerned about the internal workings of the Temple and had little idea, or desire to discover, unofficial information about the sacred ordinances.²⁵² Whilst certainly not representative of broader Australian society, Dr. Hilliard’s position is nonetheless important as a certain sub-perspective, that of the religious scholar.

Within this context of media attention, the Adelaide Temple was dedicated on the 15th of June 2000 by then-Prophet of the Church, Gordon B. Hinckley. The Dedicatory Prayer of the Adelaide Temple is quite different, to both the Hamilton and Carlingford dedications

²⁴⁹ Griffin (interviewer), ‘Interview with David Hilliard’, 21 April 2022

²⁵⁰ Griffin (interviewer), ‘Interview with David Hilliard’, 21 April 2022

²⁵¹ Griffin (interviewer), ‘Interview with David Hilliard’, 21 April 2022

²⁵² Griffin (interviewer), ‘Interview with David Hilliard’, 21 April 2022

analysed in Chapter 3, and is similarly available in Appendix A. In this prayer, Hinckley, who also dedicated the Sydney Temple, emphasised the role of the Church in the context of world history. He claims that the establishment of the Adelaide Temple, within the worldwide building program of the Church, helps to move forward the 'great work of salvation', for both the living and the dead. As with both the Hamilton and Sydney Temples, the centrality of the restored Priesthood, a key tenet in Mormon cosmology, is used as the explanation for why the Temple must be consecrated and closed off to the public. It is through this Priesthood, for the Latter-day Saints, that the ceremonies of the Temple would be able to bring 'immortality and eternal life' to faithful members and their ancestors. As with the other two dedications, Hinckley consecrated the physical elements of the Temple-grounds, again cementing the importance of Temple in Mormon cosmology as a place where the spiritual and temporal meet. This theme is evident throughout not only these prayers, but also in the teachings, rituals, and requirements associated with the Temple. Of course, Jesus Christ and the Atonement, through which Salvation is sought, is further called upon, as with the Sydney Temple.

This is combined with a blessing and consecration of the Temple, with a plea that the Lord would not allow any 'unclean hand or impure heart to desecrate the edifice' nor any 'unworthy to breach its portals.' This preoccupation with worthiness in relation to the physicality of the Temple, is essential to this dedication, and indeed the others considered in this thesis. It is clear from these dedicatory prayers that the leader of the Church was sincere in his belief in the sacredness of the Temple, and how that could be eradicated if those who were not worthy entered. The centrality of Joseph Smith who, according to Latter-day Saint thought was chosen by Deity to bring about the restoration of the Gospel

and its divinely revealed ordinances, similarly is mentioned in this prayer. With this, the metaphor of a 'stone cut from the mountain without hands', a Biblical reference from the Book of Daniel that has been used by Latter-day Saints to describe the religion, is also referred to.²⁵³ This is combined with the idea, spoken of previously, that the Church would 'fill the earth.' Hinckley also prays for the missionaries in Australia, as well as the Presidency and Matron within the Adelaide Temple, those ecclesiastical leaders chosen to maintain the edifice. The Dedicatory Prayer ends with a reaffirmation of the Church's view that the construction of the Adelaide Temple was a manifestation of following God's will. This Dedicatory Prayer indicates the way in which Hinckley, as leader of the Latter-day Saints, saw the religion, and how he sought adherents of the faith to see Mormonism within the context of a hagiographically-viewed world history. This is contrasted with the media representation of the Church and the Adelaide Temple.

Following its completion, one further aspect of the Temple was noted by newspapers. In response to the grandeur and expensiveness of the Temple, leader of the Christadelphians in South Australia, Peter Mansfield, decried the building and the Church in general on religious grounds.²⁵⁴ For context, the Christadelphians are another restorationist denomination, with roots in the nineteenth-century United States, and so share cultural and historical similarities with the Latter-day Saints.²⁵⁵ Though Christadelphians and Mormons have traditionally been grouped together as either 'cults'

²⁵³ Spencer W. Kimball, 'The Stone Cut Without Hands', *General Conference Sermon*, April 1976 <https://abn.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/1976/04/the-stone-cut-without-hands?lang=eng>

²⁵⁴ Hackett, 'All God's Children and the Temple of Conflict', *The Advertiser*, Adelaide, South Australia, 15 June 2000, pp. 9

²⁵⁵ Hackett, 'All God's Children and the Temple of Conflict', *The Advertiser*, Adelaide, South Australia, 15 June 2000, pp. 9

or 'new religious movements' by both mainstream Christianity and academic scholarship, mainly due to their history, overt control on members lives, and aggressive proselyting, there has been hostility between the two groups based on vastly different theologies.²⁵⁶

Mansfield, who visited the Temple during the Open House, stated

We don't need a multi-million dollar temple. I've seen it, I've been through it. As a building, I was very impressed. It's very plain but it is beautifully furnished. What we are saying is don't be too impressed by this Temple.²⁵⁷

Incensed over what was perceived as an un-Christian abuse of resources, the Christadelphians distributed flyers in the area shared by both the Temple at Marden as well as a Christadelphian branch in the suburb of Clearview.²⁵⁸

These flyers, according to the Christadelphians, were intended to 'tell people what these people are teaching and [why] this Temple is... wrong.'²⁵⁹ Though these pamphlets are not readily available, and thus have not been consulted, the Church officially responded to the material as 'inaccurate and inflammatory.'²⁶⁰ As well, the Christadelphians placed a banner stating 'You've Seen Their Temple, Now Back to the Bible' in front of their congregation.²⁶¹ The furore was also known by the Church, with Adelaide-based ecclesiastical leader Philip Howes interviewed for the article as well. Howes stated that

²⁵⁶ George Chryssides, 'Britain's Anti-Cult Movement', in Wilson Bryan and Jamie Cresswell (eds.), *New Religious Movements: Challenge and Response*, London: Routledge Publishing, 1999, pp. 257-271

²⁵⁷ Hackett, 'All God's Children and the Temple of Conflict', *The Advertiser*, Adelaide, South Australia, 15 June 2000, pp. 9

²⁵⁸ Hackett, 'All God's Children and the Temple of Conflict', *The Advertiser*, Adelaide, South Australia, 15 June 2000, pp. 9

²⁵⁹ Hackett, 'All God's Children and the Temple of Conflict', *The Advertiser*, Adelaide, South Australia, 15 June 2000, pp. 9

²⁶⁰ Hackett, 'All God's Children and the Temple of Conflict', *The Advertiser*, Adelaide, South Australia, 15 June 2000, pp. 9

²⁶¹ Hackett, 'All God's Children and the Temple of Conflict', *The Advertiser*, Adelaide, South Australia, 15 June 2000, pp. 9

this had been discussed with ecclesiastical leaders and public relations in Sydney, but that there was no desire to respond in a way that would provoke the situation.²⁶² This religious disagreement was featured in the next week's letters to the editor, with the majority of writers siding to some extent with the Christadelphians in condemnation of the expensiveness of the building.²⁶³

Thus, the Temple in Adelaide garnered media attention during its construction and dedication and, to an extent, the Church was accused of un-Christian excess over the building. The Adelaide Temple, as the second in Australia, represents a fundamental shift in the reception and representation of Mormonism within Australia. Though objections to the Temple did exist, these were much more minor than the years-long hostility surrounding the Sydney Temple. Despite this, there was a nonetheless a sense of disdain or bemusement from many journalists and commentators, such as Peter Goers. Yet, the media attention surrounding the Adelaide Temple suggests a more accepting Australian public, as there was not the organised hostility that was seen at the Carlingford, Sydney Temple. The importance of the Adelaide Temple in regard to the construction of the 'mini-Temples' in Australia and globally indicates the more permanent presence of the Church in these nations. This is not only due to the physicality of these buildings but, as will be examined in subsequent chapters, also the further entrenchment and visibility of the Church in politics, the state, and broader culture.

²⁶² Hackett, 'All God's Children and the Temple of Conflict', *The Advertiser*, Adelaide, South Australia, 15 June 2000, pp. 9

²⁶³ 'The Cathedrals of Europe', *The Advertiser*, Adelaide, South Australia, 24 June 2000, pp. 21

Wantirna South, Melbourne, Victoria

Completed 2000

Unlike the previous two Temples in Australia, the Melbourne Temple was constructed with relatively little objection. An article in the *Church News*, the official reporting arm of the Church, stated that at the ground-breaking, the presiding ecclesiastical authority, Elder Bruce Mitchell, 'thanked various groups, including neighbours, architects, and planners for facilitating the smooth passage of planning approvals.'²⁶⁴ Despite this, Elder Mitchell admonished the Melbourne Mormons to 'pray daily that all would go well in the building of the Temple and that there would be no mishaps or delays.'²⁶⁵ These indicate the acknowledgement by Church leaders that the Temples were not always a welcome addition within Australia. As with Adelaide, the Melbourne Temple was accessible to visitors before the dedication on the 16th of June 2000. Australian Mormons saw this as a historic day, one which had been prophesied almost twenty years earlier. An article published by *Church News* shared the feelings of then eighty-four year old Edna Ord of the Northcote congregation; at the time she was 'the oldest member in Australia.'²⁶⁶ Sister Ord mused "Isn't it marvellous ... everybody's excited. When I heard the announcement, I said 'Oh Elder McConkie, you were right.'"²⁶⁷ This was in reference to a statement made

²⁶⁴ Lindsay J. Sanders, 'Ground is Broken for Melbourne Temple', *Church News*, 3 April 1999, viewed 09/05/2023

<https://www.thechurchnews.com/1999/4/3/23249015/ground-is-broken-for-melbourne-temple>

²⁶⁵ Sanders, 'Ground is Broken for Melbourne Temple', *Church News*, 3 April 1999

²⁶⁶ Janet Kruckenberg, 'The Announcements of New Holy Edifices Bring Joy and Tears', *Church News Archive*, 22 February 1999, viewed 1/03/2021

<https://www.thechurchnews.com/archives/1999-02-20/the-announcements-of-new-holy-edifices-bring-joy-and-tears-124614>

²⁶⁷ Kruckenberg, 'The Announcements of New Holy Edifices Bring Joy and Tears', *Church News Archive*, 22 February 1999

by Apostle of the Church Bruce R. McConkie at the ground-breaking of the Sydney Temple in 1982, in which he suggested that other Temples would be built throughout the Australian continent. According to this article, he had also said to Sister Ord 'I promise you, Edna, you will have a Temple in Melbourne.'²⁶⁸

According to another article, also from, *Church News*, 'the proceedings, presided over by President Hinckley and attended by close to 5,000 local Latter-day Saints, have ushered in a new era for the development of the Church in Tasmania and Victoria.'²⁶⁹ This article added

Whereas gold prospectors have in times past flooded into Victoria in search of wealth and happiness, now members of the Church from Victoria and Tasmania will come to the temple in pursuit of heaven's wealth and eternal happiness.

There are approximately 20,000 members of the Church in the temple district in six Victorian stakes, two Tasmanian stakes and one Victorian district. More than 28,000 members of the public, including approximately 250 local business, community, political and inter-faith leaders, and 150 neighbours and temple building contractors toured the temple prior to the dedication in a week-long open house. Many of these visitors shared their experiences and impressions with missionaries and other members of the Church.²⁷⁰

This article further notes that Australian Rules Football Coach Kevin Sheedy, 'who is used to large crowds of more than 100,000 screaming fans', described the Melbourne Temple as 'extremely peaceful.'²⁷¹ Nevertheless, the importance of how the Church represented the Open Days, with an emphasis on the broad cross-section of Australian society that

²⁶⁸ Kruckenberg, 'The Announcements of New Holy Edifices Bring Joy and Tears', *Church News Archive*, 22 February 1999

²⁶⁹ 'Spiritual Sanctuaries' for Faithful Adelaide, Melbourne Members', *Church News Archives*, 23 June 2000

²⁷⁰ 'Spiritual Sanctuaries' for Faithful Adelaide, Melbourne Members', *Church News Archives*, 23 June 2000

²⁷¹ 'Spiritual Sanctuaries' for Faithful Adelaide, Melbourne Members', *Church News Archives*, 23 June 2000

attended, is central here. Moreover, this connection of Mormon cosmology and history with the broader sweeps of Australian history, is an interesting decision of the Church to be more associated with the local area.

For members in Tasmania and Melbourne, the struggle of reaching the Sydney Temple had been replaced with joy knowing that a Temple would be within easy reach. President of the Pakenham Stake, Murray Loble, observed

For 16 years we have travelled the 1,500 miles round trip to the Sydney temple and before that many members of the Church here had to sacrifice — sometimes their house, car, and other possessions — so they could afford to make the journey to the New Zealand Temple... We are now no longer enslaved by the tyranny of distance — we have been truly blessed to have a temple built in Melbourne.²⁷²

Another member, the newly announced Melbourne Temple President Keith O'Grady, also wove together Victorian history and the construction of the sacred site:

Just like the convicts who came out from Britain to Port Arthur and other penal settlements, many of our ancestors are also in chains — spiritual chains. An essential part in their progression is the temple work which we will do for them here in this beautiful new House of the Lord...²⁷³

This perspective emphasises one of the themes of this chapter, that is how Latter-day Saints see themselves within the context of Australian history. The Mormons saw themselves as an enmeshed, longstanding religious tradition with links to the colonial era, both metaphorically and literally. The dichotomy, then, of how Australian society perceived the religion and its adherents as marginal, even foreign, is important to note.

²⁷² Kruckenberg, 'The Announcements of New Holy Edifices Bring Joy and Tears', *Church News Archive*, 22 February 1999

²⁷³ 'Spiritual Sanctuaries' for Faithful Adelaide, Melbourne Members', *Church News Archives*, 23 June 2000

The *Church News* further reported on how local political and community leaders viewed their experience of the Melbourne Temple Open House. For instance, Sir James Gobbo AC, then-governor of Victoria commented to Church Area President Elder Hafen that 'he was deeply impressed by the beauty and spirit of the Temple.'²⁷⁴ Moreover, Victorian MP Ross Smith wrote a letter to local Latter-day Saint leaders, in which he stated

No one could fail to be impressed by the superb building and its outstanding facilities – a tribute to the strength of the Church and the effectiveness of its work in the community. You have every reason to be proud of your Church's achievements.²⁷⁵

This is essential for two reasons: it shows that the Church was known to politicians across the country, and that some of the highest-ranking political leaders in Victoria had attended the Open Day; far from being hostile, this letter shows an appreciation of the Church and its members. More significantly, not only are such reflections by the official Church organ important historical artefacts in discussing how the Church has been represented, but they also show the way the Church sought to further entrench itself into the broader Australian community, at least in the minds of its members. It is crucial to note here that this civility extended towards the Mormons and their holy site, within the thrusts of Australian secularisation and religious plurality discussed previously, indicates a new way in which Australian politicians engaged with their constituents.

²⁷⁴ Kruckenberg, 'The Announcements of New Holy Edifices Bring Joy and Tears', *Church News Archive*, 22 February 1999

²⁷⁵ 'Spiritual Sanctuaries' for Faithful Adelaide, Melbourne Members', *Church News Archives*, 23 June 2000

Despite the evident politicking, the thoughts of Church leaders in Melbourne are also important here. For example, President Murray Loble, of the Pakenham, Victoria Stake, stated that

The number of friends we are making in the community because of the temple is just overwhelming... The lives of tens of thousands within the Church and without will continue to be touched by the temple — here in Melbourne and beyond.²⁷⁶

This indicates the way in which Church leaders sought to situate themselves within broader Victorian society; the Temple was seen as contributing to a de-marginalisation of the religion. Similarly, this article quoted the words of Church prophet Gordon B. Hinckley, who stated after the dedication of the Melbourne Temple

I'm very happy to see that kind of growth here... It is a very salutary thing. It indicates many things, the receptivity of the Australian people ... but the fact that we now have that ratio of membership is very important and very encouraging. These are good and wonderful people.²⁷⁷

The way in which the construction of the Temple, and the experiences of its Open House, was framed by *Church News* shows how the Church sought to be viewed within Australian society both at the time, and in the future. Of course, however, this is not neutral reporting; there is a clear bias in the way in which the reception of the broader Victorian community was reported by the official Church news. These *Church News* articles were not only for Australian Mormons, but would have been available to Church members throughout the world, reinforcing the Church's articulations.

²⁷⁶ 'Spiritual Sanctuaries' for Faithful Adelaide, Melbourne Members', *Church News Archives*, 23 June 2000

²⁷⁷ 'Spiritual Sanctuaries for Faithful Adelaide, Melbourne Members', *Church News Archives*, 23 June 2000

There were a number of non-Mormon news outlets that also reported the construction of the Melbourne Temple. The first of these was in *The Herald Sun* in February 2000, which declared the Temple at Watirna was being built due to 'the religions fast growing popularity.'²⁷⁸ This article was overwhelmingly neutral in tone, noting that the Church in Victoria was 35,000 strong, and had increased by 5% the previous year.²⁷⁹ According to Graeme Cray, spokesman for the Church in Australia at the time, this was due to the unshifting values and doctrines of the Church in the face of a changing world. Cray emphasised that the 'strong family values' of the Church 'fulfils the need for security and for people who want to live a traditional family life.'²⁸⁰ As the Melbourne Temple caters to the Mormon community in Tasmania, it is likely here that this comment was made in the context of the recent decriminalisation of homosexuality in Tasmania..²⁸¹

In May 2000, the Church placed an advertisement in Melbourne's *The Age* newspaper that announced the Open House. Declaring that 'this could be your only look inside a 21st century temple', this advertisement, reprinted below, invited the public to view the sacred house before it was closed to non-Mormons.²⁸² Only a week later, Melbourne's *The Herald Sun* announced the Melbourne Temple's Open House. Written by Sasha Baskett, this article was similarly neutral in its reporting of the Temple, noting 'the \$8 million

²⁷⁸ Sasha Baskett, 'Church Builds Temple on Solid Rock of Attendance', *Herald Sun*, Melbourne, Victoria, 29 February 2000, pp. 15

²⁷⁹ Baskett, 'Church Builds Temple on Solid Rock of Attendance', *Herald Sun*, Melbourne, Victoria, 29 February 2000, pp. 15

²⁸⁰ Baskett, 'Church Builds Temple on Solid Rock of Attendance', *Herald Sun*, Melbourne, Victoria, 29 February 2000, pp. 15

²⁸¹ Rodney Croome, 'Gay Law Reform', in Alison Alexander (ed.), *The Companion to Tasmanian History*, 2006

https://www.utas.edu.au/library/companion_to_tasmanian_history/G/Gay%20Law%20Reform.htm

²⁸² 'This Could Be Your Only Chance to See Inside a 21st Century Temple', *The Age*, Melbourne, Victoria, 24 May 2000, pp. 12

temple is one of four being built in Australia to meet growing demand for the religion.’²⁸³ It also noted the increased Church membership, stating it was the ‘fastest-growing Christian denomination in Australia at the 1996 census.’²⁸⁴ Baskett’s article provides an insight into the more neutral acceptance of the Temple in Melbourne, especially when compared to Sydney, and, to a lesser extent, Adelaide.

As well as this, on the 14th of June 2000, Penelope Debelle, writing for Melbourne’s *The Age*, discussed the ending of the Open House, representing this shift from publicly accessible to exclusivity.²⁸⁵ Titled ‘Mormons’ Opulent Temples Await the Worthy’, this article compared the building and dedication of the Adelaide and Melbourne Temples. According to Debelle, the Melbourne Temple, in particular, ‘created enormous public interest, with about 50,000 people in the past two weeks – all wearing disposable slippers to protect the white carpet – taking guided tours.’²⁸⁶ This article similarly noted that ‘after a Mormon temple has been dedicated, only the “worthy” – those members of the Church judged by their peers to be in good standing relative to the commandments – may enter.’²⁸⁷ Reference to exclusivity of the Temple appears not only in this and subsequent articles in Melbourne’s press by non-Mormon journalists, but also in the official advertisement placed by the Church. Debelle similarly labels the Temples as ‘extravagant, modern’, and emphasises not only the cost of the Temple, including the ‘high standard of workmanship... from the pale Italian granite exterior to the almost exclusively white interior’, but also the wealth of the Church in general. Debelle firmly states the Temple is

²⁸³ Sasha Baskett, ‘Mormons Declare Open House’, *The Herald Sun*, Melbourne, Victoria, 01 June 2000, pp. 26

²⁸⁴ Baskett, ‘Mormons Declare Open House’, *The Herald Sun*, Melbourne, Victoria, 01 June 2000, pp. 26

²⁸⁵ Penelope Debelle, ‘Mormons’ Opulent Temples Await the ‘Worthy’, *The Age*, 14 June 2000, pp. 4

²⁸⁶ Debelle, ‘Mormons’ Opulent Temples Await the ‘Worthy’, *The Age*, 14 June 2000, pp. 4

²⁸⁷ Debelle, ‘Mormons’ Opulent Temples Await the ‘Worthy’, *The Age*, 14 June 2000, pp. 4

‘sacred ground’, and details the various rooms of the Temple, including the ‘large and ornate font that is two storeys high and consists of a large fibreglass tub resting on 12 oxen, representing the twelve tribes of Israel.’²⁸⁸ Though not hostile, it is evident that Debelle was intrigued by the Temple, and sought to provide a fair overview of the Church’s existence in Australia and the Temples themselves. However, the emphasis on the expense of the building, and the wealth of the Church in general, was a common theme throughout the commentary surrounding the Melbourne Temple, as with the Adelaide.

Following the Open House, on 15 June 2000, the Melbourne Temple was dedicated, making it a sacred place only accessible to the Latter-day Saints. The Melbourne Temple Dedicatory Prayer was offered by Gordon B. Hinckley. This dedicatory prayer reiterates similar themes as the benediction in Adelaide. Hinckley emphasised the importance of the Temple in Latter-day cosmology, and the belief that the sacred building would ‘bless us and the generations of our posterity, as well as the uncounted generations’ of the deceased.²⁸⁹ Hinckley further stated that the construction of the Melbourne Temple was a ‘prophetic day’; this is perhaps related to Bruce R. McConkie’s pronouncement to Edna Ord.²⁹⁰ Hinckley further sought heaven’s blessing upon the land and buildings associated with the Temple, and reiterated that the sacred edifice had been built to glorify God and Jesus Christ. Here, Hinckley specifically seeks a blessing upon the separate parts of the Temple: the altars, halls, baptistry, ordinance rooms, and the statue of Moroni, again evoking the site’s sacred materiality. As always, the ‘peculiar and wonderful sanctity’ of

²⁸⁸ Debelle, ‘Mormons’ Opulent Temples Await the ‘Worthy’’, *The Age*, 14 June 2000, pp. 4

²⁸⁹ ‘Melbourne Australia Temple – Dedicatory Prayer’, *Church News Website*, 16 June 2000, viewed 07/08/2021

²⁹⁰ Kruckenberg, ‘The Announcements of New Holy Edifices Bring Joy and Tears’, *Church News Archive*, 22 February 1999

the Temple was central here. Hinckley prayed that it would not be despoiled by those who are not 'worthy.' With this, the purpose of the Temple is again disclosed: for members to make covenants and participate in ordinances.

As with the Adelaide Temple, Hinckley blessed the workers of the Temple, including the matron and presidency. He also revealed the centrality of the Temple to the 'cause of Zion in all the earth.'²⁹¹ That is, to spread the restored gospel and establish the Kingdom of God before the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. As with the dedication of the Sydney and Adelaide Temple, Hinckley thanked the Lord that Australia allowed the religious freedom for the construction of the Latter-day Saint sacred site. Interestingly, even outside of the political and cultural tensions of the Cold War, Hinckley sought God's blessing on the nation, and asked for heaven to keep Australia in peace. As with the other Temples, Hinckley also pronounced a blessing upon the missionaries within Australia, that they would be endowed with power that came through their ordinances and covenants they made in the Temple. Thus, the dedication of the Melbourne Temple was in many ways comparable to the Adelaide Temple, although there was arguably more of an effort to connect Mormonism with broader sweeps of Australian history.

²⁹¹ 'Melbourne Australia Temple – Dedicatory Prayer', *Church News Website*, 16 June 2000, viewed 07/08/2021

Yokine, Perth, Western Australia Temple

Completed 2001

The Temple in Perth, Western Australia was the next to be completed; the dedication occurred in April 2001. At the time, it was the furthest in distance from the Church headquarters in Salt Lake City.²⁹² The Temple built in the Northern Suburb of Yokine was the most warmly received by the local government, public, and other religious organisation within Australia. According to a *Church News* article about the ground breaking of the site, ‘religious, civic, and political leaders... express[ed] their respect for the members, initiatives, and values of the Church.’²⁹³ This included the gifting of frankincense, ‘symbolizing one of the gifts given to Jesus by the wise men’, by Reverend Wally Mowtschan, leader of the Russian Orthodox Church in Perth.²⁹⁴ Similarly, the groundbreaking was remarked upon favourably by both the then Governor and Premier of Western Australia, Major Michael Jeffrey and Richard Court respectively. For example, Governor Jeffrey wrote to Church leaders

²⁹² Alan Wakeley and Richard Hunter, ‘Temple in A Far Corner Received with Gratitude’, *Church News Archives* Website, viewed 17/03/2021

<https://www.thechurchnews.com/archives/2010-03-10/perth-australia-temple-66120>

²⁹³ ‘A Sense of Brotherhood at Perth Groundbreaking’, *The Church News Archives* Website, December 1999, viewed 17/03/2020

<https://www.thechurchnews.com/archives/2010-03-10/perth-australia-temple-66120>

²⁹⁴ ‘A Sense of Brotherhood at Perth Groundbreaking’, *The Church News Archives* Website, December 1999

I have no doubt that the temple will contribute to the growth and stability of the Church here. But more importantly it will contribute to the growth and stability of members and their families... This is the most significant step forward since the Church was established in Western Australia 103 years ago, and I congratulate you all on reaching this important and exciting milestone.²⁹⁵

Moreover, Premier Court wrote:

The significant growth of the membership of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints throughout the world is accompanied by the growing respect and influence for good in the Western Australian community... Now at the end of the 20th Century an important extension of the work and witness of the Church is about to be built in Perth.²⁹⁶

Such positive reactions from civic and religious leaders of Perth, whilst not entirely unique in the construction of Temples throughout Australia, is certainly evidence of the way in which the Church had become recognised throughout the country. Though, arguably, the blatant positivity of Western Australia's politicians does not negate the hostility experienced by members across the country, it does make this more complex and nuanced. Their complimenting of the Church could similarly represent their courting of votes, rather than a sincere congratulation on the Church's growth.

As an important aside, I have not been able to find an advertisement placed in newspapers by the Church announcing the Open House, as has been the practice. However, there were several articles that noted the construction. For example, *The West Australian* journalist Megan Ellul noted the physical attributes of the \$9 million building.²⁹⁷ Like those in Adelaide and Melbourne, Ellul commented on the 'lifesize

²⁹⁵ 'A Sense of Brotherhood at Perth Groundbreaking', *The Church News Archives Website*, December 1999

²⁹⁶ 'A Sense of Brotherhood at Perth Groundbreaking', *The Church News Archives Website*, December 1999

²⁹⁷ Megan Ellul, 'Gold, Mirrors Reflect Sacred House', *The West Australian*, Perth, 27 April 2001, pp. 3

fibreglass oxen, gold angel on a spire, and a quarry's worth of Italian granite.'²⁹⁸ The emphasis on the physicality of the Temple is reiterated throughout her article, which also notes that crafts-people were 'flown from America' for particular jobs. Moreover, Ellul discusses the 'big crystal chandelier and gold gilded mirrors' of the sealing room, where 'silence is maintained at all times', as well as the need to wear 'plastic booties' over their shoes when touring the Temple.²⁹⁹ For this article Ellul interviewed Kenneth Johnson, an ecclesiastical authority in Western Australia, who sought to 'demystify the religion'; he stated, 'if you're not open to public examination, you run the risk of rumour and misconception.'³⁰⁰ This quote is key here: the Church is evidently aware of the perceptions of secrecy from those outside of the religion, in particular with the Temple. That this was reflected upon directly is important, and indicates the Church's still marginal, though more visible and syncretic, existence in Australia.

Ellul further noted that 'work by local artists depicting WA places such as Esperance and Rottnest hang in the foyer.'³⁰¹ This particular localisation seems to be unique to the Perth Temple, however. Finally, Ellul, as with previous journalists, noted the growth of the Church in Australia in the previous decades, and the fact that, once dedicated, 'non-Mormons will not be allowed into the Temple.'³⁰² Two days later, on the 29th of April 2001, Perth's *Sunday Times*, announced the Open House of the Perth Temple had begun. It reported that in just the first day, more than three-thousand people 'of varying religions and ages donned plastic shoe-coverings to walk through the new religious landmark.'³⁰³

²⁹⁸ Ellul, 'Gold, Mirrors Reflect Sacred House', *The West Australian*, 27 April 2001, pp. 3

²⁹⁹ Ellul, 'Gold, Mirrors Reflect Sacred House', *The West Australian*, 27 April 2001, pp. 3

³⁰⁰ Ellul, 'Gold, Mirrors Reflect Sacred House', *The West Australian*, 27 April 2001, pp. 3

³⁰¹ Ellul, 'Gold, Mirrors Reflect Sacred House', *The West Australian*, 27 April 2001, pp. 3

³⁰² Ellul, 'Gold, Mirrors Reflect Sacred House', *The West Australian*, 27 April 2001, pp. 3

³⁰³ 'Temple Tours Popular', *The Sunday Times*, Perth, Western Australia, 29 April 2001, pp. 9

With more brevity than Ellul, this journalist noted the physical attributes of the building, such as Italian granite.³⁰⁴ This article actually asked two of the attendees of the Open House, Peter Hoskins and his mother Peggy, about their experience of the Temple; Peter stated 'he was awed by the size and grandeur of the building.'³⁰⁵ Like the Ellul article, Peter Meurs, another ecclesiastical leader in Western Australia, stated that the first day's attendance had 'exceeded expectations', and had 'attracted people from all faiths, which we are really pleased about.'³⁰⁶

More prominent, however, were articles in Church-owned news organs that discussed the uniqueness of the Perth Temple. For example, when the Perth Temple was completed in early 2001, it began to service 12,000 members who lived in Western Australia; it was the 106th Temple in operation worldwide.³⁰⁷ Apostle of the Church Jeffrey R. Holland stated at the dedication

With the dedication of this temple on the other side of the earth from Salt Lake City, we are seeing fulfilled the oft-stated prophecy of Church leaders over centuries that temples would eventually circle the globe...

This is a significant event in the on-rolling destiny of the Church and in the progress of the kingdom of God on earth. There is wonderful symbolism and imagery in today's temple dedication for which all of us can be truly grateful.³⁰⁸

³⁰⁴ 'Temple Tours Popular', *The Sunday Times*, Perth, Western Australia, 29 April 2001, pp. 9

³⁰⁵ 'Temple Tours Popular', *The Sunday Times*, Perth, Western Australia, 29 April 2001, pp. 9

³⁰⁶ 'Temple Tours Popular', *The Sunday Times*, Perth, Western Australia, 29 April 2001, pp. 9

³⁰⁷ Wakeley and Hunter, 'Temple in A Far Corner Received with Gratitude', *Church News Archives Website*, viewed 17/03/2021

³⁰⁸ Wakeley and Hunter, 'Temple in A Far Corner Received with Gratitude', *Church News Archives Website*, viewed 17/03/2021

Alan Walkeley and Richard Hunter, who wrote an article entitled 'Temple in a Far Corner Received with Gratitude' for the *Church News*, commented on the dedication

Even the forecast rain, after months of dry weather, could not dampen the spirits of those who witnessed the special events of the day. Indicating that the heavens were watching over the proceedings, the rain held from falling until President Hinckley completed the cornerstone ceremony outside the temple and returned inside for the remainder of the first dedicatory service.³⁰⁹

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Walkeley and Hunter also reported on the joy of octogenarian Lillian MacMillan, who had been baptised into the Church at the age of seventeen in 1932: 'I've been waiting 70 years for this to happen... I'm so happy that we now have a building such as this on our doorstep.'³¹⁰ Walkeley and Hunter noted that

for the Saints in Perth, a visit to the nearest temple in Sydney took great sacrifice. As far as Los Angeles is from New York, the trip required driving or expensive air travel and the taking of vacation time to be able to participate in the sacred ceremonies... before the Sydney temple was dedicated in 1984, the Saints travelled to Hamilton – an even greater sacrifice.³¹¹

It is evident that the isolation of the Western Australian Mormons from the broader Australian, and global, Latter-day Saint community was considered when Hinckley announced the Perth Temple in June 1999.³¹² That members of the Church, who had to travel great distances in order to attend what is believed to be salvation-granting rites, were able to have a Temple so close to home was seen to be a miracle. It is further

³⁰⁹ Wakeley and Hunter, 'Temple in A Far Corner Received with Gratitude', *Church News Archives* Website, viewed 17/03/2021

³¹⁰ Wakeley and Hunter, 'Temple in A Far Corner Received with Gratitude', *Church News Archives* Website, viewed 17/03/2021

³¹¹ Wakeley and Hunter, 'Temple in A Far Corner Received with Gratitude', *Church News Archives* Website, viewed 17/03/2021

³¹² 'Perth Australia Temple', *The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* Website, viewed 11/10/2021 <https://newsroom.churchofjesuschrist.org/article/perth-australia-temple>

evidence that the construction of the Temple in Perth was well received by the public, political, and religious spheres of Western Australia.

As with the previous two Temples, the Yokine, Perth Temple was dedicated by Gordon B. Hinckley. Distinctly, in this prayer, Hinckley emphasised the 'hidden' nature of the Temple, and the 'dispensation of the fulness of times'; this is important, as it shows a more open acknowledgement of the arguably gnostic elements of the Temple. This perhaps reflects a more comfortable existence of Mormonism within Australia or at least Western Australia. Broader themes can be seen as in the other dedicatory prayers: an emphasis on the authority of the Priesthood held by the Church, the primacy of Joseph Smith, gratitude for the freedom of religion in Australia, the sanctity of the ordinances available, and an itemised blessing of the physical features of the Temple, evoking this sacred physicality. Here, though, Hinckley specifically asks for the Lord to protect the Temple from the ravages of nature and man-inflicted damage – likely a direct reference to the vandalism at the Sydney Temple, as discussed in Chapter 3.³¹³ As well, Hinckley seeks heaven's blessing on the missionaries working in Australia, the Church throughout the world, the workers of the temple, and the youth of the Church. This is a unique part of this dedication, where Hinckley prays that the youth will grow up with a desire to attend the Temple and partake of the ordinances it houses. It reflects a concern that has been consistent for the last half a century within the Church, that the 'rising generation' is rejecting Mormonism.³¹⁴ Nevertheless, the Perth dedication whilst unique in some respects, is comparable to the other dedications of the 'mini-Temples' around Australia.

³¹³ Newton, *Southern Cross Saints*, pp. 84

³¹⁴ Ronald A. Rasband, 'Our Rising Generation', Annual General Conference Sermon, *The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints Website*, April 2006, viewed 11/10/2021

As an aside, only a year after the completion of the Perth Temple, a furore erupted after a building contractor claimed he had not been paid by Doric Construction, the firm responsible for building the Temple, for his work on the building.³¹⁵ Though this was denied by Doric Construction, the contractor, Reno Day, ‘removed one of two gates from the Temple.’³¹⁶ Mr. Day stated that he had taken Doric to court, but this was again denied by the company. As such, he had decided the only recourse was a public display of disaffection. Though not an act of organised, public hostility on the level of the Carlingford Residents Action Committee, which had sought to stop the Sydney Temple’s construction, this would have nonetheless been perceived as sacrilege by the Perth Mormons. Aside from this, however, the Perth Temple was the most well-received Latter-day Saint building by broader society to be built within Australia. Although only dedicated a year after the Adelaide and Melbourne Temples, it is evident the construction of additional Temples around the nation, within the context of a more extensive global temple-building enterprise, was seen by the Church and its members as an ‘anchor’, and sought to localise the Latter-day Saint community within Australia.³¹⁷

<https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/2006/04/our-rising-generation?lang=eng>

³¹⁵ ‘Temple Gate Falls Over Debt Wrangle’, *The West Australian*, Perth, Western Australia, 25 June 2002
‘Temple Gates Row Still Open’, *The West Australian*, Perth, West Australia, 26 June 2002

³¹⁶ ‘Temple Gate Falls Over Debt Wrangle’, *The West Australian*, Perth, Western Australia, 25 June 2002 ‘

³¹⁷ ‘Sydney Australia Temple – Dedicatory Prayer’, *Temples of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* Website, 20 September 1984, viewed 07/08/2021

<https://churchofjesuschristtemples.org/sydney-australia-temple/dedicatory-prayer/>

Holly Mendenhall, ‘Anchoring Yourself To Christ’, *BYU Hawai’i*, 21 November 2023

<https://speeches.byuh.edu/devotionals/anchoring-yourself-to-christ>

Brisbane Temple, Kangaroo Point, Queensland

Completed 2003

The last of the 'mini-Temples' to be constructed within Australia was built at Kangaroo Point, Brisbane, Queensland, completed in 2003. The Church had owned the land at Kangaroo Point for over forty years, on which stood a chapel that serviced Brisbane-based Mormons.³¹⁸ In Brisbane, the Church desired to build a slightly grander Temple than was constructed in Adelaide, Melbourne, or Perth, albeit not as prominent as Sydney.³¹⁹ However, before construction even began, there were issues with these plans. As reported by Lachlan Heywood of *The Courier-Mail*, there was a residents-led 'legal challenge' to the temple scheduled for the Planning and Environment Court.³²⁰ According to the challenge submitted by local residents, the planned temple was too large and, there was open hostility towards the Angel Moroni statue, which 'stands poised to... herald the second coming of Christ.'³²¹ As stated in the previous chapter, the statue was not placed upon the Sydney temple until a year after it was finished, as the Church was unable to receive the proper permits until this time. In contrast to Sydney, where resident agitation lasted for years, in Brisbane, the resident challenge 'was dropped when the Church agreed to significant design changes.'³²² Besides Sydney, the Brisbane Temple is the only within Australia that had to change its blueprint due to public hostility, though this has occurred throughout the world.³²³ As reported by Heywood, the Church had to reduce

³¹⁸ Lachlan Heywood, 'Latter-day Deal for Temple', *The Courier-Mail*, 26 February 2001, pp. 3

³¹⁹ Heywood, 'Latter-day Deal for Temple', *The Courier-Mail*, 26 February 2001, pp. 3

³²⁰ Heywood, 'Latter-day Deal for Temple', *The Courier-Mail*, 26 February 2001, pp. 3

³²¹ Mathewson, 'Neighbours Sound Off Over Trumpeting Angel', *The Courier-Mail*, 08 October 2002, pp. 4

³²² Heywood, 'Latter-day Deal for Temple', *The Courier-Mail*, 26 February 2001, pp. 3

³²³ Heywood, 'Latter-day Deal for Temple', *The Courier-Mail*, 26 February 2001, pp. 3

‘the floor area... and the roof line... to minimise its impact on neighbours’ view of the city.’³²⁴ In exchange for the Church’s cooperation, the City Council ‘modified conditions limiting the temple’s hours of operations’, allowing the Temple to service the Queensland Mormon community for longer time periods.³²⁵ According to this article, the Lord Mayor at the time, Jim Soorley, ‘said he had inspected a similar Mormon temple in Adelaide to gain a sense of the project, and expected it would work.’³²⁶ Church spokesperson Ralph Orth commented on the legal challenge and compromise

As members of the Christian Church, we always strive to be good neighbours and we have made every effort to be understanding and co-operative... accordingly, we have made a number of design changes to accommodate neighbours... this temple will be a landmark for the city of Brisbane and a blessing for the people of Queensland.³²⁷

Opposition to the building of the Temple in Brisbane is important to this history of Mormonism in Australia, in particular the reception to the Church. Numerous newspaper articles published in Brisbane mention the fact that the Temple was ‘controversial’ to neighbours, and that local residents were not impressed with the structure. Catriona Mathewson reported in 2002 that some ‘resident have claimed the temple sticks out like a sore thumb’; Mathewson quoted Selene Starck, who lived in Kangaroo Point, who stated that it was ‘casino-looking, a bit tacky... I think most of us [locals] don’t particularly like it... it’s ugly.’³²⁸ Another neighbour, Marcelle Sarkis stated that ‘she was offended by the flashy display of opulence.’³²⁹ Sarkis stated that “‘it is not modest and the heart of the religion must be modest and humble – like Jesus... it is too much, ‘look, we are rich’ and

³²⁴ Heywood, ‘Latter-day Deal for Temple’, *The Courier-Mail*, 26 February 2001, pp. 3

³²⁵ Heywood, ‘Latter-day Deal for Temple’, *The Courier-Mail*, 26 February 2001, pp. 3

³²⁶ Heywood, ‘Latter-day Deal for Temple’, *The Courier-Mail*, 26 February 2001, pp. 3

³²⁷ Heywood, ‘Latter-day Deal for Temple’, *The Courier-Mail*, 26 February 2001, pp. 3

³²⁸ Catriona Mathewson, ‘Neighbours Sound Off Over Trumpeting Angel’, *The Courier-Mail (Brisbane, Queensland)*, 08 October 2002, pp. 4

³²⁹ Mathewson, ‘Neighbours Sound Off Over Trumpeting Angel’, *The Courier-Mail*, 08 October 2002, pp. 4

sparkling.”³³⁰ Starkis’ response, and the inclusion of her quote in this newspaper article, perhaps indicates the way in which religion in Australia was changing institutionally; whilst grand architectural displays may have been the norm in previous generations, society’s expectations of religions have shifted. However, Mathewson did note that there were those who ‘prais[ed] it as a landmark.’³³¹ Though there was a lack of consensus on the Brisbane temple, with a clear division amongst those within the neighbourhood, opposition was framed as a matter of aesthetics, an interesting pivot that suggests a caution towards criticism in an increasingly religiously pluralistic Australia.³³² However, this framing is replete with value judgements, not just about aesthetics, but what the sacred site actually represents.

When the Temple was finished in April 2003, David Bentley of *The Courier-Mail* in Brisbane wrote of the completion and subsequent Open House, which ran from the 10th May and 7th June 2003. Bentley gave a brief overview of the Church’s history, the purpose of the Temple, and the Church’s opposition to ‘abortion, pornography, gambling, legal recognition of same-sex unions, unwise eating habits and misuse of drugs.’³³³ Bentley also noted that the completion of the temple was not welcomed by all in the community, discussing the residential committee who legally challenged the announced construction, as well as a ‘pornography millionaire whose cliff-edge block the temple overlooks.’³³⁴ Whilst the Brisbane Temple was the last to be built in Australia, it was actually the second one to be planned after the temple in Sydney, having been announced in the 1997 General

³³⁰ Mathewson, ‘Neighbours Sound Off Over Trumpeting Angel’, *The Courier-Mail*, 08 October 2002, pp. 4

³³¹ Mathewson, ‘Neighbours Sound Off Over Trumpeting Angel’, *The Courier-Mail*, 08 October 2002, pp. 4

³³² Mathewson, ‘Neighbours Sound Off Over Trumpeting Angel’, *The Courier-Mail*, 08 October 2002, pp. 4

³³³ David Bentley, ‘Heaven on Earth’, *The Courier-Mail (Brisbane, Queensland)*, 05 April 20003, pp. 06

³³⁴ Bentley, ‘Heaven on Earth’, *The Courier-Mail (Brisbane, Queensland)*, 05 April 20003, pp. 06

Conference.³³⁵ However, the legal challenges slowed the building of the temple, which caused a delay in both the construction and subsequent dedication. According to Mathewson, Church spokesman Ralph Orth hoped that the invitation for non-Mormons to examine the Temple before it was dedicated and closed to the public would 'help demystify the religion.'³³⁶ Kristy Sexton, writing for the Adelaide-based *The Sunday Mail*, noted that that the 'controversial \$17 million [temple]... is a crowd puller... [with] more than 15,000 tickets snapped up by people keen to take a sticky-beak inside.'³³⁷ This was confirmed by an official Church press release about the Brisbane Temple's Open House, which Christopher Cooper claimed '50,000 visitors – including Rotary International President Bhichai Rattakul of Thailand' had participated in.³³⁸ According to Cooper, the newly-opened Temple would serve over 23,000 members of the Church within Queensland, northern New South Wales, and the Torres Strait Islands.³³⁹ Nevertheless, the tension over the Brisbane temple demonstrates the uneasy place of the Church within Australia, with the Temple's site at Kangaroo Point generating concern. The resistance of the public, coupled with the compromise of the Church and subsequent curiosity of locals, indicates that whilst the Church had existed in Australia for over 150 years, with a permanent presence in Queensland since the 1850s, there was nonetheless lingering suspicion and hostility.

³³⁵ Bentley, 'Heaven on Earth', *The Courier-Mail (Brisbane, Queensland)*, 05 April 2003, pp. 06

³³⁶ Mathewson, 'Neighbours Sound Off Over Trumpeting Angel', *The Courier-Mail*, 08 October 2002, pp. 4

³³⁷ Kristy Sexton, 'Reach for the Sky – Temple Draws 15,000', *The Sunday Mail (Adelaide, South Australia)*, 04 May 2003, pp. 43

³³⁸ Christopher Cooper, 'Brisbane Temple Opens to Visitor Tours', *The Church News Archive*, 05 June 2003, viewed 01/03/2021

<https://www.thechurchnews.com/archives/2003-06-07/brisbane-temple-opens-to-visitor-tours-102129>

³³⁹ Cooper, 'Brisbane Temple Opens to Visitor Tours', *The Church News Archive*, 05 June 2003, viewed 01/03/2021

The dedicatory prayer of the Brisbane Temple is somewhat unique in the comparison to the other three prayers that have been analysed in this chapter; this was again uttered by Gordon B. Hinckley. In this prayer, Hinckley begins by addressing God as ‘Elohim’, an important name-title in Latter-day Saint cosmology. Although usually reserved only for the Temple, the linguistic use is important to dissect here in regards to Mormon theology. According to Latter-day Saint Apostle and theologian Bruce R. McConkie, this name-title comes from the ancient Hebrew word *El*, which he claims translates to Lord or God.³⁴⁰ According to McConkie, the suffix of -ohim or -oheim designates a plural noun; thus, as has been formalised in Mormon dogma, pronounced that the modern use of the word Elohim should denote the idea of ‘God of the Gods.’³⁴¹ This complex but central doctrine in Mormon thought was first discussed openly in Joseph Smith’s King Follett Sermon, and has been canonised by subsequent ecclesiastical leaders.³⁴² The Church argues that there is Biblical precedence for this belief, the ‘Lords many, and Gods many’ as described by Paul in his Letter to the Corinthians, but that God the Father, Elohim, is God of these Gods.³⁴³ It is important to note that Elohim is not unique to Mormonism but used by both mainline Christian denominations and Judaism.³⁴⁴ However, this open reference to more sacred and secretive aspects of Mormon theology perhaps reflects the Church’s confidence in its place within Australia, and indeed the world. Hinckley’s linguistic use of ‘Elohim’ is unique in the Brisbane dedication in the context of the later Temples within

³⁴⁰ Bruce R. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, Salt Lake City, Utah: Bookcraft Incorporated, 1958, pp. 207

³⁴¹ McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, pp. 207

³⁴² McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, pp. 384

Joseph Smith, Jr., ‘The King Follett Sermon’ (1844 Funeral Eulogy), reprinted in *The Ensign*, April 1971, viewed 11/10/2021

<https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/ensign/1971/04/the-king-follett-sermon?lang=eng>

³⁴³ 1st Corinthians 8:5, *The Holy Bible*

McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, pp. 207

³⁴⁴ ‘Elohim’, *Britannica Encyclopedia of World Religions*, 2006, pp. 326; Koog P. Hong, “ELOHIM, THE ELOHIST, AND THE THEORY OF PROGRESSIVE REVELATION.” *Biblica* 98, no. 3 (2017): 321–38.

Australia, although both the Hamilton and Sydney dedicatory prayers also utilise this name. Also unique to this dedication is Hinckley's mention of the Book of Mormon, and the divinity associated with that, as well as his reference to Joseph Smith's vision that ushered in the 'last and final dispensation', that is the time period directly before the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. This dedication was replete with specific Mormon theological tenets, and the speech highlighted points of difference between Mormon and other Christian faiths.

Hinckley moreover prayed that the Lord would 'visit this sacred edifice', again symbolising the centrality of the Temple in Latter-day Saint thought as the melding of the material and sacred. This admonition that God would physically enter the Brisbane Temple is important, reinforcing this theme of the Temple being a meeting place of the eternal and temporal. Again, the prophet extends a blessing upon the Temple that it would be protected from the 'elements of nature' and the 'evil hand' of those who seek to 'defile' the sacred place. Unlike consecratory prayers for other Temples, Hinckley also blessed and dedicated the 'neighbouring chapel', which was finished at the same time as the Temple. This is unique to the Brisbane Temple, and Hinckley makes the clear distinction between the purposes of the chapel and the Temple in Latter-day Saint religious worship. The chapel is open to the public, and is for the purpose of weekly meetings, sermons, music, cultural activities, religious instruction, and partaking of the 'sacrament of the supper of the Lord.' In contrast, the Temple is closed off to the general public, and is exclusively available to 'worthy' Latter-day Saints. Hinckley finished the dedication, again, with a blessing upon Australia, and that the Church may be 'recognised and respected' by the broader population of Brisbane. This perhaps indicates the

complexity of Mormonism's acceptance and existence within Australia. Though the Church had become solidified and localised with a growth in membership and the building of Temples and chapels, there was still a disconnect between the Latter-day Saints and Australian broader society. That this was acknowledged by the leader of Mormonism is equally important in understanding that this 'otherness' is evident.

Auckland and Wellington, North Island, New Zealand Temples

Announced 2018 and 2022

Most recently, President Russell M. Nelson announced the plans to build the Auckland Temple during a visit in May 2018, just after the Christchurch shootings; Nelson was coincidentally in New Zealand as part of a ministering tour.³⁴⁵ President Nelson met with then-mayor of Auckland, Phil Goff, who was reportedly positive in his view of the Church:

President Nelson, I have to say that your Church is a very important faith organisation in New Zealand. The Church performs a very important role in the values that you teach and in the community service that you give us.³⁴⁶

This Temple was announced in General Conference in October 2018, and was received with widespread excitement amongst New Zealand's Latter-day Saints.³⁴⁷ The reactions

³⁴⁵ Eyre, 'Auckland New Zealand Temple Groundbreaking Date Announced', *Church Newsroom Website*, 12 March 2020, viewed 25/03/2021

³⁴⁶ McKenzie Stauffer, 'LDS President Announces Location for New Zealand Temple', *KUTV Website*, 21 May 2019, viewed 25/03/2021
<https://kutv.com/news/local/lds-president-announces-location-for-new-zealand-temple>

³⁴⁷ 'Auckland New Zealand Temple Groundbreaking Date Announced', *Church Newsroom Website*, 12 March 2020, viewed 25/03/2021
<https://newsroom.churchofjesuschrist.org/article/auckland-new-zealand-temple-groundbreaking-date-announced>

outside the faithful Mormon community have largely been supportive or benign, though still replete with curiosity.³⁴⁸ This indicates a different reception and representation of the Church in New Zealand, but could also indicate a different approach to the spirituality of the minor religion based on the passing of time, and the integration of multiculturalism, secularisation, and religious plurality within the country.

This is important in and of itself, however, as it represents the way in which the Church has become more accepted and well-received within New Zealand. Unlike previous Temples, there were very few complications and there were no legal challenges, residential protests, or complaints from other religious organisations. It was noted by one journalist however, that the site, located in the Auckland suburb of Manuka, was worth tens of millions of dollars.³⁴⁹ This commentary on the price of Temples has been common throughout each of the constructions, and perhaps indicates the public's discomfort with the wealth of the Church. The Church's financials within Australia and New Zealand will be more discussed in a later chapter of this dissertation. Importantly, journalist Tarannum Shaikh noted the Auckland Temple is intended to not only service members in northern New Zealand, but also the Cook Islands and the island-nation of Niue.³⁵⁰ The

³⁴⁸ Anne Gibson, 'Mormon Church Buys Site for First Auckland Temple', *The New Zealand Herald* Website, 30 May 2019, viewed 25/03/2021

<https://www.nzherald.co.nz/business/mormon-church-buys-site-for-first-auckland-temple/NO52F3BGRXDRDFEJH2YC463GS4/>

³⁴⁹ Gibson, 'Mormon Church Buys Site for First Auckland Temple', *The New Zealand Herald* Website, 30 May 2019, viewed 25/03/2021

³⁵⁰ Tarannum Shaikh, 'The Country's Second Mormon Temple to be Built in Auckland', *StuffNZ* Website, 09 October 2018, viewed 25/03/2021

<https://www.stuff.co.nz/auckland/107698388/the-countrys-second-mormon-temple-to-be-built-in-auckland>

groundbreaking occurred in November 2022, performed by Russell M. Nelson; as of writing it still being constructed, as seen in the photograph above.³⁵¹

In April 2022, the Wellington Temple was also announced in General Conference, due for completion in 2025. What is fascinating about both of these Temples is that whilst these are still in the planning and construction phases, the Hamilton Temple was also being renovated. As such, there has been a reversal in the previous historical phenomenon of Australian Mormons travelling to New Zealand to receive their Temple ordinances. Instead, Latter-day Saints from New Zealand had to travel to Sydney, Melbourne, or most commonly, Brisbane in order to attend the sacred site.³⁵² This has been difficult for many Latter-day Saints in New Zealand, who have to make great financial sacrifices in order to attend the Temple.³⁵³ This is particularly true of young men and women who are becoming missionaries, as it is a prerequisite that they perform the ordinances and rituals.

Temples In the Pandemic

³⁵¹ Aubrey Eyre, 'Auckland New Zealand Temple Groundbreaking Date Announced', *Church Newsroom* Website, 12 March 2020, viewed 25/03/2021

<https://www.thechurchnews.com/temples/2020-03-12/groundbreaking-date-auckland-new-zealand-announced-176972>

³⁵² Libby Wilson, 'Mormon Weddings Head Overseas While NZ's Temple Closed', *StuffNZ* Website, 17 August 2017, viewed 25/03/2021

<https://www.stuff.co.nz/national/106277279/mormon-weddings-head-overseas-while-nzs-temple-closed>

³⁵³ Wilson, 'Mormon Weddings Head Overseas While NZ's Temple Closed', *StuffNZ* Website, 17 August 2017, viewed 25/03/2021

It should also be noted that during the COVID-19 pandemic, Australian and New Zealand Temples were temporarily closed for swatches of 2020.³⁵⁴ This was part of a worldwide closing of Temples, which occurred in late March after it was reported that an elderly woman in Utah had become infected with coronavirus after attending the Salt Lake City Temple.³⁵⁵ However, after a few months, Australian temples were partially reopened, but only for the performance of living ordinances.³⁵⁶ This meant that they were only available for those who were receiving their initiatory, endowment, or sealing, rather than those who wished to perform these for deceased family members or strangers.³⁵⁷ This has represented a major shift within the Mormon use of temples, as they have always been built with the intent to perform ordinances for the dead. The limited operating capacity of Temples during the pandemic has been largely influenced by local and national laws regarding social distancing and lockdowns, as well as by directions from Salt Lake City.³⁵⁸ As such, due to Victoria's more extensive lockdown, the Melbourne Temple was closed for longer than other Temples around the country.

³⁵⁴ 'First Presidency Temporarily Closes All Temples', *Church Newsroom* Website, 25 March 2020, viewed 26/03/2021

<https://newsroom.churchofjesuschrist.org/article/first-presidency-temporarily-closes-all-temples-march-25-2020>

³⁵⁵ 'First Presidency Temporarily Closes All Temples', *Church Newsroom* Website, 25 March 2020, viewed 26/03/2021; Tad Walch, '1st Utahn to Die of COVID-19 Attended Bountiful Temple Last Week, Church Confirms', *Deseret News* Website, 23 March 2020, viewed 26/03/2021

<https://www.deseret.com/faith/2020/3/23/21191722/mormon-temple-covid-19-coronavirus-utah-death-bountiful-lds-church>

³⁵⁶ McKenzie Stauffer, 'LDS Church Reopens More Temples for Marriage Ceremonies', *KUTV News* Website, 12 May 2020, viewed 26/03/2021

<https://kutv.com/news/local/lds-church-reopens-more-temples-for-marriage-ceremonies>

³⁵⁷ Stauffer, 'LDS Church Reopens More Temples for Marriage Ceremonies', *KUTV News* Website, 12 May 2020

³⁵⁸ 'The Latest News on Temple Reopenings', *Church Newsroom* Website, 29 March 2021, viewed 30/03/2021

<https://newsroom.churchofjesuschrist.org/article/first-presidency-limited-reopening-temples>

In March 2021 Temple restrictions were lifted, with a returned availability of ordinance services both for the living and dead.³⁵⁹ An official Church document from late March 2021 announced that all five temples within Australia were ‘open for ... performing ordinances for living individuals [and] limited ordinances on behalf of deceased individuals.’³⁶⁰ The gradual reopening of Temples throughout the world was heralded by Elder Dale G. Renlund of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, who claimed it a blessing from deity.³⁶¹ The Church’s cosmological underpinnings of the Temple, as a sacred place where ordinances can be performed for living members and deceased loved ones has thus been adapted to the challenge of a worldwide pandemic. It is also clear that whilst the functionality of the Temple had to change due to local laws and directions from Salt Lake City, the theological foundations of these sacred sites has remained unchanged.

Conclusion

There are several arguments that can be drawn from analysing the construction and announcements, constructions, and dedications of the ‘mini-Temples’ in Australia and New Zealand. It is clear that the building of these sacred sites represents a fundamental pivot towards the localisation and solidification of the religion within these nations. Though the Church has been in existence in Australia and New Zealand since the 1840s and has been a part of public consciousness during this time, the building of Temple

³⁵⁹ ‘The Latest News on Temple Reopenings’, *Church Newsroom* Website, 29 March 2021

³⁶⁰ ‘The Latest News on Temple Reopenings’, *Church Newsroom* Website, 29 March 2021

³⁶¹ ‘The Latest News on Temple Reopenings’, *Church Newsroom* Website, 29 March 2021

represents a more structured permanency. Whilst this has certainly ensured that Mormonism and its adherents are more of an enduring feature, both culturally and physically, in the broader societal landscape, these buildings have been met with varied reactions from citizens, other clergy, and political leaders. There have been legal challenges, modified Temple designs, support, bemusement, outright hostility, and citizenry action in response these structures. In some instances, there were overt or underlying hostility, marginalisation, and suspicion of the secret nature of the Temples. It is important to emphasise, however, that much of this hostility, likely to not appear openly bigoted, was cloaked in objections to architecture and aesthetics. This reaction against the construction of Latter-day Saint holy sites was not unique to the Mormons during this period, however, as other religious buildings, both planned and constructed, have been targeted in aggressive ways, as has been discussed.

What is clear is that for the Latter-day Saints, the Temples are the meeting place between the temporal and eternal realms; the sacred and exclusive nature of these buildings has been emphasised in both Mormon and non-Mormon commentary of the Temples. This is perhaps most evident in the Dedicatory Prayers; these sources are central to understanding how the Latter-day Saints view the Temples, as it instructs members to view the edifices in a specific way. Moreover, these prayers indicate the way in which the Church sees itself within the history of these two nations, as well as human history. Latter-day Saint theology is reiterated in these blessings, particularly in relation to the material sacredness of the Temple. However, whilst Temples are evidence of a localisation and visibility of the Church within these countries, their control rests solely in the hands of the central hierarchy.

The building of Temples within both New Zealand and Australia brings out interwoven and complex themes. These buildings are representative of a transition from a foreign into a more localised and syncretic spirituality in terms of how the Latter-days viewed themselves within the broader culture and histories of both Australia and New Zealand. The Temples anchor this marginalised faith community within a culture that is, despite being conscious of the Latter-day Saints since the nineteenth century, still indifferent or hostile to its adherents. Yet, each of the Temples were represented and received by press, governments, and the broader public in diverse ways. This indicates the nuance and complexity of Mormonism's place within Australia, and how this has been reflected.

Each Temple was unique in its reception and representation by broader media, society, and government. In Adelaide, the Temple was received with more bemusement and curiosity than disdain, but was ridiculed by another religious minority. However, as can be seen from the reactions to the Melbourne and Perth Temples, high-ranking political, and even religious, leaders expressed their admiration for both the temples and the Mormon community in their states. Conversely, in Brisbane, the design of the Temple had to be changed to appease the protest of residents, which was only approved by the government with these compromises. The changing of 'the House of the Lord' to appease the Brisbane public is important to note from a Latter-day Saint cosmology; though accepted by the Church, Hinckley's Dedicatory Prayer indicates the Church's opposition to these events. Twenty years after the construction of the Brisbane Temple, in Auckland and Wellington, the Temples have been approved and received with little complaint or compromise, and indeed was neutrally reported by media. This lack of hostility is just as

important to emphasise the transition of the Latter-day Saint Church into a more localised spirituality, albeit with hierarchical roots in the United States.

Yet, whilst the construction of Temples is indicative of this pivot towards localisation and syncretisation, these buildings have, at times, been met with resistance from broader society, media, and local governments. This dichotomy, which began to form prior to World War II and the building of Latter-day Saint chapels, crystallised with the construction of the Temples. Thus, the construction of these 'mini-Temples' around Australia and New Zealand indicates a fundamental pivot point, as from the 2000s onwards, as shall be explored in the following chapters, the Church has become much more visible and enmeshed in the political, cultural, and broader religious elements of these countries, albeit in a marginalised form.

CHAPTER V

**‘Determined In Their Self-Righteousness To Make More Enemies
Than They Will Be Able To Handle’³⁶²:**

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Mormonism in Australian & New Zealand Politics, Court Cases, and Government Reports

Introduction

In 2019, Prime Minister of New Zealand Jacinda Ardern hosted the prophet of the Church, Russell M. Nelson, his wife Wendy, and Apostles Neil Anderson and Gerrit Gong in official government buildings in Wellington.³⁶³ Here, the Nelsons and Elders Anderson and Gong also met Prime Minister Ardern’s parents, who are faithful members of the Church. Although Jacinda Ardern left Mormonism in the early 2000s, President Nelson nevertheless gifted her an embossed Book of Mormon, as well as a copy of her family genealogy.³⁶⁴ This encounter occurred just after the horrific Christchurch massacre,

³⁶² Andrw Bolt, ‘Do Fundamentalists Now Run the Vic Libs?’, *The Daily Telegraph* Website, 11 May 2018, viewed 19/11/2020

³⁶³ Zane Small, ‘Mormon Leader Russell Nelson Labels Jacinda Ardern ‘Courageous Consensus-Builder’, *NewsHub New Zealand* Website, 23/05/2019, viewed 22/08/2020

<https://www.newshub.co.nz/home/politics/2019/05/mormon-leader-russell-nelson-labels-jacinda-ardern-courageous-consensus-builder.html>; Sarah Jane Weaver, ‘President Nelson Praises New Zealand’s Prime Minister During Visit to Wellington’, *Church News* Website, 20 May 2019, viewed 22/08/2020, <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/church/news/president-nelson-praises-new-zealands-prime-minister-during-visit-to-wellington?lang=eng>

³⁶⁴ Jana Reiss, ‘Commentary: It’s Mormonism’s Loss that New Zealand’s Dynamic Leader Couldn’t Find a Home in the Faith’, *The Salt Lake Tribune* Website, Last Update 21 May 2019, viewed 22/08/2020,

<https://www.sltrib.com/religion/2019/05/20/commentary-its-mormonisms/>

Lydia Smith, ‘New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern Left Mormon Church to Support LGBT Rights’, *The Independent United Kingdom* Website, 21 October 2017, viewed 27/09/2020

where on 15 March 2019 an Australian far-right white supremacist open-fired on worshippers at a Mosque who had met for Friday Prayers.³⁶⁵ In response, the Church donated \$US100,000 to the victims and their families; Nelson and other Church leaders, who were in the country as part of a Pacific Area ministerial tour, also met with various Muslim leaders in New Zealand, including Sheik Mohammad Amir and Dr. Mustafa Farouk to offer sympathy and support.³⁶⁶ Though this is the greatest example of direct interactions between the Church and the political spheres of Australia and New Zealand, this is by no means the only connection.

Since the establishment of Temples, which has signified the localisation of Mormonism within Australia and New Zealand, the Church has been increasingly involved in politics within these two nations. This chapter will explore the direct influence of the Church, as an official religious organisation, as well as its indirect influence through the actions of politically active Latter-day Saints. Moreover, this chapter will examine how the Church's engagements with the politics of Australia and New Zealand has been received and

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/australasia/new-zealand-prime-minister-jacinda-ardern-quit-mormon-church-lgbt-rights-a8012676.html>; Weaver, 'President Nelson Praises New Zealand's Prime Minister During Visit to Wellington', *Church News Website*, 20 May 2019

³⁶⁵ Harriet Sherwood, 'New Zealand Muslim Leaders Call for Calm After Mosque Attacks', *The Guardian Website*, 15 March 2019, viewed 03/07/2020

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/mar/15/new-zealand-muslim-leaders-call-for-calm-after-mosque-attacks>; Simon Smale, 'Christchurch Shootings Leave 50 People Dead After Attacks on Mosques, As It Happened', *ABC News Website*, Posted 15 March 2019, Updated 18 March 2019, viewed 16/07/2020
<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2019-03-15/christchurch-shooting-multiple-fatalities-mosque-new-zealand/10904416>

³⁶⁶ Sarah Jane Weaver, 'President Nelson Announces Donation to Rebuild Mosques Damaged in Deadly New Zealand Attacks', *Church News Website*, 21 May 2019, viewed 14/07/2020,

<https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/church/news/president-nelson-announces-donation-to-rebuild-mosques-damaged-in-deadly-new-zealand-attacks?lang=eng>; Sarah Jane Weaver, 'President Nelson Calls New Zealand's Prime Minister 'Courageous', Promises Church Will Donate to Mosques', *Church News Website*, 08 August 2019, viewed 04/03/2020
<https://www.thechurchnews.com/leaders-and-ministry/2019-05-20/pacific-tour-president-nelson-prime-minister-jacinda-arden-mosques-1960>

represented. Newspaper articles, official reports, online publications, and court cases will be utilised in order to understand the depth of the Church's influence in the political realms of these nations. In doing so, this chapter will further argue that the Mormon Church's resources, ideologies, and influence have become more evident, though not challenged, within the politics of Australia and New Zealand. It should be noted, however, that despite the Church's efforts to become more influential, both as an institution and through the efforts of individual members, the religion is nonetheless marginal within these nations, albeit with an increased visibility and localisation.

This chapter will demonstrate the gradual increase in political activity of the Church and its members in the Antipodes during the twentieth and twenty-first century. This correlates with the politicisation of the Church in the United States from the 1960s.³⁶⁷ Within Australia and New Zealand, this has occurred through the election of Latter-day Saint politicians within state and federal governments, the Church's involvement in political movements, and the utilisation of its institutional resources in archiving public records. As this chapter will also discuss, beginning in the twentieth century, prominent Indigenous rights activists within both Australia and New Zealand have been Latter-day Saints. However, it is only within the twenty-first century that the Church, as an institution, has become involved in the political realms of these countries. This chapter

³⁶⁷ Matthew Harris (ed.), *Thunder From the Right: Ezra Taft Benson in Mormonism and Politics*, University of Illinois Press, 2019; Matthew Harris, *Watchman on the Tower: Ezra Taft Benson and the Making of the Mormon Right*, University of Utah Press, 2020

will also explore the way in which individual Latter-day Saints have entered the politics in an elected capacity. The discussion will then expand to those who hold positions of political power but are not elected; for example, the increase of Latter-day Saints in the Victorian Liberal Party's administrative body. This chapter will not examine the Church's involvement with the sexual politics of Australia and New Zealand, however, as this will be explored in Chapter 6.

As well as activism and politics, this chapter will explore legal proceedings against both individual Latter-day Saints and the Church itself, and how these have in turn been represented in the press. This will include the court case *Iliafi and Affiliates v the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints*. This somewhat notorious case, which later became an international incident, was fought in the Australian High Court over the 2008 decision to discontinue the Samoan-speaking congregations in Brisbane, Queensland. Similarly, this chapter will explore the Church's existence in various government reports. For instance, the recent Australian Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sex Abuse contains several stories and references to the Church. This will be further contextualised by the examination of the media's hostility towards Latter-day Saint 'worthiness interviews.' This practice, in which children and teenagers are questioned about moral and sexual 'worthiness', including interviews about sexual behaviour by predominantly middle-aged, male lay clergy, has been alleged to constitute sexual abuse. Moreover, the controversial issue of the Church's 'political neutrality' will be discussed in detail. This is especially relevant as journalists, politicians, and political commentators who, as recently as 2020, have accused the Liberal Party of Victoria of 'branch stacking' hard-right religious individuals in their organisation in order to win over conservative Mormons and

Catholics. The decision by various state governments in Australia to allow the Latter-day Saint Church to digitise genealogical and public records will similarly be deliberated. This includes reactions to this announcement, which has been met with criticism and suspicion by the media. The key argument of this chapter is that since the beginning of the twenty-first century, the Church has gradually, yet perceptibly, become more visible and engaged within the public and political realms of both Australia and New Zealand. Though still a minority and marginalised religion, both in terms of population and perception, this intervention into the secularised, political sphere of both nations has not been unchallenged.

In order to understand this more thorough visibility and attempted syncretism with broader Australian and New Zealand society, this chapter is situated in relation to other histories of religion in these nations. Primarily, it explores how the Latter-day Saints, as a religious minority, have interacted in various ways with the State; though existing scholarship does not mention the Latter-day Saints directly, the themes from this broader research will be utilised. Most predominantly, scholars have highlighted the uncomfortable position of religions within the supposedly 'secular' nations of Australia and New Zealand.³⁶⁸ As has been discussed, the major religion of both of these countries

³⁶⁸ See, for example:

Noel Cox, 'Legal Aspects of Church-State Relations in New Zealand', *Journal of Anglican Studies*, Volume 8, Issue 1, pp. 9-33; Noel Cox, 'Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction in the Church of Province of Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia', *Deakin Law Review*, Volume 6, Issue 2, 2001, pp. 262-284; Brian Fletcher, *An English Church in Australian Soil: Anglicanism, Australian Society, and the English Connection Since 1788*, Canberra, ACT: Barton Books, 2015; Tom Frame, *Church and State: Australia's Imaginary Wall*, Sydney: University of NSW Press, 2005; Grant Huscroft, 'Canadian and New Zealand Perspectives on the Separation of Church and State', *Brandeis Law Journal*, Volume 41, Issue 3, 2003, pp. 507; Marion Maddox, 'The Church, the State, and the Classroom: Questions Posed by an Overlooked Sector in Australia's Education Market', *University of New South Wales Law Journal*, Volume 34, Issue 1, 2011, pp. 300-315; Haig Patapan, 'Church and State in Australia: Towards a New Dialogue', *Public Law Review*, Volume 12, Issue 1, 2001, pp. 13-16; Max Wallace and Meg Wallace, 'Finding Separation of Church and State for New Zealand', *The Australian Humanist*, Issue 112, 2013, pp. 7-8

has traditionally been the Church of England, which has also functioned in a quasi-imperial role throughout these nations' histories.³⁶⁹ Even religions like Catholicism or minority Protestant sects have served as conduits in which the 'Europeanness' of these societies has been enforced.³⁷⁰ Despite the evident public role religions have played within both Australia and New Zealand, these nations have rejected a 'state religion', and have been governed by the separation of Church and State. There has long been debate among scholars and social and political commentators about the degree to which this has been successful, especially in the context of declining religiosity in large sections of both the Australian and New Zealand population.³⁷¹ The relevant scholarly debates canvas issues such as the contemporary political influence of religions in these countries³⁷², and

³⁶⁹ Bruce Kaye, 'From Anglican Gaol to Religious Pluralism: Re-casting Anglican Views of Church and State in Australia' in Hilary Carey and John Gascoigne (eds.), *Church and State in Old and New Worlds*, Boston: Brill Publishing, 2011, pp. 287-305; John Stenhouse, 'Church and State in New Zealand, 1835-1870: Religion, Politics, and Race', in Hilary Carey and John Gascoigne (eds.), *Church and State in Old and New Worlds*, Boston: Brill Publishing, 2011, pp. 233-259; Colin Brown, Marie Peters, and Jane Teal (eds.), *Shaping a Colonial Church: Bishop Harper and the Anglican Diocese of Christchurch, 1856-1890*, Christchurch: Canterbury University Press, 2006

³⁷⁰ Chavura, Gascoigne, and Tregenza, *Reason, Religion, and the Australian Polity: A Secular State?*, New York: Routledge Publishing, 2019; Chavura and Tragenza, 'The 'Secular' Settlement and Australian Political Thought', *Australian Journal of Political Science*, Volume 54, Issue 2, 2019, pp. 272-287

Stenhouse, 'Church and State in New Zealand, 1835-1870: Religion, Politics, and Race', in Carey and Gascoigne (eds.), *Church and State in Old and New Worlds*, Boston: Brill Publishing, 2011, pp. 233-259

³⁷¹ David Griffiths, 'Defining the 'Secular' in New Zealand Bill of Rights Era: Some Cases and Controversies', *Otago Law Review*, Volume 12, Issue 3, 2011, pp. 497-524

³⁷² See, for example:

Rex Ahdar, 'Religious Parliamentarians and Euthanasia: A Window Into Church and State in New Zealand', *A Journal of Church and State*, Volume 38, Issue 3, 1996, pp. 569-593; Hanlie Booysen, 'Teaching "Islam and Politics" in the Wake of the Christchurch Terrorist Attack', *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs*, Volume 41, Issue 3, 2021, pp. 437-451; Frank Brennan, *Acting on Conscience*, Brisbane: University of Queensland Press, 2006; Anna Crabb, 'Invoking Religion in Australian Politics', *Australian Journal of Political Science*, Volume 44, Issue 2, pp. 259-279; Carolyn Evans, 'Religion as Politics not Law: The Religion Clauses in Australian Constitution', *Religion, State, and Society*, Volume 36, Issue 3, pp. 283-302; Marion Maddox, 'Religion and Politics', in Jenny Lewis and Anne Tiernan (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Australian Politics*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021, pp. 317-334; Jonathon Malloy, 'Political Opportunity Structures, Evangelical Christians, and Morality Politics in Canada, Australia, and New Zealand', *Australian Journal of Political Science*, Volume 52, Issue 3, 2017, pp. 402-418; Gregory Melleuish, 'Religion and Politics in Australia', *Political Theology: The Journal of Christian Socialism*, Volume 11, Issue 6, 2010, pp. 909-927; Miriam Pepper and Rosemary Leonard, 'Climate Change, Politics, and Religion: Australian Churchgoers' Beliefs About Climate Change', *Religions*, Volume 7, Issue 5, 2016, pp. 47; Timothy Stanley, *Religion After Secularisation in Australia*, New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2015; John Warhurst, 'Religion and Politics in the Howard Decade', *Australian Journal of Political Science*, Volume 42, Issue 1, 2007, pp. 19-32

Thomas Westaway, 'Religion and Politics', *The New Zealand Law Journal*, February 2018, pp. 32-35

to what extent constitutional, legal, and government structures should uphold, challenge, or protect religiosity in multicultural, religiously pluralistic nations.³⁷³

In New Zealand, a dichotomy has emerged within the literature. In his chapter for *God and Government: The New Zealand Experience*, Rex Ahdar defined New Zealand as a ‘de facto’ Christian state, arguing ‘the core principles and ideals of Christianity are present without... formal acknowledgement... of Christianity... as the national religion.’³⁷⁴ Over five years later, Ahdar claimed that Christianity’s assumed relationship with the New Zealand state had become fraught, and was increasingly challenged.³⁷⁵ As an aside, Ahdar published his article in *BYU Law Review*, a publication of the Latter-day Saint Church owned Brigham Young University; despite this, no mention of the Mormons appear in Ahdar’s article. Expanding on Ahdar’s observations, other scholarship focusses on the way in which the primacy of Christianity has been slowly whittled from official frameworks in recent decades. For example, in 2017, removing the phrases ‘True Religion’ and ‘Jesus Christ our Lord’ from the Parliamentary Prayer, and how the broader public responded.³⁷⁶ As discussed by Oxholm et al., the political group ‘Jesus for NZ’ sprung up in direct protest to this event, whilst other organisations and individuals have petitioned to have all references to religion eradicated from Parliament.³⁷⁷ Other

³⁷³ John Evans, ‘Government Support of the Church in the Modern Era’, *The Journal of Law and Religion*, Volume 13, Issue 2, 1998, pp. 517-530

³⁷⁴ Rex Ahdar, ‘New Zealand and the Idea of the Christian State’, in Rex Ahdar and John Stenhouse (eds.) *God and Government: The New Zealand Experience*, Dunedin: University of Otago Press, 2000

³⁷⁵ Rex J. Ahdar, ‘Reflection on the Path of Religion State Relations in New Zealand’, *BYU Law Review*, Volume 2006, Issue 3, 2006, pp. 619-660

³⁷⁶ Theis Oxholm, Catherine Rivera, Kearly Schirrmann, and William Hoverd, ‘Representing New Zealand Religious Diversity? The Removal of the Words “True Religion” and “Jesus Christ” from the Parliamentary Prayer’, *A Journal of Church and State*, Volume 46, Issue 1, 2022, pp. 87-109

³⁷⁷ Oxholm et al., ‘Representing New Zealand Religious Diversity? The Removal of the Words “True Religion” and “Jesus Christ” from the Parliamentary Prayer’, *A Journal of Church and State*, Volume 46, Issue 1, 2022, pp. 87-109

concerns surrounding the protection of religious freedoms, and how these could be potentially curtailed by the State, have similarly been examined by scholars.³⁷⁸ As will be explored, the election of Jacinda Ardern, a left-wing former Latter-day Saint, represents an interesting case study of the emerging tensions in New Zealand surrounding these issues.

In Australia, a similar thread has emerged in scholarship, though different conclusions have been drawn. In 2005 religious scholar Marion Maddox argued that in Australia there has been, since the election of Liberal Prime Minister John Howard, a discernible increase in Australia's 'Christian-right'.³⁷⁹ Maddox argues this has been influenced by a similar, albeit drastically different, phenomenon in the United States and Great Britain.³⁸⁰ Arguably, with the 2019 election of devout Pentecostal Prime Minister Scott Morrison, Australia's Christian-right has become more visible in the political landscape.³⁸¹ In parallel, the Church has weaponised both its resources and adherents for more conservative politics within these nations, though the existence and advocacy of Māori and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Mormon activists complicates this. It is within this broader history of New Zealand and Australian religion and politics that Mormonism has become more confident within the nation, which has led to greater political participation by not only the institution but also individual members. As will be seen, this has attracted increased scrutiny of the Church, its beliefs, and practices within Australian

³⁷⁸ Rex Ahdar, 'How Well Is Religious Freedom Protected Under a Bill of Rights? Reflections from New Zealand', *University of Queensland Law Journal*, Volume 29, Issue 2, 2010, pp. 279-296

³⁷⁹ Marion Maddox, *God Under Howard: The Rise of the Religious Right in Australian Politics*, Crows Nest, NSW: Allen and Unwin, 2005

³⁸⁰ Maddox, *God Under Howard*, 219-220, 281

³⁸¹ Adam Possamai and David Tittensor, *Religion and Change in Australia*, Milton: Taylor and Francis Group, 2022

media and by the government. It is critical here to articulate that although there has been a greater visibility and representation of the Church, the sources consulted need to be critically evaluated; each is written for a particular purpose, with a wide range of biases and audiences that should be accounted for. Thus, despite an increased visibility and localisation of the Church through the efforts of these current and former Mormons, the religion as a whole remains on the periphery, despite a more thorough syncretism.

Māori Mormon Activism, 1960s – Present

As explored in Chapter 2, Māori Mormons have been involved within New Zealand politics since the 1930s; this has continued after the construction of the Hamilton Temple, and the establishment of a more visible and localised Latter-day Saint community. Two sources are important to note here, and help highlight the way in which Mormons and their religion has become syncretised in New Zealand politics and activism. Peter Lineham's 2021 article 'Mormonism in New Zealand Politics' charts the gradual integration of not only politically-minded Latter-day Saints, but also the influence of the institutional religion itself. Lineham's article discusses the tensions that existed within New Zealand politics in relation to Mormonism, and the 'unenviable' place that Māori Latter-day Saints occupied. Lineham argues that many of the politically active Māori Mormons were interested in social welfare, land rights, and anti-colonialism, which stands in stark contrast to the conservative Republicanism and American exceptionalism of the institutional Church.³⁸² Lineham states, generally, Māori and broader Polynesian

³⁸² Peter Lineham, 'Mormons and Politics in New Zealand', *Mormon Studies Review*, Volume 8, January 2021, pp. 46

activism aligns with more 'left leaning' politics, which became especially fervent during the late twentieth century. This has meant that politically active Māori Latter-day Saints have historically, though not exclusively, been involved with the Labour Party of New Zealand.³⁸³ This stood in direct conflict to United States Mormon politics, which has almost exclusively veered towards expressions of right-wing values. However, globally, Latter-day Saint politicians have been more split; for example, Scotland has had Mormon politicians from both the left and right of politics.³⁸⁴

In this vein, the first Mormon politician in New Zealand, Puhī Tipene Watene, was elected in 1963 as a Labour MP for Western Māori. Watene had become involved with the Labour Party when he was a member of the Auckland-based Watersiders Union.³⁸⁵ As well as being an elected MP, Watene participated in various Māori organisations, such as the Māori Council and the Māori Advisory Committee of the Labour Party. However, Lineham argues Church headquarters had a conflicted response to Watene's election. Within the context of the Cold War, the election of a left-leaning Māori Mormon politician who advocated for land rights and social welfare, this is understandable. Lineham states:

Latter-day Saint missionaries were uncomfortable with the growing emphasis on Māori land rights starting in the mid-1970s and the way the Labour Party adopted that emphasis... since the early 1950s Latter-day Saint policy in New Zealand has focused on separating Church practices, in the

³⁸³ Lineham, 'Mormons and Politics in New Zealand', *Mormon Studies Review*, Volume 8, January 2021, pp. 46

³⁸⁴ 'Brian Adam MSP Passes Away', *Church Newsroom*, 27 April 2023, viewed 02/06/2023 <https://news-uk.churchofjesuschrist.org/article/brian-adam--msp--passes-away>; Stephen Kerr, MP, 'My Faith Makes Me No Less Scottish', *The Scotsman*, 22nd April 2019, viewed 02/06/2023 <https://www.scotsman.com/news/opinion/columnists/my-faith-makes-me-no-less-scottish-stephen-kerr-mp-1419362>

³⁸⁵ Lineham, 'Mormons and Politics in New Zealand', *Mormon Studies Review*, Volume 8, January 2021, pp. 43

hope that the Church might have a broader appeal... the banning of Māori language in chapel services were intended to “rescue” the Church from too much identification with Māori.³⁸⁶

Lineham’s argument that the Church’s purposeful pivot away from being perceived as a ‘Māori Church’ in New Zealand was accelerated due to the political atmosphere of Māori activism, including land rights, is essential here. It coincided with Church headquarters’ increasing determination to align the Church with more conservative, even far-right, forces, particularly under the influence of then-Apostle Ezra Taft Benson.³⁸⁷ The existence of Labour elected, Māori Mormon MP Puhī Watene was therefore known by the Church, and, according to Lineham, was cause for concern.³⁸⁸ This dichotomy is important to also contextualise within the increased hostilities of the Cold War, in which many left-leaning politicians within the Western sphere, particularly those who pushed for Indigenous rights, were seen as a threat to capitalist governments.³⁸⁹

Though the first elected Māori Mormon official, Watene was by no means the last. For example, Lineham notes the election of ‘arguably the most prominent Mormon politician’, Ben Couch.³⁹⁰ Elected through the right-leaning National Party in 1975, Couch was the second Māori politician to win a general seat. Couch’s conservative politics were evidenced in his desire to assimilate Māori into broader New Zealand society, which

³⁸⁶ Lineham, ‘Mormons and Politics in New Zealand’, *Mormon Studies Review*, Volume 8, January 2021, pp. 44

³⁸⁷ Harris, *Watchman on the Tower: Ezra Taft Benson and the Making of the Mormon Right*, University of Utah Press, 2020

³⁸⁸ Lineham, ‘Mormons and Politics in New Zealand’, *Mormon Studies Review*, Volume 8, January 2021, pp. 44

³⁸⁹ Matthew Harris, ‘Breaching the Wall: Ezra Taft Benson on Church and State’, in Matthew Harris (ed.), *Thunder From the Right: Ezra Taft Benson in Mormonism and Politics*, University of Illinois Press, 2019, pp. 12-13

³⁹⁰ Lineham, ‘Mormons and Politics in New Zealand’, *Mormon Studies Review*, Volume 8, January 2021, pp. 44

became clear during his time as Minister of Māori Affairs and Minister of Police from 1978-1984.³⁹¹ Lineham states that Couch was

notorious for calling for the use of physical punishment for violent offenders and supporting the Springbok tour in 1981, the tour of the South African rugby team that had been selected to exclude Black players, provoking widespread protest among Māori and liberal minded people. His political stance was at odds with growing Māori concern with lost rights...³⁹²

Despite the longstanding influence of Ben Couch, Lineham emphasises there has been something of a return to 'Indigenous politics' for Mormon politicians, particularly in more recent decades.

This is confirmed by authors Selwyn and Rāhui Katene, in their book *Point of Order, Mr. Speaker?* Their book discusses the role and influence of Māori politicians in the modern era, and features Rāhui Katene's own story of running for the Māori Party in November 2008 and being elected to represent the seat of Te Tai Tonga.³⁹³ Katene was a strong advocate for social change, and satirically told one journalist that 'as a newcomer I didn't want to set the bar too high, just end world hunger, wars – the basics.'³⁹⁴ Rāhui Katene reminisced:

I had enquired earlier if I could be sworn in by placing my hands on the Book of Mormon... instead of the Bible. That request was declined, but the Clerk agreed I could use my own Bible. On the day, I brought 'my Bible', a compendium of scripture that included the standard King James version of the Bible, but also the Book of Mormon [as well as other Latter-day Saint scriptures, the Doctrine

³⁹¹ Lineham, 'Mormons and Politics in New Zealand', *Mormon Studies Review*, Volume 8, January 2021, pp. 44

³⁹² Lineham, 'Mormons and Politics in New Zealand', *Mormon Studies Review*, Volume 8, January 2021, pp. 44-5

³⁹³ Rāhui Katene, 'Introduction', in Katene, Rāhui and Selwyn (eds.), *Point of Order, Mr. Speaker?: Modern Māori Political Leaders*, Wellington, New Zealand: Huia Publishers, 2017, pp. 7

³⁹⁴ Katene, 'Introduction', in Katene (eds.), *Point of Order, Mr. Speaker?*, pp. 8

and Covenants and Pearl of Great Price]. This didn't go unnoticed by Mormons watching the event.

For me it meant I was honouring my religious beliefs and heritage.³⁹⁵

That Latter-day Saint scripture was utilised in a swearing in ceremony of a left-leaning Māori politician is significant. Though Katene was denied the option of reciting her oath with her hand only on the *Book of Mormon*, the fact that she clandestinely utilised the Latter-day Saint compendium of scriptures indicates the complicated place that Mormonism has within New Zealand society and politics. This anecdote suggests Mormonism has become more integrated within the politics of New Zealand, though arguably through challenge, compromise, and the agency of individuals. It is important to note, however, that a significant number of politicians since the turn of the twenty-first century have instead utilised 'secular' oaths when being sworn into New Zealand's government, and Muslim politicians have been permitted to utilise the Quran.³⁹⁶ Mormon politicians thus occupy a precarious place within this broadened view of legitimate religions. As a self-professed Christian denomination, a status denied by the majority of other Christian faiths, Katene's discrete use of her own scriptures within the New Zealand parliament made an important statement about this uneasy, marginal existence. Despite the reticence to allow just the Latter-day Saint scripture in this oath-taking, this blending of Mormon spirituality and governance in New Zealand represents a further, if not slightly protested, integration of the religion into the broader politics of the nation.

A further Mormon Māori politician who occupied this uncomfortable space was Marama Fox. Between 2014 and 2017, Fox was appointed co-leader of the Māori Party, which

³⁹⁵ Katene, 'Introduction', in Katene (eds.), *Point of Order, Mr. Speaker?*, pp. 13

³⁹⁶ 'MPs Swear Their Oaths', *Otago Daily Times*, 9 December 2008, viewed 02/06/2023
<https://www.odt.co.nz/news/politics/mps-swear-their-oaths>

advocates for more binding Indigenous rights in New Zealand, particularly over the question of Māori control of oceans and seabeds.³⁹⁷ It is interesting to note that Marama Fox quoted from a Latter-day Saint hymn, *Love At Home*, in her maiden speech to Parliament and paraphrased a quote from Latter-day Saint prophet Harold B. Lee in her first address when she stated ‘the most important work we will ever do will be within the walls of our own home.’³⁹⁸ This emphasis on traditional families represented an alienation of Fox from the majority of her constituents: Lineham claims that ‘some felt that her conservative ‘family’ politics had inclined her in this direction at the expense of the Māori Party’s focus on protecting land rights.’³⁹⁹ These fears were not largely unfounded, as during her tenure as co-leader, the traditionally left-leaning Māori Party allied with the right-wing National Party, which eventually led to numerous concessions of the overarching goals of the Māori Party.⁴⁰⁰ Of course, there has not been a universal Māori approach to politics, nor has there been a universal approach to Mormon-Māori politics. However, these tensions between various priorities of individual politicians and the institutional Church are evidence of the sometimes-uncomfortable localisation of Mormonism within New Zealand, especially when it becomes more entwined with politics.

Indigenous Australian Mormon Activists, 1970s-Present

³⁹⁷ Lineham, ‘Mormons and Politics in New Zealand’, *Mormon Studies Review*, Volume 8, January 2021, pp. 45

³⁹⁸ Marama Fox, ‘Maiden Address Marama Fox (The Māori Party)’, *Scoop*, 28 October 2014, viewed 10/06/2022

<https://www.scoop.co.nz/stories/PA1410/S00197/maiden-address-marama-fox.htm>

³⁹⁹ Lineham, ‘Mormons and Politics in New Zealand’, *Mormon Studies Review*, Volume 8, January 2021, pp. 45

⁴⁰⁰ Lineham, ‘Mormons and Politics in New Zealand’, *Mormon Studies Review*, Volume 8, January 2021, pp. 45

As across the Tasman, within Australia there have been Indigenous Latter-Day Saints who were strong in their faith and in their political activism. It is important to emphasise here that this section discusses both living and deceased Indigenous Australians; reader discretion is advised. One of the most eminent Aboriginal activists was Lorna ‘Nanna Nungala’ Fejo, Warumungu Elder from the Northern Territory.⁴⁰¹ Fejo was taken from her family as a toddler in 1932, during the tumultuous and horrific years of the Stolen Generations.⁴⁰² Since adulthood, Fejo worked tirelessly in her efforts as an activist, educator, health-worker, and Elder in her community.⁴⁰³ In 1973, Fejo joined the Church, though the details of her conversion to the Church has not been discussed in the numerous news articles about her, even those by *Church News*.⁴⁰⁴ Fejo has received numerous accolades, including the Australian Medical Association Award in 1998, the Australian Achiever Award in 2000, the Centenary Medal in 2001, and the Charles Darwin Research and Innovation Medal in 2009.⁴⁰⁵ Lorna Fejo passed in early 2022.⁴⁰⁶

⁴⁰¹ Darren Coyne, ‘Waiting for an Apology: Hundreds Will Put Pressure on Rudd to Keep Promise’, *Koori Mail* pp. 1 (available online at the *Australian Institute for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies Website*), 16 January 2008, viewed 26/05/2020

<https://aiatsis.gov.au/featured-collections/koori-mail>

⁴⁰² Gaynor Lovett (Northern Territory Library), ‘Lorna ‘Nanna Nungala’ Fejo’, *Territory Stories Website*, ‘Story Told... January 2010’, viewed 26/05/2020

<https://www.territorystories.nt.gov.au/handle/10070/218080>

⁴⁰³ Lovett (Northern Territory Library), ‘Lorna ‘Nanna Nungala’ Fejo’, *Territory Stories Website*, ‘Story Told... January 2010’; Lorna Fejo, ‘Testing for Chlamydia’, *Aboriginal and Islander Health Worker Journal*, Volume 11, Issue 2, June 1987, pp. 28-9

⁴⁰⁴ ‘Mormon Grandmother Helps Australian Prime Minister to Say ‘Sorry’’, *Deseret News Website* 12 April 2008, viewed 26/05/2020

<https://www.deseret.com/2008/4/12/20081317/mormontimes-com-mormon-grandmother-helps-australian-prime-minister-say-sorry>; Coyne, ‘Waiting for an Apology: Hundreds Will Put Pressure on Rudd to Keep Promise’, *Koori Mail* pp. 1 (available online at the *Australian Institute for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies Website*), 16 January 2008; Sarah Jane Weaver, ‘Service to Aboriginal Women Lauded’, *Church News Website*, 30 March 2000, viewed 26/05/2020

<https://www.thechurchnews.com/archives/2000-04-01/service-to-aboriginal-women-lauded-119885>

⁴⁰⁵ Richard King (Creator), ‘Lorna Fejo’s Awards’, *Library and Archives Northern Territory* (available online on the *Trove Website*), published 01 January 2008, viewed 27/09/2020

<https://trove.nla.gov.au/work/187623156>

⁴⁰⁶ ABC Radio Darwin, ‘Nanna Nungala Fejo, named in the National Apology to the Stolen Generations, Dies Aged 91’, *ABC News*, 27 February 2022,

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2022-02-27/nanna-nungala-fejo-stolen-generations-apology-speech-dies-at-91/100865534>

Fejo's most significant professional impact was through her Strong Women, Strong Babies, Strong Culture Program, that ran for over thirty years, and worked to lower health problems amongst Indigenous mothers and children.⁴⁰⁷ The Australian Medical Association lauded the program for almost halving 'the number of low birth weight babies' amongst Indigenous Australians in the Northern Territory.⁴⁰⁸ After receiving a number of awards, the *Australian Mormon Newsroom* reported on Lorna Fejo's life, legacy, and time in the Church. In a 2000 article she emphasised her faith; Fejo is quoted by Sarah Weaver as saying 'I carry the Book of Mormon in my handbag... I have to read it everyday.'⁴⁰⁹

What Lorna Fejo is most famous for, however, is her tireless efforts to have the traumatic effects of the policies that created the Stolen Generations better acknowledged. Most significantly, Fejo instructed Prime Minister Kevin Rudd on his National Apology to Indigenous Australians, given in 2008.⁴¹⁰ In this address, Rudd cited the life experiences of Fejo, from her being forcefully removed from her family, to her reconnection with

⁴⁰⁷ Lorna Fejo, 'The Strong Women, Strong Babies, Strong Culture Program', *Aboriginal and Islander Health Worker Journal*, Volume 18, Issue 6, November/December 1994, pp. 16; 'NT Icon Takes Out AMA's Top Award', *Aboriginal and Islander Health Worker Journal*, Volume 22, Issue 4, July/August 1998, pp. 16

⁴⁰⁸ 'Public Report Card: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health – No More Excuses', *Australian Medical Association Website*, 2002, viewed 17/09/2020, pp. 3

https://ama.com.au/sites/default/files/documents/Indigenous_Report.pdf

⁴⁰⁹ Sarah Jane Weaver, 'Service to Aboriginal Women Lauded', *Church News Archives*, Updated 30 March 2000

⁴¹⁰ Ping Lo, 'That's My Nanna the PM's Talking About', *ABC Canberra Local Stories Website*, 13 February 2008, viewed 27/09/2020

<https://www.smh.com.au/national/nanna-nungala-fejo-shared-sorrow-and-joy-with-pm-20080214-gds0zn.html>; Jonathon Pearlman, 'Nanna Nungala Fejo Shared Sorrow and Joy with PM', *The Sydney Morning Herald Website*, 14 February 2008, viewed 26/04/2020

<https://www.smh.com.au/national/nanna-nungala-fejo-shared-sorrow-and-joy-with-pm-20080214-gds0zn.html>

Country and Language, and her eventual work in health, activism, and community services; importantly, however, her religion was not mentioned in the Apology, nor in subsequent media representation, except from official Church sources.⁴¹¹ Fejo was in Canberra to witness the momentous occasion, and afterwards was approached by Rudd, who asked if he had done justice to her journey in the few moments that he spoke of her life; Fejo assured Rudd he had.⁴¹² In response to this event, *Australian Mormon Newsroom* published another article on Lorna Fejo and asked about her feelings towards the National Apology, as well as how the Church had assisted her throughout her life.⁴¹³ This is an interesting development, as aside from a handful of references to Indigenous Australians in Church publications from the 1970s to 2000s, the Church never spoke on the Stolen Generations until after the National Apology.⁴¹⁴ Fejo spoke to the *Australian Mormon Newsroom* of the Church's emphasis on families, 'that love was passed down through the generations', and of her love for the Book of Mormon.⁴¹⁵ Fejo's role as political activist and faithful Mormon is evidence of the way in which the Church has become more integrated within the cultural, historical, and political realms of Australia.

⁴¹¹ 'Transcript: Rudd Apologises to the Stolen Generations', *SBS News Website*, Updated 14/11/2013, viewed 25/05/2020

<https://www.sbs.com.au/news/transcript-rudd-apologises-to-stolen-generation>; Misha Schubert, "I Never Thought I'd See the Day", *The Age Website*, 14 February 2008, viewed 26/04/2020
<https://www.theage.com.au/national/i-never-thought-id-see-this-day-20080214-ge6q4f.html>

⁴¹² Schubert, "I Never Thought I'd See the Day", *The Age Website*, 14 February 2008

⁴¹³ 'Mormon Grandmother Helps Australian Prime Minister to Say 'Sorry'', *Church Newsroom Website*, 08 April 2008, viewed 25/05/2020

<https://newsroom.churchofjesuschrist.org/article/mormon-grandmother-helps-australian-prime-minister-say--sorry->

⁴¹⁴ 'Mormon Grandmother Helps Australian Prime Minister to Say 'Sorry'', *Church Newsroom Website*, 08 April 2008, viewed 25/05/2020; Tracy Matenga, "Torn Apart in This Life, United for Eternity in the Next," *Ensign*, Mar. 2019, <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/ensign/2019/03/aus-eng-local-pages/local-news-003?lang=eng>

⁴¹⁵ 'Mormon Grandmother Helps Australian Prime Minister to Say 'Sorry'', *Church Newsroom Website*, 08 April 2008

Lorna Fejo's daughter, Christine, was the first recorded Aboriginal Australian Mormon missionary when she served in Sydney from 1975-76.⁴¹⁶ After returning to Darwin, Christine married another returned missionary, Robert King. Both were essential in utilising the Church's resources, primarily genealogical, in assisting Indigenous Australians in the Northern Territory find families that have been shattered by the Stolen Generations, whether members of the Church or not.⁴¹⁷ In 1994, Fejo-King organised a trip to the Sydney temple which was attended by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander members from across the continent. This multi-day event included sermons, dances, temple sessions, and cultural proceedings that celebrated Indigenous Australian Latter-day Saints, and their unique struggles within the context of Australia's violent colonialism.⁴¹⁸ That this occurred at a time of radical change in regards to Indigenous rights in Australia, i.e. two years after the invalidation of *terra nullius* initiated by Edward

⁴¹⁶ Robert G. Moodie, 'Missionary Work in the Central Australian "Outback"', *The Ensign*, February 1982, available online at: <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/ensign/1982/02/news-of-the-church/missionary-work-in-the-central-australian-outback?lang=eng>

⁴¹⁷ Moodie, 'Missionary Work in the Central Australian "Outback"', *The Ensign*, February 1982

⁴¹⁸ Amanda Meyer, 'Aborigines Gather for Temple Work, Meetings', *Deseret News Website*, 5 February 1994, viewed 22/08/2020
<https://www.deseret.com/1994/2/5/20766557/aborigines-gather-for-temple-work-meetings>

Mabo, and two years before *The Wik People v. The State of Queensland* ruling, is striking.⁴¹⁹ Arguably, the Church's hosting of this Indigenous-specific event was more progressive than broader Australian culture at the time. Christine Fejo-King has become an activist and educator in her own right, and received a Doctorate in Social Work from the Australian Catholic University in 2010.⁴²⁰ She has been consulted throughout the decades by academics, government agencies, and community organisations regarding Indigenous rights, education, and health; she was also nominated for the Northern Territory Human Rights Award.⁴²¹ Doctor Fejo-King also founded a publishing house, Magpie Goose, which provides the 'opportunity for Indigenous academics to share their expertise across the world.'⁴²²

Although the most well-known Indigenous Australian Latter-day Saints, Lorna Fejo and her daughter are not the only Aboriginal Mormon activists. In 2001, Bangarang man Eddie Kneebone, a member of the Church since 1998, was nominated for the Catholic Pax Christi International Prize for his work.⁴²³ Since 1945, this award has been gifted to

⁴¹⁹ Gary Meyers and Sally Raine, 'The Legislative Response to the High Court's Native Title Decisions in Mabo v. Queensland and Wik v. Queensland', *Tulsa Journal of Comparative and International Law*, Volume 8, Issue 1, 2001, pp. 95

⁴²⁰ Karen Christine King (Bachelor of Social Work), 'How Understanding the Aboriginal Kinship System Can Inform Better Policy and Practice: Social Work Research with the Larrakia and Warumungu Peoples of the Northern Territory', A Thesis Submitted in Total Fulfilment of the Requirements of the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy, School of Social Work: Faculty of Arts and Science, Australian Catholic University, December 2011

⁴²¹ 'Larrakia Elder Nominated for Human Rights Award', *Charles Darwin University e-news*, 07 December 2015, viewed 27/09/2020, <https://www.cdu.edu.au/enews/stories/human-rights15>; Damien Murphy, 'Inquiry Told of a New Stolen Generation', *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 21 June 2017, viewed 24/06/2020 <https://www.smh.com.au/national/nsw/inquiry-told-of-a-new-stolen-generation-20170621-gwvr19.html>

⁴²² 'About Us: Sharing the Work and World of Indigenous Australians', *Magpie Goose Publishing*, viewed 27/09/2020, <http://www.magpiegoose.com.au/About-Us.php>

⁴²³ 'Eddie 'Kookaburra' Kneebone: An Educator Who Inspired Through His Art', *Aboriginal Victoria Honour Roll Inductees Website*, viewed 22/05/2020

<https://www.aboriginalvictoria.vic.gov.au/eddie-kookaburra-kneebone>

'Eddie Kneebone', *AusLit (The University of Queensland) Website*, viewed 22/05/2020 <https://www.austlit.edu.au/austlit/page/A80645>

people who have sought to eradicate injustices in society. Although Eddi Kneebone joined the Church in 1998, he later recollected he had first met the missionaries forty years earlier.⁴²⁴ Kneebone was a senior lecturer on Aboriginal and Australian history, advocate of land rights, and artist-in-residence at Wodonga Tafe in Victoria; he spent much of his life helping Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians seek reconciliation.⁴²⁵ Before his death in 2005, Eddie Kneebone's efforts took him around the country, where he gave seminars and training to the Armed Forces, education sector, and various communities.⁴²⁶ Kneebone was also a renowned artist, and following his death a number of exhibitions have included his paintings.⁴²⁷ He has also been inducted into the Honour Roll of *Aboriginal Victoria*, which proudly commemorates his lifelong efforts to facilitate reconciliation among Australians.⁴²⁸

For his extensive efforts to bridge the divide between First Nations and non-Indigenous Australians, Kneebone was both the first Indigenous person and Australian to receive the Pax Christi Peace Award.⁴²⁹ Kneebone's passion for art, reconciliation, and activism, whilst not directly influenced by the Church and its principles, nevertheless found a place within the religion. This religious syncretism is reflective of the complicated appeal Mormonism has to diverse groups within Australia. These three prominent Indigenous Australian Mormons who were heavily involved in activism, social work, academia, and

⁴²⁴ Sarah Jane Weaver, 'Reconciliation Efforts', *Church News Archives* Website, Last Updated 11 January 2002, viewed 22/05/2020, <https://www.thechurchnews.com/archives/2002-01-12/reconciliation-efforts-110592>

⁴²⁵ Weaver, 'Reconciliation Efforts', *Church News Archives* Website, Last Updated 11 January 2002

⁴²⁶ Weaver, 'Reconciliation Efforts', *Church News Archives* Website, Last Updated 11 January 2002

⁴²⁷ 'Exhibition a Tribute to Eddie Kneebone', 06 July 2017, viewed 22/05/2020

<https://www.artsspacewodonga.com.au/about/media/exhibition-a-tribute-to-eddie-kneebone>

⁴²⁸ 'Eddie 'Kookaburra' Kneebone: An Educator Who Inspired Through His Art', *Aboriginal Victoria Honour Roll Inductees* Website

⁴²⁹ Weaver, 'Reconciliation Efforts', *Church News Archives* Website, Last Updated 11 January 2002

health care have made significant efforts to improve the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. It is also clear both Church and secular media outlets, within Australia and more broadly, have represented and celebrated their work and reflected the existence and experiences of Indigenous Australian Mormons.

Direct Connections Between Mormonism and Australian and New Zealand Politics, 2010s

As expressed, before the twenty-first century, Mormonism's involvement in New Zealand and Australian politics was peripheral, and almost exclusively through individual Latter-day Saint activists. However, since the turn of the century, the Church in New Zealand has been entwined with politicians and broader society, not only through individual representatives and activists but as an institution. One of the best examples of this was in September 2011, when Prime Minister of New Zealand John Key addressed the youth of the Church in the Mount Roskill Chapel in Auckland to discuss 'education and success in life.'⁴³⁰ The two thousand Mormon youth were accompanied by local MP Sam Lotu-iga and ecclesiastical leaders addressed the audience.⁴³¹ One of these ecclesiastical leaders was Elder James Hamula, President of the Pacific Area, who 'told youth that missionary service, education and marriage in the temple are "three pillars to a great life."⁴³² Michael Roberts, a Latter-day Saint leader, also stated 'we're excited for our youth to have an

⁴³⁰ 'It's About Attitude: The Prime Minister's Advice to Youth', *Newsroom New Zealand* website, 12 September 2011, viewed 17/11/2020
<https://news-nz.churchofjesuschrist.org/article/it-s-about-attitude--the-prime-minister-s-advice-to-youth>

⁴³¹ 'It's About Attitude: The Prime Minister's Advice to Youth', *Newsroom New Zealand* website, 12 September 2011

⁴³² 'It's About Attitude: The Prime Minister's Advice to Youth', *Newsroom New Zealand* website, 12 September 2011

opportunity to meet the Prime Minister, and we're equally excited for the Prime Minister to have an opportunity to feel the spirit, strength, enthusiasm and virtue of our youth.'⁴³³

In Australia, a similar event occurred in March 2013, when the controversial Liberal politician Kevin Andrews addressed 300 young adult Mormons in Melbourne.⁴³⁴ In this address, Andrews, a devout Catholic, emphasised the importance of the 'traditional' family, including the importance of abstaining from premarital cohabitation, stating it led to higher rates of divorce. Andrews' address was complimented by various Church ecclesiastical leaders, who spoke predominantly about the official Mormon document 'The Family: A Proclamation to the World.'⁴³⁵ Published by the Church in 1995, as an external declaration to 'the world', this document reinforces Mormon doctrines regarding the immortality of gender, traditional homes with men presiding and women nurturing, and God-approved heterosexual marriage.⁴³⁶ Thus, this blending of civic and religiosity reflects the complex way that the Church has become more overtly entwined within New Zealand and Australian politics.

Another way in which the institutional Church has become more directly involved with the governments of Australia and New Zealand has been through gifting of family

⁴³³ 'It's About Attitude: The Prime Minister's Advice to Youth', *Newsroom New Zealand* website, 12 September 2011

⁴³⁴ 'Australian Member of Parliament Speaks with Mormon Youth About Family Relationships', *Australian Mormon Newsroom*, 5 March 2013, viewed 02/06/2023
<https://news-au.churchofjesuschrist.org/article/australian-mp-speaks-with-youth>

⁴³⁵ 'Australian Member of Parliament Speaks with Mormon Youth About Family Relationships', *Australian Mormon Newsroom*, 5 March 2013

⁴³⁶ The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 'The Family: A Proclamation to the World', *Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* website, September 1995, viewed 02/06/2023
<https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/scriptures/the-family-a-proclamation-to-the-world/the-family-a-proclamation-to-the-world?lang=eng>

histories. Utilising their vast genealogical archives, which will be discussed in further detail below, the Church has gifted these family histories to the Prime Ministers of both Australia and New Zealand. This has been an official means by which Church leaders have sought to establish or solidify relationships with key policymakers. For instance, the Church has provided family history's to former New Zealand Prime Ministers Helen Clark, John Key, and Jacinda Ardern, and Australian Prime Ministers Kevin Rudd and Tony Abbott.⁴³⁷ As an interesting aside, *The Sydney Morning Herald*, cited this gift to Rudd in particular, in a piece entitled 'So, Prime Minister, You're Related to a Thief and a Forger.'⁴³⁸ However, the gifting of family histories is not unique to Australia and New Zealand, but is rather part of a broader public relations effort; United States Presidents Bill Clinton, Barack Obama, and Joe Biden have also been gifted their genealogy.⁴³⁹ This practice of gifting genealogies to Australian and New Zealand Prime Ministers is a crucial way in which the Church seeks to become more visible within the politics of these nations, and

⁴³⁷ 'Church Presents Family History to Australian Prime Minister', *Australian Church Newsroom Website*, 05 August 2008, viewed 17/11/2020
<https://newsroom.churchofjesuschrist.org/article/church-presents-family-history-to-australian-prime-minister>; 'Church Presents Family History to Prime Minister Tony Abbott', *Australian Church Newsroom Website*, 27 May 2015, viewed 17/11/2020

<https://news-au.churchofjesuschrist.org/article/church-presents-family-history-to-prime-minister-tony-abbott>; 'It's About Attitude: The Prime Minister's Advice to Youth', *New Zealand Church Newsroom website*, 12 September 2011, viewed 17/11/2020

⁴³⁸ Barney Zwartz, 'So, Prime Minister, You're Related to a Thief and a Forger', *The Sydney Morning Herald Website*, 01 August 2008, viewed 17/11/2020

<https://www.smh.com.au/national/so-prime-minister-youre-related-to-a-thief-and-a-forger-20080731-3nzl.html>

⁴³⁹ 'Family History Presented to President Barack Obama by Church President Thomas S. Monson', *Church Newsroom*, 20 July 2009

<https://newsroom.churchofjesuschrist.org/article/family-history-presented-to-president-barack-obama-by-church-president-thomas-s.-monson>; 'Vice President Joe Biden Receives Family History During Temple Square Visit', *Church Newsroom*, 26 January 2016

<https://newsroom.churchofjesuschrist.org/article/vice-president-joseph-biden-receives-family-history-in-temple-square-visit>; Jocelyn Mann Denyer, 'White House Visit: Pres. Clinton Meets with Pres. Hinckley, Receives Hist Six-Generation Family History', *Church News*, 18 November 1995,

<https://www.thechurchnews.com/1995/11/18/23254731/white-house-visit-pres-clinton-meets-with-pres-hinckley-receives-his-six-generation-family-history>; Herb Scribner, 'George W. Bush Meets With LDS Church Leaders in 2002', *Deseret News*, 15 November 2016

<https://www.deseret.com/2016/11/14/20600439/watch-george-w-bush-meets-with-lds-church-leaders-in-2002>

has been utilised as an opportunity for the ecclesiastical hierarchy of the Church to make themselves known to the political leaders. Whether or not this has been successful is difficult to gauge, though, undoubtedly, from the 2010s, the Church as an institution has had a more direct presence within New Zealand and Australian politics.

Legal Cases: *Iliafi and Appalents v. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and Mormonville, 2009-2014*

It has not only been through Indigenous activists, Latter-day Saint politicians, or the Church's direct interactions with the State that Mormonism has become more visible within the public life in Australia and New Zealand: it has also occurred through high-profile court proceedings. One of the most important of these was the *Iliafi v the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*. This case was launched in 2010 by disaffected members of the Samoan Mormon community in Brisbane.⁴⁴⁰ Their complaint was that the Church had discontinued Samoan language congregations in the greater Brisbane area from 2007-08.⁴⁴¹ The Church claimed that the younger generations did not speak Samoan and had become disengaged from the Church.⁴⁴² This caused a rift within the Samoan community in Brisbane. The majority of the Samoan Mormon community continued to

⁴⁴⁰ 'Federal Court Case: *Iliafi v the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints Australia*', File Number: QUD784 of 2012, Date of Judgement: 26 March 2014, *Australasian Legal Information Institute* Website, last updated: 26 March 2014, viewed 28/09/2020; 'Samoan Community Challenges Brisbane Mormon Church Language 'Ban'', *ABC News* Website, 19 September 2013, viewed 28/09/2020 <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2013-09-19/an-samoan-community-challenges-brisbane-mormon-church-language-/4967654>

⁴⁴¹ 'Federal Court Case: *Iliafi v the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints Australia*', File Number: QUD784 of 2012, Date of Judgement: 26 March 2014, *Australasian Legal Information Institute* Website, last updated: 26 March 2014, Introduction Point 2-3

⁴⁴² 'Church Embraces All Cultures and Languages: Church Statement on Brisbane Samoan Language Issue', *Australian Church News* Website, 20 September 2013, viewed 28/09/2020 <https://news-au.churchofjesuschrist.org/article/church-statement-on-brisbane-samoan-language-issue>

attend the Church in English speaking congregations, although tensions lingered.⁴⁴³ However, some members claimed the Church had broken Australian law by not allowing them to worship in their own language.⁴⁴⁴ New Zealand-based Samoan lawyer Leulua'iali'i Olinda Woodroffe was hired by the disaffected members to represent them in seeking legal redress.⁴⁴⁵

The official appellants were Iliafi Vaele and forty-nine others.⁴⁴⁶ The complaint claimed (bolded emphases in original):

that the decision in each case was indirect discrimination in contravention of s 9(1A) of the [Racial Discrimination] Act because the decision required the applicants to comply with a term, condition or requirement, namely **to worship as a group in English rather than their Samoan language**, a requirement with which many of the applicants could not comply. It is argued that it was a requirement that had the purpose or effect of nullifying or impairing the recognition, enjoyment or exercise of the rights referred to above [emphasis in original].⁴⁴⁷

As can be seen from this legal complaint, Vaele and his fellow appellants sought to show the detrimental affect the Church's decision had to the Latter-day Saint community in

⁴⁴³ ⁴⁴³ Lagi Keresoma, 'Church's Samoan Language Ban a 'Misunderstanding': Elder', *Pacific Islands Report* website, 25 September 2013, viewed 29/09/2020

<http://www.pireport.org/articles/2013/09/25/church%C3%A2%C2%80%C2%99s-samoan-language-ban-%C3%A2%C2%80%C2%98misunderstanding%C3%A2%C2%80%C2%99-elder>

⁴⁴⁴ 'Federal Court Case: Iliafi v the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints Australia', File Number: QUD784 of 2012, Date of Judgement: 26 March 2014, *Australasian Legal Information Institute* Website, last updated: 26 March 2014

⁴⁴⁵ 'Lawyer Slams Alleged Church Ban on Samoan Language', *Pacific Island Report* Website, 14 August 2013, viewed 28/09/2020

<http://www.pireport.org/articles/2013/08/14/lawyer-slams-alleged-church-ban-samoan-language>

⁴⁴⁶ 'Federal Court Case: Iliafi v the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints Australia', File Number: QUD784 of 2012, Date of Judgement: 26 March 2014, *Australasian Legal Information Institute* Website, last updated: 26 March 2014

⁴⁴⁷ 'Federal Court Case: Iliafi v the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints Australia', File Number: QUD784 of 2012, Date of Judgement: 26 March 2014, *Australasian Legal Information Institute* Website, last updated: 26 March 2014

Queensland.⁴⁴⁸ It also sought to claim that, legally, the Church was not able to ban the use of Samoan as it was against the *Freedom of Religion Act*.⁴⁴⁹

In 2012, the case went to the High Court but was defeated, yet Iliafi and the legal counsel sought redress again in the Court of Appeals, which again ruled in favour of the Church in 2014.⁴⁵⁰ On both occasions the cases were rejected on the grounds that these individuals could attend a different Church that allowed them to preach in their language.⁴⁵¹ Despite the lack of support these members received from the Australian legal system, there were others in both New Zealand and Samoa who stood with the disaffected members. Galumalemana Alfred Hunkin, chairperson of the Samoan Language Teachers in New Zealand, evoked 'the old days of colonialism' in his commentary of the Church's actions and the Australian Court's decision.⁴⁵² Hunkin claimed 'the Church has ignored the most powerful factor that people... whose first language is Samoan, can use it to communicate with God.'⁴⁵³

⁴⁴⁸ 'Federal Court Case: Iliafi v the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints Australia', File Number: QUD784 of 2012, Date of Judgement: 26 March 2014, *Australasian Legal Information Institute Website*, last updated: 26 March 2014

⁴⁴⁹ 'Federal Court Case: Iliafi v the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints Australia', File Number: QUD784 of 2012, Date of Judgement: 26 March 2014, *Australasian Legal Information Institute Website*, last updated: 26 March 2014

⁴⁵⁰ 'Federal Court Case: Iliafi v the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints Australia', File Number: QUD784 of 2012, Date of Judgement: 26 March 2014, *Australasian Legal Information Institute Website*, last updated: 26 March 2014

⁴⁵¹ 'Federal Court Case: Iliafi v the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints Australia', File Number: QUD784 of 2012, Date of Judgement: 26 March 2014, *Australasian Legal Information Institute Website*, last updated: 26 March 2014 Hunkin

⁴⁵² 'Mormon Elder Denies Banning Samoan Language From Services', *Radio New Zealand Pacific Website*, 27 September 2013, viewed 29/09/2020
<https://www.rnz.co.nz/international/pacific-news/223017/mormon-elder-denies-banning-samoan-language-from-services>

⁴⁵³ 'Mormon Elder Denies Banning Samoan Language From Services', *Radio New Zealand Pacific Website*, 27 September 2013

In Australia, two articles published by *ABC News* that discussed the lawsuit. Both presented the legal challenge over the banning of the Samoan language in Brisbane. Though the tone of the reporting was generally neutral, they contained subtle expressions of sympathy for Vaele and the appellants. One of the articles quoted Olinda Woodruffe, the Samoan lawyer representing the appellants:

You would expect a church to be a place where they welcome people as they are, who they are, what colour they are and the language they speak...So to hear something like this in the church is quite disappointing...

This has to stop because if the court finds in favour of the Mormon church then it will open a floodgate and, in my view, the Samoan language will be trampled on and no-one has the right to do that to us.⁴⁵⁴

Woodruffe led a delegation of disaffected Latter-day Saints to speak to the Samoan Prime Minister, Tuilaepa Aiono Sailele Malielegaoi. From this encounter, Prime Minister Malielegaoi 'promised to write to the Pacific community and the Mormon Church in Utah.'⁴⁵⁵ Prime Minister Malielegaoi's actions show an important transnationality here, one that sought to bypass Australian legal systems, and instead influence the Church through the political machinations of an external sovereign state.

More broadly, the Church's decision was poorly received by Samoan media and government. Prime Minister Malielegaoi stated that this decision would be met with

⁴⁵⁴ 'Samoan Mormons' Legal Battle Over Language', *ABC News*, 9 August 2013, <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2013-08-09/an-australia-samoa-church/4876010>

⁴⁵⁵ 'Samoan Community Challenges Brisbane Mormon Church Language 'Ban'', *ABC News*, 19 September 2013, <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2013-09-19/an-samoan-community-challenges-brisbane-mormon-church-language-/4967654>

opposition by the Samoan community both within his country and the international diaspora.⁴⁵⁶ According to journalist Alan Ah Mu of *Pacific Islands Report*

The Government has taken an interest in the issues the Church and its Samoan members in Brisbane have argued over in a court case... The Attorney-General is to advise Government on the matter – and met with the General Counsel of the Church on 11 September 2013.⁴⁵⁷

According to Lagi Keresoma, also for *Pacific Islands Report*:

Three local leaders Elder Fata, President Fa'aologo and Elder Fa'amoana were sent last weekend to observe the services in Brisbane congregations... They reported that services were conducted bilingually and Samoan was still used in services if needed.⁴⁵⁸

Though this may appear at first to be a contradiction of the litigants, it should be remembered that there had previously been Samoan-specific congregations. Per the report of the three Latter-day Saint leaders from Samoa, the congregations were now bilingual, and Samoan was only partially used; this shows both a confirmation of Vaele's litigation, as well as the Church's offer of a compromise.

Fearing miscommunication and dissent, Church headquarters sent President of the of the Pacific Area James Hamula to Apia, Samoa in order to quell concerns amongst the members of the Church there.⁴⁵⁹ Elder Hamula emphasised that this was a localised decision by the Stake Presidents in Queensland, and that Samoan language congregations

⁴⁵⁶ Alan Ah Mu, 'Mormon Elder to Discuss Church Language Ban in Samoa', *Pacific Islands Report Website*, 09 September 2013

⁴⁵⁷ Ah Mu, 'Mormon Elder to Discuss Church Language Ban in Samoa', *Pacific Islands Report Website*, 09 September 2013

Ah Mu, 'Mormon Elder to Discuss Church Language Ban in Samoa', *Pacific Islands Report Website*, 09 September 2013

⁴⁵⁸ Keresoma, 'Church's Samoan Language Ban a 'Misunderstanding': Elder', *Pacific Islands Report website*, 25 September 2013

⁴⁵⁹ Ah Mu, 'Mormon Elder to Discuss Church Language Ban in Samoa', *Pacific Islands Report Website*, 09 September 2013

still existed throughout various parts of Australia, New Zealand, and the United States.⁴⁶⁰ That the Church felt the need to send a high-ranking ecclesiastical leader to calm Samoan Church members is evidence of the importance of Vaele's Court Case. It is similarly telling of the way in which the Australian legal system is challenged by the maintenance of multiculturalism, especially in relation to religious organisations. However, it should be noted that within the last five years, the Queensland Church has reinstated the Samoan speaking congregations. As of 2024, there are Samoan-language congregations in Brisbane suburbs such as Ipswich, Brassall, and Karawatha in operation.⁴⁶¹ Nevertheless, it was the responses from various media throughout Australia, New Zealand, and the Pacific and concerned reactions from Australian Samoans and the wider Samoan diaspora, that indicate further that Mormon Church actions have become relevant to wider discussions of multiculturalism, discrimination, and the law. This has made the Church a much more visible and syncretised, albeit challenged, religion within the broader flow of contemporary Australian and New Zealand public life.

As an aside, another legal incident took place in 2013 that involved Australian Latter-day Saints. This was different, however, as it was a civil lawsuit against Catherine Thompson, a member of the Church in Western Australia, who was at one time labelled 'one of the wealthiest legitimate finance brokers in Australia.'⁴⁶² Thompson was charged with the

⁴⁶⁰ Ah Mu, "Mormon Elder to Discuss Church Language Ban in Samoa", *Pacific Islands Report Website*, 09 September 2013

⁴⁶¹ 'Find Meetinghouse or Ward', *the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints website*, last viewed 29/01/2024

<https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/maps/meetinghouses/@-27.609376,152.927790,11&id=meetinghouse:5474787-01-01>

⁴⁶² Rania Spooner, 'Millions Stolen in Perth Mormon Scam', *The Sydney Morning Herald Website*, 30 April 2013, viewed 03/11/2020

<https://www.smh.com.au/national/western-australia/millions-stolen-in-perth-mormon-scam-20130430-2iqpw.html>

theft of four million dollars from investors to create what she dubbed ‘Mormonville.’⁴⁶³ According to reports in *ABC News* and *The Sydney Morning Herald*, in 2007, Thompson began to pitch this private settlement as ‘a Mormon retirement village’,⁴⁶⁴ a plan to create what *The West Australian* described as ‘a physical and spiritual home for elderly parishioners in Canning Vale.’⁴⁶⁵ Thompson had solicited investments, predominantly from members of the Church in Perth, which ranged from \$40,000 to \$400,000.⁴⁶⁶ For most, this was their life savings, and many were bankrupted by the fraud; one elderly couple had to sell their home and live in a caravan.⁴⁶⁷ Thompson pocketed invested funds and used them on ‘on property, business trips and her lifestyle.’⁴⁶⁸

Consequently, Thompson was jailed and had her brokage license revoked and, according to *The Esperance Express*, also faced ‘an almost inevitable excommunication from the Church... of which she has been a member for 25 years.’⁴⁶⁹ However, according to her lawyer, Richard Lawson, Thompson had genuinely believed that her private settlement

⁴⁶³ Glenn Cordingley, ‘\$4m ‘Mormonville Fraud’, Woman Catherine Thompson Bailed’, *PerthNow* Website, 19 August 2010, viewed 03/11/2020

⁴⁶⁴ ‘Former Finance Broker Jailed for ‘Mormonville’ Fraud’, *ABC News* Website, 30 April 2013, viewed 03/11/2020

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2013-04-30/former-finance-broker-sentenced-to-jail-for-fraud/4661108>

⁴⁶⁵ Natasha Boddy, ‘Broker Jailed Over ‘Mormonville’ Scam’, *The West Australian* Website, 30 April 2013, viewed 03/11/2020

<https://thewest.com.au/news/wa/broker-jailed-over-mormonville-scam-ng-ya-277175>

⁴⁶⁶ Tim Clarke, ‘WA Mortgage Broker Catherine Anne Thompson Stole \$4m in Mormon Project Scam’, *The Advertiser (AdelaideNow)* Website, 30 April 2013, viewed 03/11/2020

<https://www.adelaidenow.com.au/news/national/wa-mortgage-broker-stole-4m-in-mormon-project-scam/news-story/0c5f1caa53bce1b3e7a5214991d3d1e4>

⁴⁶⁷ Clarke, ‘WA Mortgage Broker Catherine Anne Thompson Stole \$4m in Mormon Project Scam’, *The Advertiser (AdelaideNow)* Website, 30 April 2013, viewed 03/11/2020

⁴⁶⁸ Kate Campbell, ‘Guilty Plea to \$4m Theft From Investors’, *The West Australian* Website, 01 March 2013, viewed 03/11/2020

<https://thewest.com.au/news/australia/guilty-plea-to-4m-theft-from-investors-ng-ya-280951>; Spooner, ‘Millions Stolen in Perth Mormon Scam’, *The Sydney Morning Herald* Website, 30 April 2013, viewed 03/11/2020

⁴⁶⁹ ‘Millions Stolen in Perth Mormon Scam’, *The Esperance Express* Website, 30 April 2013, viewed 03/11/2020

<https://www.esperanceexpress.com.au/story/1468267/millions-stolen-in-perth-mormon-scam/>

would be a success. As part of his defence, Lawson claimed ‘she believed it was her mission to develop Mormonville... She maintains that she did not act in a predatory way.’⁴⁷⁰ Here, the tone of the press is interesting to note; though there is some sympathy for the duped Latter-day Saints, the religiosity of both Thompson and the victims is central. The scheme was centred on the desire to create a Mormon-based community that was distinct from broader Western Australian society. Though not a suit against the Church, as had occurred with the *Iliafi v. The Church*, the lawsuit against Thompson and the failed Mormonville garnered negative publicity against the Church and, to an extent, its members. Rania Spooner of *WA Today* noted that Lawson also argued Thompson had a ‘narcissistic’ personality, and that she could not empathise with her victims.⁴⁷¹ According to Spooner, Lawson claimed that ‘it wasn’t greed that propelled her in this scheme, rather this thrill to succeed.’⁴⁷² This was a significant scandal, reported by media outlets throughout Australia, and also announced in the Utah-based Mormon magazine *LDSLiving*.⁴⁷³ Whilst the article was short, it is evidence that this news reached the headquarters of the Church, and was reported by a privately-owned Mormon publication. While the Church made efforts to distance itself from Thompson through

⁴⁷⁰ Rania Spooner, ‘Millions Stolen in Perth Mormon Scam’, *WAToday*, 30 April 2013, viewed 03/11/2020 <https://www.watoday.com.au/national/western-australia/millions-stolen-in-perth-mormon-scam-20130430-2iqpw.html>

⁴⁷¹ Spooner, ‘Millions Stolen in Perth Mormon Scam’, *WAToday*, 30 April 2013

⁴⁷² Spooner, ‘Millions Stolen in Perth Mormon Scam’, *WAToday*, 30 April 2013

⁴⁷³ ‘Former Finance Broker Jailed for ‘Mormonville Fraud’, *ABC News*, 30 April 2013, <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2013-04-30/former-finance-broker-sentenced-to-jail-for-fraud/4661108>; ‘Mortgage Broker stole \$4m in Mormon Project Scam’, *LDS Living*, 30 April 2013, <https://www.ldsliving.com/mortgage-broker-stole-4m-in-mormon-project-scam/s/72374>; ‘WA Mormon Jailed for five years over \$4m scam’, *9News*, 30 April 2013, <https://www.9news.com.au/national/wa-broker-stole-4m-in-mormon-project-scam/84335d2e-2e5a-4e77-8e48-51b133efeba9>; ‘Victims of \$4.2m swindle find closure’, *The Weekend Australian*, 30 April 2013, <https://www.theaustralian.com.au/news/latest-news/victims-of-42m-swindle-find-closure/news-story/c07478453177076ba45c8981979d831f>; Natasha Body, ‘Broker Jailed Over ‘Mormonville’ Scam’, *The West Australian*, 30 April 2013, <https://thewest.com.au/news/wa/broker-jailed-over-mormonville-scam-ng-ya-277175>; Glen Cordingley, ‘\$4m ‘Mormonville Fraud’ Woman Catherine Thompson Bailed’, *PerthNow*, 19 August 2010, <https://www.perthnow.com.au/news/wa/4m-mormonville-fraud-woman-catherine-thompson-bailed-ng-0694d620ac0640cad930b4f29193e5ab>;

excommunication, this infamous court case undoubtedly was perceived by media organisations within Australia to have been influenced by her religion. The media labelled this a ‘Mormon Scam’, conflating the actions of an individual Latter-day Saint with the broader Church in Australia, whilst also, arguably, minimising the fact that Mormons were also the primary victims of this fraud. Though there are evident biases, for example the labelling this as a ‘Mormon scam’, and the sensational nature of this case study, the representation is important here.

Australia’s First Elected Latter-day Saint Politician, 2017

The Mormon with the most direct political power in Australia’s history has been Elizabeth Kikkert, the first Pacific Islander to be elected as a politician, and the first and only Latter-day Saint. Kikkert was elected to represent the seat of Ginninderra, Canberra in 2017; she migrated from Tonga with her single-mother when she was eight years old, grew up in Western Sydney, and relocated to the ACT with her husband and children in 2005.⁴⁷⁴ Here, she was a volunteer in the Church, where she was a leader in the women’s auxiliary organisation, the Relief Society, in the Belconnen congregation.⁴⁷⁵ In 2016, the *Australian Mormon Newsroom* stated that Elizabeth Kikkert was running for the ACT Legislative Assembly.⁴⁷⁶ In this news release, the Church emphasised its neutrality as an organisation:

⁴⁷⁴ ‘Elizabeth Kikkert MLA: Liberal for Ginninderra’, *Canberra Liberals Website*, viewed 20/08/2020.

<https://voteliberal.org.au/kikkert/>

⁴⁷⁵ ‘About Me’, *Elizabeth Kikkert, MLA Website*, viewed 16/09/2020

<https://www.elizabethkikkert.com.au/about>

‘News Release: Mormon Mother of Five Running for Public Office in Canberra’, *Australian Mormon Newsroom*, 10 May 2016, viewed 16/09/2020

<https://news-au.churchofjesuschrist.org/article/mormon-mother-of-five-running-for-office-in-canberra>

⁴⁷⁶ ‘News Release: Mormon Mother of Five Running for Public Office in Canberra’, *Australian Mormon Newsroom*, 10 May 2016, viewed 16/09/2020

Principles compatible with the gospel are found in the platforms of all major political parties. While the Church does not endorse political candidates, platforms, or parties, members are urged to be full participants in political, governmental, and community affairs.⁴⁷⁷

Kikkert ran, and was elected, on a mixture of family and community-oriented policies, with an emphasis on environment and multiculturalism. Kikkert claims that she has 'been a strong advocate for issues such as youth mental health, youth homelessness, and evidence-based approaches to child protection.'⁴⁷⁸ Kikkert's election, as well as her openness about her religious-based approaches to politics, indicates that Mormonism's prominence has expanded within Australia. Moreover, that Kikkert is Australia's first elected Pasifika MP, as well as its first elected Mormon politician, further shows the complex place that Mormonism has within multicultural Australia.

The Election of Jacinda Ardern, 2017

In New Zealand, the most significant example of the connection between the Church, public life, and politics was the election of ex-Mormon Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern in 2017. The daughter of devout Latter-day Saint parents, Ardern has repeatedly stated that she was raised as a typical Mormon, abstaining from drinking, smoking, and sporting on Sundays, instead attending her local congregation in Morrinsville, North Island each week.⁴⁷⁹ In Madelaine Chapman's 2020 biography of Ardern, a brief five page chapter is

<https://news-au.churchofjesuschrist.org/article/mormon-mother-of-five-running-for-office-in-canberra>

⁴⁷⁷ 'News Release: Mormon Mother of Five Running for Public Office in Canberra', *Australian Mormon Newsroom*, 10 May 2016

⁴⁷⁸ 'About Me', *Elizabeth Kikkert, MLA Website*, viewed 16/09/2020

<https://www.elizabethkikkert.com.au/about>

'Elizabeth Kikkert MLA: Liberal for Ginninderra', *Canberra Liberals Website*, viewed 20/08/2020

<https://voteliberal.org.au/kikkert/>

⁴⁷⁹ Madeleine Chapman, *Jacinda Ardern: A New Kind of Leader*, Carlton, Victoria: Nero, an Imprint of Schwartz Books, 2020, pp. 12-13

dedicated to her issues and subsequent alienation from the Church; the chapter's tone is neutral, and seeks to only briefly explore this as part of Arden's early life.⁴⁸⁰ Though still a faithful Mormon into her adulthood, whilst attending the University of Waikato in Hamilton, Ardern became involved in the Young Labour political movement and began to grow close to a number of people who identified with the LGBTQIA+ community.⁴⁸¹ Ardern states that during her time at university, she realised her advocacy of sexual and gender equality was in conflict with the teachings of the Church, and began to disassociate from it.⁴⁸² Chapman claims that Ardern does not resent the Church or its members, noting that in 2018 Arden stated 'I can't separate out who I am from the things that I was raised with... I took a departure from the theology, but otherwise I have only positive things to say about it.'⁴⁸³

More important to this chapter, however, is the successive media coverage of her disillusionment from the Church. In the lead up to the 2017 election, a slew of New Zealand publications discussed Ardern and her disaffection from the Church.⁴⁸⁴ In August 2016 Dr. Jarrod Gilbert, who interviewed Jacinda and her fiancé Clarke Gayford for *The New Zealand Herald*, noted her background as a Latter-day Saint. He offered a brief, inaccurate history of the religion and labelled it 'the most ridiculous of all the main

⁴⁸⁰ Chapman, *Jacinda Ardern: A New Kind of Leader*, Carlton, pp. 12-17

⁴⁸¹ Chapman, *Jacinda Ardern: A New Kind of Leader*, pp. 15

⁴⁸² Chapman, *Jacinda Ardern: A New Kind of Leader*, pp. 15

⁴⁸³ Chapman, *Jacinda Ardern: A New Kind of Leader*, pp. 17

⁴⁸⁴ Jarrod Gilbert, 'Life, Kids, and Being Jacinda', *The New Zealand Herald Website*, August 2016, viewed 31/10/2020

<https://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/life-kids-and-being-jacinda/4K7RICULEMUYCWEPIOPCDIIEQI/>

Kim Knight, 'The Politics of Life: The Truth About Jacinda Ardern', *The New Zealand Herald Website*, 29 January 2017, viewed 31/10/2020

<https://www.nzherald.co.nz/lifestyle/the-politics-of-life-the-truth-about-jacinda-ardern/4WEA6GJ4UZCLE23QCG23WTHR7I/>

Churches.’⁴⁸⁵ This quote shows that although Mormonism had a long and complex history within New Zealand, it was still seen as marginal by some sections of society. By 2017, the *New Zealand Herald* had changed its tune: in an article by Kim Knight, only a brief mention of Arden’s previous religion is mentioned.⁴⁸⁶ Moreover, a brief description of Arden’s Mormon childhood was published on the official government New Zealand History website.⁴⁸⁷ As will be discussed in the next chapter, the framing of Arden as a former Latter-day Saint who disaffected due to the Church’s views of sexuality is an important aspect of the way in which the Church was viewed within both Australia and New Zealand.

‘Moronic Mormons’: Tensions Between Church Members and Broader Australian Conservative Politics, late 2010s

In Australia, towards the end of 2010s, the alliance between the Latter-day Saints and right-wing conservatives had begun to grow uneasy. Despite an earlier shared agenda between in regards to the anti-same-sex marriage debate, to be discussed more fully in the next chapter, this began to dissipate with legalisation that legalised same-sex marriage in 2017. Despite this, individual Mormons continued to be involved in conservative Australian politics, but hostilities had already festered. For example, in 2018 Victorian Liberal Member James Penny was expelled from his party after he posted what was reported as an ‘anti-Mormon’ comment on social media. Penny stated, under an alias,

⁴⁸⁵ Gilbert, ‘Life, Kids, and Being Jacinda’, *The New Zealand Herald Website*, August 2016, viewed 31/10/2020

⁴⁸⁶ Knight, ‘The Politics of Life: The Truth About Jacinda Arden’, *The New Zealand Herald Website*, 29 January 2017, viewed 31/10/2020

⁴⁸⁷ ‘Biographies: Jacinda Arden’, *NZ History Website*, viewed 31/10/2020
<https://nzhistory.govt.nz/people/jacinda-arden>

‘we true liberals, the ones aligned with Malcolm Turnbull, and those who believe in what Menzies created, hate these moronic Mormons just as much as everyone else.’⁴⁸⁸ Marijke Rancie, an Australian-Mormon conservative activist discussed in the next chapter lodged a formal complaint to the party’s administrative committee.⁴⁸⁹ According to Richard Willingham, of the *ABC News*, the comment was made ‘in relation to an article in *The Age*... about the Mormon Church asking children invasive questions about sex.’⁴⁹⁰ Rancie claimed ‘it was a clear example of religious vilification’:

If the word Mormon were replaced with Jew, Muslim, Indian, or Lesbian I am confident that swift action would be taken ... This is not the first incident of religious vilification directed toward myself or other members of my faith within the Liberal Party.⁴⁹¹

James Penny also ‘hit out at the increasing move towards the hard right of the political spectrum by some in the party’.⁴⁹² Willingham noted that there had been a recent shift in the Liberal Party Administrative Committee which saw Mormons and Catholics become a majority of office-bearers.⁴⁹³ Of Rancie’s actions, he noted that ‘some Liberals called the complaint a “witch hunt designed to whack people into submission and to fall in line.”’⁴⁹⁴ This upset centrist members of the Victorian Liberals, who have accused the right-faction in the Liberal Party of ‘branch stacking’ with both Mormons and Catholics. Again, this

⁴⁸⁸ Richard Willingham, ‘Victorian Liberal Member Faces Expulsion Over ‘Moronic Mormons’ Post on Social Media’, *ABC News Website*, Friday 11 May 2018, viewed 19/11/2020
<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2018-05-11/victorian-liberal-member-faces-expulsion-over-anti-mormon-post/9748858>

⁴⁸⁹ Willingham, ‘Victorian Liberal Member Faces Expulsion Over ‘Moronic Mormons’ Post on Social Media’, *ABC News Website*, Friday 11 May 2018, viewed 19/11/2020

⁴⁹⁰ Willingham, ‘Victorian Liberal Member Faces Expulsion Over ‘Moronic Mormons’ Post on Social Media’, *ABC News Website*, Friday 11 May 2018, viewed 19/11/2020

⁴⁹¹ Willingham, ‘Victorian Liberal Member Faces Expulsion Over ‘Moronic Mormons’ Post on Social Media’, *ABC News Website*, Friday 11 May 2018, viewed 19/11/2020

⁴⁹² Willingham, ‘Victorian Liberal Member Faces Expulsion Over ‘Moronic Mormons’ Post on Social Media’, *ABC News Website*, Friday 11 May 2018, viewed 19/11/2020

⁴⁹³ Willingham, ‘Victorian Liberal Member Faces Expulsion Over ‘Moronic Mormons’ Post on Social Media’, *ABC News Website*, Friday 11 May 2018, viewed 19/11/2020

⁴⁹⁴ Willingham, ‘Victorian Liberal Member Faces Expulsion Over ‘Moronic Mormons’ Post on Social Media’, *ABC News Website*, Friday 11 May 2018, viewed 19/11/2020

reporting needs to be viewed with the lens of representation: though there is certainly evidence that this abortive attempt to 'branch stack' occurred, the representation of politically-active Latter-day Saints is what is crucial here.

This new group was reportedly 'hated by so-called traditional and established Liberals, with anger and fear at the new faction.'⁴⁹⁵ Conservative newspaper *The Australian* was not pleased with the decision of the Liberal Party, with Samantha Hutchinson writing an article entitled 'Liberal Party Turning Its Back On Its Principles Over Mormon Slur.'⁴⁹⁶ Hutchinson argued that former Premier of Victoria Jeff Kennett condemned the apparent censorship, and the Victorian Liberal Party of 'turning its back on... free speech.'⁴⁹⁷ Hutchinson also noted that 'ten of the 78 people elected to the Liberals' administrative bodies at the party's... state council are Mormons'; she describes this 'new wave' as 'exceptionally vocal', particularly in relation to the Safe Schools Program and Marriage Equality.⁴⁹⁸ *Australian Financial Review* reporter Aaron Patrick similarly spoke of the rising power of the 'Christian and Mormon recruits' in the Victorian Liberal Party.⁴⁹⁹ Moreover, as can be seen by the above illustration, the more centrist newspaper *The Age*

⁴⁹⁵ Willingham, 'Victorian Liberal Member Faces Expulsion Over 'Moronic Mormons' Post on Social Media', *ABC News Website*, Friday 11 May 2018, viewed 19/11/2020

⁴⁹⁶ Samantha Hutchinson, 'Liberal Party Turning It Back On Its Principles Over Mormon Slur', *The Australian Website*, 06 August 2018, viewed 19/11/2020

<https://www.theaustralian.com.au/nation/politics/liberal-party-turning-its-back-on-its-principles-over-mormon-slur/news-story/6c7321111b5cb50f10cda52619b49c78>

⁴⁹⁷ Hutchinson, 'Liberal Party Turning It Back On Its Principles Over Mormon Slur', *The Australian Website*, 06 August 2018, viewed 19/11/2020

⁴⁹⁸ Hutchinson, 'Liberal Party Turning It Back On Its Principles Over Mormon Slur', *The Australian Website*, 06 August 2018, viewed 19/11/2020

⁴⁹⁹ Aaron Patrick, 'Liberal Party Prodigy Marcus Bastiaan Plans to Succeed Michael Kroger', *Australian Financial Review Website*, 28 June 2018, viewed 19/11/2020

<https://www.afr.com/politics/liberal-party-prodigy-marcus-bastiaan-plans-to-succeed-michael-kroger-20180628-h11zfd>

was concerned with the rising influence of politically-motivated Mormons.⁵⁰⁰ As well as a satirical cartoon, journalists Farrah Tomazin and Ben Schneiders derided the Church's claims of political neutrality, and discussed the hostilities surrounding the increased participation of Latter-day Saints within the Victorian Liberal Party.

A more vocal disdain towards the new religious wave of the Liberal Party was echoed by prominent conservative commentator Andrew Bolt, who wrote an article entitled 'Do Fundamentalists Now Run the Vic Libs?' for *The Daily Telegraph* in May 2018.⁵⁰¹ Bolt lamented

The new religious alliance controlling the Victorian Liberal party seems to have forgotten Liberal principles, and seem determined in their self-righteousness to make more enemies than they will be able to handle...

A party that expels someone critical of Mormons is a party that seems likely to expel just about anyone at all. First, they came for the Mormon-mocker, next...

It has been many years, even decades, since the Victorian Liberals last expelled someone for bringing the party into disrepute for their comments.⁵⁰²

Bolt's contempt is evident, and his statements complicate the assumed status of Mormons as right-wing allies in Australia's cultural contentions. Yet his comments confirm the validity of Hutchinson's assertion that more traditional conservatives within the Liberal Party are hostile towards the new wave of religiously motivated politicians.

⁵⁰⁰ Farrah Tomazin and Ben Schneiders 'Mormon Church 'Politically Neutral' Amid Liberal Party Power Shift', *The Age*, 09 June 2018, <https://www.theage.com.au/politics/victoria/mormon-church-politically-neutral-amid-liberal-party-power-shift-20180608-p4zk9z.html>

⁵⁰¹ Bolt, 'Do Fundamentalists Now Run the Vic Libs?', *The Daily Telegraph* Website, 11 May 2018

⁵⁰² Bolt, 'Do Fundamentalists Now Run the Vic Libs?', *The Daily Telegraph* Website, 11 May 2018

These claims are further reiterated by former Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull, who wrote in his autobiography *A Bigger Picture*

Churches were good recruiting grounds for branch stackers ... Michael Sukkar, Kevin Andrews, and Alan Tudge, among others, were assiduous branch stackers in Victoria, famously recruiting Mormons to eventually shift control of the Liberal Party in Australia's most liberal state to the hard right.⁵⁰³

Similarly Niki Savva's book *Plots and Prayers*, which details the ousting of Malcolm Turnbull, twice mentions the recruitment of Mormons to the Victoria Liberal Party. Both Turnbull and Savva note that the vocal entrance of Mormons into conservative politics created tension with more 'traditional' Liberal members.⁵⁰⁴ This encroachment of the religious right into party politics, in particular by Latter-day Saints, represents a further complicated relationship between Mormonism and Australian politics. The representation of this, in media, memoir and sustained political analysis, is reflective not only of the actual existence of Latter-day Saints within Australian politics, but also how this is received by others. Though this effort was widely critiqued as an obvious push for voters, these tensions and hostilities are essential in understanding the overarching themes of this chapter. Within the last three decades, the Church has become much more visible within political circles, but this has led to resentment in some instances from the broader public. This derision is crucial to note: though the Liberal Party has a long-standing history of involving politically-active religious individuals, as discussed, the efforts to involve 'fundamentalist' Mormons and Catholics was seen as an aberration of

⁵⁰³ Malcolm Turnbull, *A Bigger Picture*, Richmond, Victoria: Hardie Grant Books, April 2020, pp. 495

⁵⁰⁴ Niki Savva, *Plots and Prayers: Malcolm Turnbull's Demise and Scott Morrison's Ascension*, Melbourne, Victoria: Scribe Publishing, 2019, pp. 269 and 315

the attempts to secularise and modernise the Victorian Liberal Party, to the point that it has been noted by not only journalists but also mainstream politicians and political writers.

Mormon Digitisation of Official Australian Records, 2018

A further example of Mormonism's proliferation and visibility in Australian public life can be seen from the Church's digitisation of various genealogical and public records for the states of South Australia, Victoria, Tasmania, and New South Wales.⁵⁰⁵ Due to its emphasis on Temples and proxy ordinances, the Church has vast digitisation technologies and resources.⁵⁰⁶ These have been utilised in the United States, for example, when in 2015 the Church began digitisation of handwritten records of freed slaves held by the Freedman's Bureau Project.⁵⁰⁷ The Church in Australia, through its company FamilySearch

⁵⁰⁵ 'Why Does the Mormon Church Want State Records? And What Do They Do With Them?', *ABC Radio Adelaide Website*, 05 July 2018, viewed 09/07/2020

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2018-07-05/why-does-the-mormon-church-want-state-records/9943288>
Nick Ryan, 'Why I'm Happy with the Mormons Keeping South Australian Personal Records in Utah', *Sunday Mail*, via *The Advertiser Website*, 07 July 2018, viewed 09/07/2020

<https://www.adelaidenow.com.au/news/opinion/nick-ryan-why-im-happy-with-the-mormons-keeping-south-australian-personal-records-in-utah/news-story/c7f452d3c71f88ccbe57e7c0ea2be668>; Tory Shepherd, 'State Records of SA Give South Australians' Personal Records to the Mormon Church to Safeguard', *The Advertiser Website*, 04 July 2018, viewed 09/07/2020
<https://www.adelaidenow.com.au/news/south-australia/state-records-of-sa-give-south-australians-personal-records-to-the-mormon-church-to-safeguard/news-story/d31b15bfffddda32e60f0e11a5b0edb2>

⁵⁰⁶ 'About FamilySearch', *FamilySearch Website*, Updated 2019, viewed 09/07/2020

<https://www.familysearch.org/en/about>

⁵⁰⁷ 'Mormon Church to Digitally Index Millions of Handwritten Records About Four Million Freed Slaves to Help African Americans Reconnect with Civil War-era Ancestors', *Daily Mail (Australia)*, 20 June 2015, viewed 01/07/2023

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3132232/Mormon-church-make-available-records-4-million-freed-slaves.html>; Lee Davidson, 'Mormons Lead Effort to Index Records of 4 Million Slaves', *Washington Post*, 22 June 2015, viewed 01/07/2023
https://www.washingtonpost.com/national/religion/mormons-lead-effort-to-index-records-of-4-million-freed-slaves/2015/06/22/9e48973c-191d-11e5-bed8-1093ee58dad0_story.html; Tad Watch, 'LDS

International, has been officially contracted by various state governments to digitise official documents.⁵⁰⁸ In an *ABC Radio Adelaide* broadcast and subsequent article from July 2018, Director of State Records of South Australia, Simon Froude commented:

The partnership with FamilySearch allows us to increase [our] reach so that members of the public who live in regional areas who aren't able to get to our Gepps Cross site or who live interstate or overseas, are able to actually access the records of the state of South Australia.⁵⁰⁹

This article noted:

Mr Froude said anybody could access the records online, but they would have to sign up by creating an account which requires your name, birth date, and sex. You also need to tick a box, detailing whether you are a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints or not, provide your email address and select your country.

Although a useful process that will greatly enhance the ability of governments, researchers, and citizens to have access to information that previously would be unavailable, this contract has been met with some hostility and incredulity from various media and news reports.

Church, FamilySearch Launch Project to Index Freedman's Bureau Records of 4 Million Slaves', *Deseret News*, 20 June 2015, viewed 01/07/2023
<https://www.deseret.com/2015/6/19/20566994/lds-church-familysearch-launch-project-to-index-freedmen-s-bureau-records-of-4-million-former-slaves>; Daniel Wallis, 'Mormon Church to Make Available Records of 4 Million Freed Slaves', *Reuters*, 20 June 2015, viewed 01/07/2023
<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-mormons-slave-records-idUSKBN0P001B20150620>

⁵⁰⁸ 'Why Does the Mormon Church Want State Records? And What Do They Do With Them?', *ABC Radio Adelaide* Website, 05 July 2018

⁵⁰⁹ 'Why Does the Mormon Church Want State Records? And What Do They Do With Them?', *ABC Radio Adelaide* Website, 05 July 2018

This is for two reasons: the theological underpinnings of why the Church is interested in digitising records, and the realisations of those doctrinal ideologies with the proxy baptism of deceased, and alive, Australians. For context, the Church utilises digitised records to perform sacred Temple ordinances, only available to members of the Church. In theory, these ‘proxy ordinances’, defined by the Church as ‘a living person receiving ordinances on behalf of someone who is deceased’, should only be performed for the ancestors of living members of the Church.⁵¹⁰ However, this has not been the case historically or contemporarily. For example, the Church has faced backlash both in Australia, New Zealand, and internationally due to the fact that in the 1990s, Holocaust victims, including Ann Frank, have had temple proxy ordinances performed for them, without the consent of living descendants.⁵¹¹ In a similar vein, journalist Tom Heneghen wrote a *Reuters* article in 2007 revealing that controversial historical figures such as Adolf Hitler, Joseph Stalin, Genghis Khan, Al Capone, and Mao Zedong have all ‘appeared for a short time in the International Genealogical Index for proxy baptisms.’⁵¹²

⁵¹⁰ The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, ‘Temple Ordinances for the Deceased’, *General Handbook: Serving in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, Salt Lake City, Utah, 2020 ‘Topic: Baptism for the Dead’, *Australian Church Newsroom Website*, viewed 07/09/2020 <https://news-au.churchofjesuschrist.org/article/baptism-for-the-dead>

⁵¹¹ ‘Anne Frank ‘Posthumously Baptised as a Mormon’’, *The Telegraph Website* 24 January 2012, viewed 07/09/2020

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/religion/9102688/Anne-Frank-posthumously-baptised-as-a-Mormon.html>; ‘The Latest: Mormon Leader Encourages Baptisms for the Dead’, *The New Zealand Herald Website*, 02 April 2017, viewed 07/09/2020

https://www.nzherald.co.nz/lifestyle/news/article.cfm?c_id=6&objectid=11830261; Mark Oppenheimer, ‘A Twist on Posthumous Baptisms Leaves Jews Miffed at Mormon Rite’, *The New York Times Website*, 02 March 2012, viewed 07/09/2020

<https://www.nytimes.com/2012/03/03/us/jews-take-issue-with-posthumous-mormon-baptisms-beliefs.html>; Michelle Rindels and Brian Skoloff, ‘Claim Surfaces of Anne Frank Baptism by Mormons’, 24 February 2012, viewed 07/09/2020

<https://www.seattletimes.com/nation-world/claim-surfaces-of-anne-frank-baptism-by-mormons/>; Andrea Stone, ‘Mormon Baptism Targets Anne Frank – Again’, *The Huffington Post Website*, 22 February 2012, viewed 07/09/2020

https://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/mormons-posthumous-baptism-anne-frank_n_1292102?ri18n=true

⁵¹² Tom Heneghen, ‘Will Pope Benedict Become a Mormon After He Dies’, *Reuters International Website*, 05 February 2007, viewed 07/09/2020

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-religion-mormons-baptism-idUSL0218416820070204>

In the Australian context, journalists Liam Mannix and Ben Schneiders have reported that various figures from Australian history have had proxy ordinances performed by individual members of the Church.⁵¹³ These include legendary cricket player Don Bradman, Tasmanian Aboriginal woman Truganini, Australia's first Indigenous parliamentarian Neville Bonner, outlaw bushranger Ned Kelly, Catholic Archbishop Daniel Mannix, and Prime Minister Robert Menzies.⁵¹⁴ Schneiders and Mannix further note that Menzies was 'baptised for the dead' when he was still alive.⁵¹⁵ These proxy ordinances were performed without the knowledge of surviving family members; in particular, descendants of Ned Kelly were reportedly incensed to discover that their ancestor had been baptised into the Latter-day Saint Church, noting Kelly's Irish Catholic roots.⁵¹⁶ Thus, whilst the Church has been contracted to digitise official documents, these actions have unsettling implications because of actions from the Church. Nevertheless, this example shows a more thorough localisation and enmeshment of Mormonism within the governmental realm of Australia.

⁵¹³ Liam Mannix, 'Mormon Church Baptising Thousands of Dead Victorians', *The Age Website*, 10 March 2017, viewed 09/07/2020

<https://www.theage.com.au/national/victoria/mormon-church-baptising-thousands-of-dead-victorians-atheist-or-not-20170307-gus640.html>; Ben Schneiders, 'Menzies, Ned, and the Don: Mormons Baptise Prominent Australians After Death', *The Sydney Morning Herald Website*, 23 September 2018, viewed 09/07/2020\

<https://www.smh.com.au/national/menzies-ned-and-the-don-mormons-baptise-prominent-australians-after-death-20180922-p505ds.html>

⁵¹⁴ Schneiders, 'Menzies, Ned, and the Don: Mormons Baptise Prominent Australians After Death', *The Sydney Morning Herald Website*, 23 September 2018

⁵¹⁵ Schneiders, 'Menzies, Ned, and the Don: Mormons Baptise Prominent Australians After Death', *The Sydney Morning Herald Website*, 23 September 2018

⁵¹⁶ Schneiders, 'Menzies, Ned, and the Don: Mormons Baptise Prominent Australians After Death', *The Sydney Morning Herald Website*, 23 September 2018

The Church and the Australian Royal Commission into Child Sexual Abuse and 'Worthiness Interviews', 2018-2020s

Arguably, one of the most severe controversies the Church has been embroiled in was the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. This was a monumental investigation carried out by the Australian government that investigated the extent to which child sexual abuse had occurred within various religious organisations, and how these organisations had responded to the abuse within their ranks.⁵¹⁷ Compared to other religions, there was a relatively low number of former or current Latter-day Saints in Australia who participated in the Commission.⁵¹⁸ In fact, it was one of the lowest reporting religions; in Volume I, there were only seven who were interviewed.⁵¹⁹ Despite the fact that there was very little discussed in regards to the Mormon Church, stories of individual survivors of Sexual Abuse perpetrated by former Latter-day Saints appear on the Royal Commission's website. These horrific narratives detail different aspects of how the Mormon Church has helped to enable sexual violence against children. For example, one woman, named as Annette Marie by the Commission, tells how she was molested by three teenaged males when she was only a child, after which her ultra-religious family did not take appropriate steps to seek justice.⁵²⁰ She recalls the misogynistic and all-encompassing nature of Mormonism:

⁵¹⁷ 'Final Report', *Royal Commission Into Institutional Responses to Child Sex Abuse*, Commonwealth of Australia, 2017

<https://www.childabuseroyalcommission.gov.au/final-report>

⁵¹⁸ *Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, Volume 16: Book 1*, Commonwealth of Australia, 2017, pp. 290

⁵¹⁹ *Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, Volume 16: Book 1*, Commonwealth of Australia, 2017, pp. 290

⁵²⁰ 'Anette Marie's Story', *Private Sessions – Narratives: Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse*, viewed 15/11/2020

<https://www.childabuseroyalcommission.gov.au/narratives/annette-maries-story>

It's a patriarchal religion where women don't have any value and that's why my sister and I were treated like shit and that's why my brothers were treated really good... It's a total cult... Completely. They are just so manipulated and brainwashed that they don't understand what's going on... they hide behind this front of religion and pay their money and pretend to be good people.⁵²¹

This accusation of theological misogyny within Mormonism, particularly in the covering up of sexual abuse, is important to note here, as it is a common theme described by other victims.

Another former Mormon, named Penelope, stated that her family converted to Mormonism when she was about six years old.⁵²² She remembered the ostracisation by broader family members for joining Mormonism. It was around this age that she began being sexually abused by a member of her local congregation, Darren Wiggins.⁵²³ After two years, she disclosed the abuse to her mother, who did not take her concerns seriously. In her 40s, Penelope had a mental health breakdown and was hospitalised.⁵²⁴ According to this report, she requested information on Wiggins, but felt “put down’ by the police, as they did not give her any information about him.’⁵²⁵ Later, with the help of her local MP and other support workers, she was able to meet with a representative of the Church; this

⁵²¹ ‘Anette Marie’s Story’, *Private Sessions – Narratives: Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse*, viewed 15/11/2020

⁵²² ‘Penelope’s Story’, *Private Sessions – Narratives: Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse*, viewed 15/11/2020

<https://www.childabuseroyalcommission.gov.au/narratives/penelopes-story>

⁵²³ ‘Penelope’s Story’, *Private Sessions – Narratives: Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse*

⁵²⁴ ‘Penelope’s Story’, *Private Sessions – Narratives: Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse*

⁵²⁵ ‘Penelope’s Story’, *Private Sessions – Narratives: Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse*

representative acknowledged that the abuse happened as Wiggins had been convicted of sexual violence towards another Mormon girl.⁵²⁶ The report states:

Penelope then made a civil claim against the Church. When her solicitor for this matter asked her father for a statement about Wiggins, he declined to provide one. Page | 360

'He knew this guy had abused me, but Dad wouldn't do anything.' ...

Penelope received a \$40,000 compensation settlement. As part of this agreement, she signed a confidentiality clause. This was particularly distressing for her, and she was pleased to learn of later legislation that overrides this condition.⁵²⁷

That the Church made Penelope sign a confidentiality clause indicates that not only does the Church have a history of protecting abusers from the law, but that it has sought to silence victims.

One further testimonial, provided by Melinda Jane, discussed being molested by Melbourne Mormon Tony Walker, who would give teenagers alcohol and cigarettes.⁵²⁸ Melinda Jane stated that Walker had attempted to rape both her and another Mormon teenager from the congregation at his home. Following this:

... the threats started. Walker rang Melinda while she was babysitting: 'You know I can find you anywhere', he said.

⁵²⁶ 'Penelope's Story', *Private Sessions – Narratives: Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse*

⁵²⁷ 'Penelope's Story', *Private Sessions – Narratives: Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse*

⁵²⁸ 'Melinda Jane's Story', *Private Sessions – Narratives: Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse*, viewed 15/11/2020
<https://www.childabuseroyalcommission.gov.au/narratives/penelopes-story>

If she told anyone, Melinda was warned, 'I'll take you down the plughole with me. No one will ever believe you.' ...

Eventually they told Stacy's parents, who rang the priest. Melinda was relieved.

The Mormons believe in 'the discerning spirit', which means that a Mormon priest (called a bishop) can tell if you're lying. Melinda was confident the bishop would believe her.

She got her chance at a bishops' court.

'There were four men in there ... My parents sat behind me. And I was just grilled.

"What happened? What else have you heard? And are you lying?"

Fifteen years later, when she was applying for victim's compensation, Melinda discovered that the bishops court had charged her with misconduct and stealing. Nothing happened to Walker.

The Mormon community shunned Melinda and her family. People asked, 'How could you make up these lies about this poor man?' ...

Melinda made a statement [to police] and Walker was charged with indecent assault and rape. The bishop testified for Walker at the hearing. The rape charges were dropped and the remaining charges were set for trial.

Tony Walker suicided a week later. Melinda never got her day in court. There are people who still believe she made it up. For years Melinda believed that Walker had faked his death and was coming to get her. She has since been successful in getting compensation. The stake president of the Church later realised that Melinda was not lying but has not apologised.

This description of the 'Bishop's Court', in which Melinda Jane was questioned by ecclesiastical leaders of her congregation is particularly important. That the inner workings of Latter-day Saint ecclesiastical committees are accurately recorded by the Commission is significant. It is also alarming that ecclesiastical leaders testified against Melinda Jane in order to protect an older male member of their faith. It is also revealing the Church has not addressed its surfaced activities in the Royal Commission to its

members. Given the history of the mainstream suspicions about Mormonism and sex, and the recent reporting of 'worthiness interviews' discussed below, it is interesting that these findings have not been reported by Australia's media.

Distinct but related to the Royal Commission was the furore that erupted after investigative journalist pieces led to allegations of child abuse due to the Church's practice of 'worthiness interviews.' This worldwide practice, which has children from the age of twelve years old discussing their 'sins', including those sexual in nature, with local lay leaders. This was investigated in detail by *The Sunday Age* and *The Sydney Morning Herald*.⁵²⁹ In these articles, journalists Ben Schneiders and Royce Millar discuss the practice in which children disclosed what they perceived to be their wrongdoings to lay, male leaders in the Church, usually middle-aged or older, without a parent or guardian present. They wrote:

Australian children as young as 12 are being asked explicit questions about their sexual thoughts and whether they masturbate, as adult male religious figures in the Mormon church use one-on-one interviews to test children's sexual "purity".

The invasive questioning has been described as an "abuse" of children, according to leaked correspondence from the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse.⁵³⁰

⁵²⁹ Ben Schneiders and Royce Millar, 'Mormons Asked Children Invasive Questions About Sex', *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 5 May 2018, viewed 16/11/2020
<https://www.smh.com.au/national/mormons-asked-children-invasive-questions-about-sex-20180504-p4zddg.html>

Ben Schneiders, "Conditioned to Lying": How Mormon Sexual Questioning is 'Child Abuse', *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 9 March 2019, viewed 16/11/2020
<https://www.smh.com.au/national/conditioned-to-lying-how-mormon-sexual-questioning-is-child-abuse-20190309-p512xx.html>

⁵³⁰ Schneiders and Millar, 'Mormons Asked Children Invasive Questions About Sex', *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 5 May 2018

According to the Church, these one-on-one interviews are to ensure that children and teenagers are able to confidentially discuss their spiritual salvation without feeling threatened or intimidated by their parents.⁵³¹

However, as argued by the Royal Commission, the practice of young people meeting alone with lay ministers who have no experience in counselling or psychology outside of basic ecclesiastical training to discuss sex and sexuality, constitutes child abuse.⁵³² These articles emphasised that these children were being told that in order to be forgiven by God, they must confess their sins to their Church leaders..⁵³³ They discussed the damaging effect that these experiences had on those who later left the Church. For example, they discussed the experiences of

Stephanie McLean, who was brought up in the church, recalls a Mormon leader grabbing a white rose, pulling off the petals and stamping on them, then saying: "that's you after sex".

[Church leaders also] Spit out piece of gum and step on it, 'That's you after sex'," she was told. "The idea was that you were completely defiled by sex [outside marriage]."⁵³⁴

Another former member, recounted how she had been beaten and raped by a fellow Mormon when she was a teenager, but after discussing it with her local leader, had been 'told by Church authorities to not go to police.' She stated 'you are taught that being

⁵³¹ Schneiders and Millar, 'Mormons Asked Children Invasive Questions About Sex', *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 5 May 2018; Schneiders, "Conditioned to Lying": How Mormon Sexual Questioning is 'Child Abuse', *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 9 March 2019

⁵³² Schneiders and Millar, 'Mormons Asked Children Invasive Questions About Sex', *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 5 May 2018; Schneiders, "Conditioned to Lying": How Mormon Sexual Questioning is 'Child Abuse', *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 9 March 2019

⁵³³ Schneiders and Millar, 'Mormons Asked Children Invasive Questions About Sex', *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 5 May 2018

⁵³⁴ Schneiders and Millar, 'Mormons Asked Children Invasive Questions About Sex', *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 5 May 2018

impure sexually is next to murder, it would be better to die fighting off a rape than to be raped.’⁵³⁵

This practice of Mormon lay leaders interviewing children and teenagers has not only been condemned within Australia, but also in the United States and the United Kingdom.⁵³⁶ Notably, former United States Bishop Sam Young was excommunicated for his denouncement of the worthiness interviews, and his role in organising protests in Salt Lake City against the practice.⁵³⁷ In response to these newspaper articles in *The Sydney Morning Herald* and *The Sunday Age*, the Church released a counter article, entitled ‘The Value of Pastoral Care and Personal Interviews.’⁵³⁸ Sections of this read:

A recent article published in *The Age* newspaper (and syndicated elsewhere) entitled “Mormons asked children invasive questions about sex,” unfortunately only provided one side of the issue of pastoral care for youth.

The article only reports on concerns raised by a handful of individuals. No mention is made of the many positive experiences of young people who have greatly benefited from having a personal relationship with their local minister.

⁵³⁵ Scneiders and Millar, ‘Mormons Asked Children Invasive Questions About Sex’, *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 5 May 2018, viewed 16/11/2020

⁵³⁶ Jo Adnitt and Joice Etutu, ‘Mormon Church Must End Children’s Sexual Interviews, Members Say’, *BBC News Website*, 01 July 2018, viewed 16/11/2020

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-44644130>; Larry D. Curtis, ‘LDS Church Responds to Hunger Strike Protesting Bishops Worthiness Interviews With Kids’, *KUTV News Website*, 30 July 2018, viewed 16/11/2020

<https://kutv.com/news/local/lds-church-responds-to-hunger-strike-as-it-enters-third-day>

⁵³⁷ Lauren Jackson, ‘Why A Former Mormon Bishop was Excommunicated for Criticizing Sexually Explicit Youth Interviews’, *CNN News Website*, 24 September 2018, viewed 16/11/2020

<https://edition.cnn.com/2018/09/24/us/mormon-young-excommunicated/index.html>; Courtney Tanner, ‘Excommunicated LDS Bishop Leads 800 in March to End Child Abuse and Hold All Religions Accountable’, *The Salt Lake Tribune Website*, 10 October 2019, viewed 16/11/2020

<https://www.sltrib.com/religion/2019/10/05/todays-historic-march-end/>

⁵³⁸ ‘The Value of Pastoral Care and Personal Interviews’, *The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints Australia Website*, 07 May 2018, viewed 16/2020

<https://news-au.churchofjesuschrist.org/article/the-value-of-pastoral-care-and-personal-interviews>
[emphasis and dot points in original]

Whilst preparing their article, the journalists reached out to the Church with a number of questions, seeking a response. The response below was provided...

There are times when a discussion of moral cleanliness is appropriate—particularly if a young man or young woman feels a need to repent. In these instances leaders are counselled to adapt the discussion to the understanding of the individual and to exercise care not to encourage curiosity or experimentation.

Church leaders have a solemn responsibility to keep confidential all information they receive in confessions and interviews. When a young person is faced with serious sin or temptation, a bishop will likely encourage them to share (as appropriate) their struggles with their parents so they can pray for, teach and encourage the young man or young woman...

There may be occasions when a leader may ask [teenage members], “Are you living the standards of the Church? Are you living the law of chastity?” If the person says, “I’m struggling with X,” the bishop may ask the young person to tell him more about that in a desire to understand the situation and offer help with overcoming challenges or completing necessary steps for repentance.

Whilst a lengthy public announcement, it is nonetheless telling of a number of significant themes. This includes the admittance to the worthiness interviews of children and teenagers, the fact that the Church believed itself to have been misrepresented by these newspaper articles, and that the Church is unlikely to repeal such practices. Most significantly, however, the letter on pastoral care shows the way in which the Church positions itself after media backlash. This letter is clearly written to members of the Church, but is evidently also created for public consumption; the tone of the letter is almost outraged defensiveness. Evidently, the Church is displeased at having its internal ecclesiastical workings discussed by Australia’s press. Moreover, the very public condemnation of this practice indicates the continued strain between the Church and contemporary Australian society. It indicates the Church’s status as a perpetual ‘other’ when measured against more mainstream Australian morality and norms. In conjunction

with this, however, the way in which Mormonism has become represented and perceived through these scandals and outrage is telling of this larger theme of visibility, localisation, and an increased relationship with the state.

Critiques of Church Financials in Australia and New Zealand, 2022

Recently, within both Australia and New Zealand, scandals surrounding the Church's financial activities within both nations has been reported by the media, and is evidence of a more complicated relationship between the Church, and Australian and New Zealand society and government. In April 2022, a joint investigation by *The Age* and *The Sydney Morning Herald* about the Church's finances within Australia was released, which revolved around money donated to and removed from LDS Charities Australia. The first of the three articles explains that the Church has structured itself to exploit hundreds of millions of dollars in tax exemptions. This investigation revealed that since 2015, Australian Latter-day Saints have been drawn 'on \$[AUD]400 million in tax deductions not available to followers of other religions or denominations.'⁵³⁹ According to journalist Ben Schneiders, most of the Church's tax activities are run through a shell company, LDS Charities Australia, which has no office, Australian website, infrastructure or paid employees, and which could be in breach of Australian tax laws. Schneider wrote that 'in Australia, the Church has ensured that donations and tithing [ten percent of faithful

⁵³⁹ Ben Schneiders, 'Mormons Inc: Church Accused of Multinational Tax Rort', *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 3 April 2022
<https://www.smh.com.au/national/mormons-inc-church-accused-of-multinational-tax-rort-20220330-p5a98p.html#:~:text=The%20Mormon%20Church%20has%20been,to%20followers%20of%20other%20religions.>

Latter-day Saints' income] – which are not tax-deductible – are routed through a charitable trust to gain 100 per cent tax deductibility.⁵⁴⁰

Although Schneiders sought a written statement from Church spokespeople, this was not forthcoming; instead, it was claimed that ‘the Church operated in accordance with tax laws.’⁵⁴¹ Schneiders found that the Church had spent, on average, \$36,000 per year on charitable donations between 1985 and 2010. Suddenly, there was a monumental uptick in the money contributed to the LDS Charities Australia fund. However, there has not been a comparably large increase in the number of Latter-day Saints in Australia that would account for the rapid increase to \$70 million per year; the Church’s collections are more than other charities such as Oxfam, Beyond Blue, or the Catholic Church’s Caritas Australia. A Church spokesperson denied that LDS Charities Australia was run by Utah-based Latter Day Saints Charities; instead, the Church claimed that it ‘funded programs through other charities... allowing it to keep costs low.’⁵⁴² The spokesman also stated that ‘all decisions are made right here in Australia’, though this is highly unlikely given the absence of offices, employees, or website. In supporting this claim, Dr Ryan Cragan, a University of Tampa professor and expert in Mormonism, stated that ‘it is a stunningly hierarchical religion... any big decisions like that are going to be made in Salt Lake City.’⁵⁴³ Schnieders quotes Krystian Seibert, a charities expert from Swinburne University’ Centre for Social Impact, who stated that in order to qualify for the status of Deductible Gift

⁵⁴⁰ Schneiders, ‘Mormons Inc: Church Accused of Multinational Tax Rort’, *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 3 April 2022

⁵⁴¹ Schneiders, ‘Mormons Inc: Church Accused of Multinational Tax Rort’, *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 3 April 2022

⁵⁴² Schneiders, ‘Mormons Inc: Church Accused of Multinational Tax Rort’, *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 3 April 2022

⁵⁴³ Schneiders, ‘Mormons Inc: Church Accused of Multinational Tax Rort’, *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 3 April 2022

Recipient, which allows tax deductions, 'operations and management decisions of a charity needed to be made from Australia', further throwing the Church's claims into dispute.⁵⁴⁴ Importantly, Schneiders contextualises these discrepancies with a comment that the US Church similarly has a history of secretive financial dealings. In 2020, a *Washington Post* investigation revealed that the Church was 'secretly running a \$US100 billion investment fund, Ensign Peak Advisors, that was accumulating vast tax-free wealth by investing in hedge funds, Chevron, Visa, Apple, and some of the biggest landholding in the US.'⁵⁴⁵

According to Schneiders, ex-Mormons within Australia have been involved in a complaint to the Australian Charities and Not-For-Profits Commission about the Latter-day Saints Church's tax practices. One of these ex-Mormons was Dr. Simon Southerton, who has had long, protracted tensions with the Church both within Australia and in Salt Lake City. In the late 1990s, Southerton had been both a Latter-day Saint bishop in Queensland and a CSIRO-employed environmental scientist. Following growing disbelief and disaffection with Church doctrines surrounding evolution, young earth creationism, and a Global Flood, Southerton resigned from his post as a bishop in 1998. The core of his dissidence, however, were the claims that the people in *The Book of Mormon*, the Nephites and Lamanites, were the ancestors of Native Americans.⁵⁴⁶ *The Book of Mormon* chronicles that the Nephites and Lamanites colonised what is now known as the Americas after their migration from Jerusalem. Southerton had, through intense research, discovered the

⁵⁴⁴ Schneiders, 'Mormons Inc: Church Accused of Multinational Tax Rort', *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 3 April 2022.

⁵⁴⁵ Schneiders, 'Mormons Inc: Church Accused of Multinational Tax Rort', *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 3 April 2022

⁵⁴⁶ Dehlin, 'Simon Southerton', *Mormon Stories Website*

scientific consensus showed a link between Native Americans and Asian DNA, and showed no connection to the Middle East; this realisation led to his disaffection from the Church. Southerton later recalled:

LDS apologists at BYU [were alerted] to the existence of an Australian bishop who had lost his faith in the Book of Mormon because of DNA. From just weeks after resigning as a bishop, I [was] treated as an enemy of the church.⁵⁴⁷

This perception that he was an ‘enemy of the Church’ was further compounded when, in 2004, Southerton published a book on the subject, *Losing a Lost Tribe: Native Americans, DNA, and The Mormon Church*.⁵⁴⁸ The book was published through Signature Books, based in Utah.

Following the book’s release, the Church launched a lengthy crusade against the former bishop. As reported by not only *Deseret News* in Utah, but also the *Sydney Morning Herald*, *The Age*, and *ABC News*, Southerton was excommunicated in 2005.⁵⁴⁹ However, rather than being called to face the charge of apostasy, which Southerton had expected to happen, he instead faced a Church Court who claimed that Southerton was being disciplined for committing adultery.⁵⁵⁰ *The Sydney Morning Herald* further stated that

⁵⁴⁷ Dehlin, ‘Simon Southerton’, *Mormon Stories Website*

⁵⁴⁸ Simon Southerton, *Losing A Lost Tribe: Native Americans, DNA, and the Mormon Church*, Salt Lake City, Utah: Signature Books, August 2004

⁵⁴⁹ ‘Church Excommunicates ‘DNA’ Author’, *Deseret News*, 05 August 2005

<https://www.deseret.com/2005/8/5/19905648/church-excommunicates-dna-author>; ‘Mormons Excommunicate Australian Author’, *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 05 August 2005

<https://www.smh.com.au/world/mormons-excommunicate-australian-author-20050805-gdltir.html>; ‘Mormons Challenge Apostate Scientist’, *The Age*, 15 July 2005

<https://www.theage.com.au/national/mormons-challenge-apostate-scientist-20050721-ge0jti.html>;

David Routledge (interviewer) with Simon Southerton, ‘Mormon Bishop Faces Excommunication’, *ABC Radio National*, 20 July 2005

<https://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/archived/religionreport/mormon-bishop-faces-excommunication/3354108#transcript>

⁵⁵⁰ ‘Church Excommunicates ‘DNA’ Author’, *Deseret News*, 05 August 2005; ‘Mormons Excommunicate Australian Author’, *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 05 August 2005; ‘Mormons Challenge Apostate Scientist’,

Southerton was warned against discussing his doctrinal-scientific disaffection with the Church leaders. Southerton claimed he was ‘instructed before the meeting that if [he] attempted to talk about ‘DNA’ and apostasy, that the council would be immediately shut down and completed in [his] absence.’⁵⁵¹

In a 2005 interview for *ABC Radio National* with David Rutledge, Southerton was asked about the process of his disciplinary council. Revealingly, Southerton stated that:

Certainly [the Church is] very concerned about the sorts of things that I'm writing, but there seems to be a trend occurring, starting up in the last few years, that people who do write books and are subsequently invited to Disciplinary Councils, quite often the Council is either called off, or there's really a non-result. And perhaps the church is now trying to avoid holding Councils on the charge of apostasy, because some of the information that is now available, they would probably prefer those 16 men who sit on the council not to hear it because it is so challenging to their faith.

Southerton was interviewed for this dissertation, with questions focused on how media responded to his disaffection from the Church, the publishing of his book, and subsequent excommunication.⁵⁵² Southerton acknowledged that whilst there was intense media discussion in Australia surrounding his very public excommunication from the Church, this was mirrored elsewhere around the world, including within the United States and Britain. He did note that his interview with *ABC Radio National* was unique, however, and that he was not expecting his story to be of such interest to Australian news organisations.⁵⁵³ Southerton argued that the Church-owned media, *Deseret News*, attempted to divert attention away from the scientific evidence by constantly mentioning

The Age, 15 July 2005; Rutledge (interviewer) with Southerton, ‘Mormon Bishop Faces Excommunication’, *ABC Radio National*, 20 July 2005

⁵⁵¹ ‘Mormons Excommunicate Australian Author’, *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 05 August 2005

⁵⁵² Brenton Griffin (interviewer), ‘Interview with Simon Southerton’, 23 February 2022

⁵⁵³ Griffin (interviewer), ‘Interview with Simon Southerton’, 23 February 2022

that his excommunication from the Church was on the ostensible charge of adultery.⁵⁵⁴ Southerton argues the motives of the Church here were apparent: a ‘character assassination’ to ensure that faithful members would not heed his academic observations. Through excommunication, the Church could present Southerton as a disgruntled former bishop, who was punished by the Church for sin, rather than as someone who was attempting to present scientific evidence that was contrary to Latter-day Saint doctrine.⁵⁵⁵ Since his excommunication, Southerton has been involved with the United States-based *Mormon Stories Podcast*, hosted by the similarly excommunicated academic, Dr. John Dehlin.⁵⁵⁶ Southerton has attempted to bring about change within Australia that would bring to light the allegedly illegal financial activities.

Another prominent ex-Mormon, Dr Neville Rochow, QC, (who was interviewed for this dissertation, and will be discussed in the next chapter), highlighted in Schneiders’ article that ‘they don’t set up schools, don’t set up hospitals, don’t have homeless shelters, don’t have places for women to escape when they have bad marriages.’⁵⁵⁷ A follow-up article by Scheiders noted that federal politicians had proposed a Tax Office probe into the practices of the Latter-day Saint Church in Australia.⁵⁵⁸ Labor’s Andrew Leigh, who was Shadow Treasurer at the time, declared that there should be an ‘immediate investigation’, whilst Greens treasury spokesman Nick McKim stated that there was enough information

⁵⁵⁴ Griffin (interviewer), ‘Interview with Simon Southerton’, 23 February 2022

⁵⁵⁵ Griffin (interviewer), ‘Interview with Simon Southerton’, 23 February 2022

⁵⁵⁶ Griffin (interviewer), ‘Interview with Simon Southerton’, 23 February 2022

⁵⁵⁷ Schneiders, ‘Mormons Inc: Church Accused of Multinational Tax Rort’, *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 3 April 2022

⁵⁵⁸ Ben Schneiders, ‘Labor, Greens Push for Tax Office Investigation into Mormon Donations’, *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 03 April 2022

<https://www.smh.com.au/national/labor-greens-push-for-tax-office-investigation-into-mormon-donations-20220401-p5aa0v.html>

to investigate: 'the generous tax exemptions given to religious organisations should be respected and not exploited.'⁵⁵⁹ Interestingly, then-Assistant Treasurer, Liberal Michael Sukkar, did not respond to media requests for comment. This article reiterated the claim from Church spokespeople that LDS Charities Australia was not run by the Utah-based entity, instead allocating funds via 'a local board [which] made all decisions.'⁵⁶⁰

Importantly, Ben Schneiders' exposé did not reveal any of the current or previously held real assets the Church owns within Australia. However, in 2014, the Church and its Australian branch of real estate holdings, company AgReserves, appeared in the press for their sale of four farms in New South Wales, totalling AUD\$120 million; these were apparently bought in 1998 for roughly AUD\$70 million.⁵⁶¹ In an earlier article, Greg Brown of *The Weekend Australian* described the Church's assets as 'one of Australia's largest farmland holdings.'⁵⁶² Sue Neales, of *The Australian* emphasised that the Church itself was selling the properties, 'rather than through the usual major rural property agents.'⁵⁶³ Through this, it is evident Church maintains real estate holdings within Australia, which were outside the scope of Schneiders' exposé of its financials.

⁵⁵⁹ Schneiders, 'Labor, Greens Push for Tax Office Investigation into Mormon Donations', *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 03 April 2022

⁵⁶⁰ Schneiders, 'Labor, Greens Push for Tax Office Investigation into Mormon Donations', *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 03 April 2022

⁵⁶¹ Matthew Cranston and Mercedes Ruehl, 'Buyers Line Up for Mormon Farmland', *FarmOnline National*, Last Updated 19 October 2014
<https://www.farmonline.com.au/story/3381562/buyers-line-up-for-mormon-farmland/>

⁵⁶² Greg Brown, 'Corrigan-backed Webster Snares Mormon Farms', *The Weekend Australian*, Canberra, Australian Capital Territory, 29 October 2013, pp. 40

⁵⁶³ Sue Neales, 'Mormons Sell the Farm in \$120m Deal', *The Australian*, Canberra, Australian Capital Territory, 14 October 2014, pp. 30s; Peter Hemphill, 'Mormon Church to Sell NSW Farms', *The Weekly Times*, Melbourne, Victoria, 15 October 2014, pp. 3

The reaction from the Church was minimal and somewhat clandestine. The same week that the *Sydney Morning Herald* and *The Age* published their expose, the Church published a quasi-response on the New Zealand Church Newsroom website.⁵⁶⁴ Without mentioning the newspaper investigation, this commentary noted that ‘Australian Latter-day Saints have generously donated to the Church for many years’, which had then been used to fund charitable programs globally.⁵⁶⁵ This official statement repeatedly claimed that LDS Charities Australia has cooperated and operates within various tax laws. This commentary also notes the ways in which the money donated by LDS Charities Australia is utilised to supply aid, as well as the other global charities that it works with, such as UNICEF, World Food Program, Rahma Worldwide, and Catholic Relief Services. What is essential to note here, however, is that this was published by the *New Zealand Church Newsroom*, rather than the *Australian*. It was not reprinted in other regional or nation-based Newsrooms, including the worldwide, nor was there an official retort from the Church to Ben Schneider when his articles were published. This suggests that this was a purposeful and meditated response to what was perceived to be the hostile Australian press. It does not mention the investigatory report, let alone the calls for a Parliamentary Inquiry.

It is possible, however, that the Church utilised the New Zealand-based website as it was aware that a similar investigation was underway in New Zealand. In June 2022, Murray Jones of *Business Desk New Zealand*, with additional reporting by Andy Fyers and Greg

⁵⁶⁴ ‘How Charitable Donations by Australians are Helping People Around the World: The Origins and Impact for Good of LDS Charities Australia’, *Church Newsroom – New Zealand*, 13 April 2022, <https://news-nz.churchofjesuschrist.org/article/how-charitable-donations-in-australiaare-helping-people-around-the-world>

⁵⁶⁵ ‘How Charitable Donations by Australians are Helping People Around the World’, *Church Newsroom – New Zealand*, 13 April 2022

Hurrell, published a three-part investigation into the Church's finances in New Zealand. Titled *The Riches of Heaven*, these authors claimed the Latter-day Saint Church in New Zealand was the 'third wealthiest centralised religious group and 20th richest charity', with assets valued at \$ NZD424 million.⁵⁶⁶ As with the *Sydney Morning Herald* and *The Age* investigations, Jones emphasised the Church's global financials, including the exposure of Ensign Peak Advisors. These reporters also noted that, as of 2020, the Church was reporting income of \$113 million annually, second only to the Seventh Day Adventists. According to the article, 'between 2008 and 2020, the NZ Mormon Church had taken in more than \$1 billion from [local] members... and grants from headquarters in Salt Lake City.'⁵⁶⁷

This article is unique in that it was written with information provided by not only ex-members, including Rochow, but also those who still identify as active Latter-day Saints, including former ecclesiastical leaders. Some of the most damning accusations about the Church's finances in New Zealand are from those who still attend weekly Church services, although contributed to the article anonymously. For example, a former bishop, named SC, in the investigation, stated:

The church likes to promote that 100% of your donation goes to the cause [with] no admin but church employees absolutely get paid, and excess funds go into a \$100 billion-dollar fund that keeps growing.

⁵⁶⁶ Murray Jones (with additional reporting by Andy Fyers and Greg Hurrell), 'Behind the NZ Mormon Church's Millions', *Business Desk New Zealand*, 21 June 2022

<https://businessdesk.co.nz/article/charities/behind-the-nz-mormon-churchs-millions>

⁵⁶⁷ Jones (with Fyers and Hurrell), 'Behind the NZ Mormon Church's Millions', *Business Desk New Zealand*, 21 June 2022

So, in effect, none of your money might actually reach someone in need. Members believe that there are no or very little administration costs ... [and] believe that donating to the church is much more efficient than donating to other charities.

The church could now afford to not collect tithing, and pay the expenses of all its missionaries and do this forever. Which also means in practice that donations to the church are ineffectual. A member would be better off to donate to any other charity.⁵⁶⁸

Another former leader, 'AB', argued that:

There is no obvious expense to external parties for charitable work. They don't run hospitals or food banks or homeless shelters, they've closed down the Mormon high school [Church College in Hamilton.]⁵⁶⁹

Official records provided to the government show the Church in New Zealand spent \$6.2 million on 'grants, donations, humanitarian and local unit expenses' in 2020, roughly 6% of reported income.

Although the Church does have regional offices in Takapuna, Auckland, which employ over two hundred, and funds are utilised to build and renovate Temples and chapels, this article argues that the majority of the New Zealand Church's finances are directed towards the purchasing of expensive residential and commercial properties.⁵⁷⁰ It is estimated that these have increased from \$180 million in assets in 2010 to \$420 million in 2021. The Church's portfolio holds 248 properties and includes chapels, Temples,

⁵⁶⁸ Jones (with Fyers and Hurrell), 'Behind the NZ Mormon Church's Millions', *Business Desk New Zealand*, 21 June 2022

⁵⁶⁹ Jones (with Fyers and Hurrell), 'Behind the NZ Mormon Church's Millions', *Business Desk New Zealand*, 21 June 2022

⁵⁷⁰ Jones (with Fyers and Hurrell), 'Behind the NZ Mormon Church's Millions', *Business Desk New Zealand*, 21 June 2022

farmland, commercial residential, and even luxury properties.⁵⁷¹ For example, a subsequent article indicates that the Church spent \$4.2 million each on four 'upmarket' properties at the beachside apartment complex in Takapuna. According to 'AB', the Church rents these out for profit, as well as utilising them for visiting ecclesiastical leaders, predominantly from Utah.

These articles highlight the discrepancy between the Church's vast portfolio and the lives of the majority of New Zealand's Latter-day Saints, most of whom live in lower-socioeconomic conditions, or even poverty, and are required to sacrifice 10% of income to the Church before paying bills and other expenses.⁵⁷² Renowned Māori Mormon-studies scholar Gina Colvin, interviewed for this article, emphasised that even members who receive government welfare are instructed to pay 10% of this so as to be eligible for Temple recommends.⁵⁷³ 'AB' further stated that when he was a local bishop, he was able to give emergency funds to members for groceries or bills, but that this was only a temporary measure. He claimed that Church directives from headquarters instructed leaders to ensure all other available avenues had been exhausted before this happened, including borrowing money from lenders or family, and that Church assistance ceased after a couple of months. The lives of ordinary New Zealand Mormons were contrasted with global church leadership, whether centred in Utah or around the world. In 2014,

⁵⁷¹ Murray Jones (with additional reporting by Andy Fyers and Greg Hurrell), 'Mormons and Their Money: A Labour of Loyalty', *Business Desk New Zealand*, 22 June 2022

<https://businessdesk.co.nz/article/full-page/mormons-and-their-money-a-labour-of-loyalty#:~:text=On%20top%20of%20a%2010.beyond%20any%20other%20religious%20organisation.>

⁵⁷² Jones (with Fyers and Hurrell), 'Mormons and Their Money', *Business Desk New Zealand*, 22 June 2022

⁵⁷³ Jones (with Fyers and Hurrell), 'Mormons and Their Money', *Business Desk New Zealand*, 22 June 2022

leaked documents revealed senior figures received a living 'stipend' of USD\$120,000, with 3% annual increase.⁵⁷⁴

These investigations, through news organisations in both Australia and New Zealand, emphasise several themes discussed throughout this dissertation. The first is that the Church is certainly more visible in the news of these countries through its varied financial assets. It is also clear, in the case of Australia, that there may be some illegality occurring in relation to its funds, which has resulted in calls for a Parliamentary Inquiry. Regardless, these investigations certainly have reinforced an air of distrust and hostility towards the Church, both publicly and politically. These articles reiterate the continued perception of the Church and its members as suspicious 'outsiders', a common clarion call of media and even government since the religion's introduction into both Australia and New Zealand. It also indicates a more complex relationship between the Church, its members, and broader Australian and New Zealand society as it has become more permanent and localised.

Conclusion

As has been seen throughout this chapter, Mormonism has gradually become visible and localised, though not without controversy, into the political, economic, and civic realms of both Australia and New Zealand. This has mostly taken place since the turn of the twenty-first century, where individual Latter-day Saints have taken part in activism,

⁵⁷⁴ Jones (with Fyers and Hurrell), 'Mormons and Their Money', *Business Desk New Zealand*, 22 June 2022

political administration, and elected governance. Significantly, this included Indigenous New Zealand and Australian activists. The Church has also attempted to become known to policy makers within these two countries. It invites prominent individuals to Church events and sermons, including New Zealand and Australian politicians. The Church also has a programme of gifting world leaders, including those in Australia and New Zealand, with their own family history.

Various Court Cases against the Church and its members are also revealing of the entwining of Mormonism and Australian civic life. The case against Catherine Thompson, who scammed fellow members into investing in a privatised 'Mormonville' was reported throughout national and global news outlets. The discrimination case against the Church, put forward by disgruntled Samoan members, became an international affair, with the Samoan Prime Minister and government taking an interest. Latter-day Saint individuals have also featured in the politics of Australia and New Zealand. Arguably, hostilities from within the right-leaning Liberal Party have erupted due to the increased presence of Mormons within conservative Australian politics.

As well as individual Mormons, the Church, as an institution, has become embedded within Australian and New Zealand politics. Whilst this is important in understanding the overarching themes of this chapter, it is also the reactions to the Church's efforts that are important to note. Perhaps due to the greater visibility of the Church and its members, there has been an increase in hostility against the Church within Australia and New Zealand. This has manifested in concerns about the Church's official role in digitising Australian public records for various Australian states, given its history of baptising

famous deceased Australians. Moreover, the Church was embroiled in the Australian Royal Commission into Institutional Child Sexual Assault. Although largely absent from the official reprimands and recommendations, stories of the Church's mishandling of accusations amongst its own clergy are readily available. Most significantly, this chapter has argued that the Church's increased visibility in Australia and New Zealand has been uneasy. Within the last ten years, the Church has had to repeatedly defend itself against perceived media backlash, such as arguing its political neutrality or justifying its internal ecclesiastical workings. This indicates a level of hostility still existent from broader Australian and New Zealand society, that sees the Church and its members as 'outsiders.' Despite this status, the Church's recent influence on the political realm, and its interactions more broadly with the State in these nations, are essential to how the religion has been perceived and represented within Australia and New Zealand. This visibility surrounding a more active political entanglement and localisation represents not only an integration with these nations, but also the religions' continued marginal and peripheral status.

CHAPTER VI

'We Urge Church Members To Vote With Their Conscience And Let Their Voices Be Heard On This Critical Issue':⁵⁷⁵

Mormonism in Australian & New Zealand Sexual Politics

Introduction

Throughout 2016 and 2017, the Church became embroiled in the Australian marriage equality postal survey, which sought the nations' opinion on whether same-sex marriage should be legalised. Though the Church professed political neutrality, it became involved in a number of ways that indicated this was not the case. Directly, it attempted to sway members' opinions through pastoral letters that emphasised the Church's stance on the sanctity of heterosexual marriage. More significantly, it clandestinely contributed close to a million dollars in order to be associated with the Australian Christian Lobby and their 'No Campaign' against marriage equality. As will be seen, this alliance between the Church

⁵⁷⁵ 'News Release: Pacific Area Presidency Sends Letter to Australian Latter-day Saints on Marriage and Family', *Church Newsroom Australia* Website, 12 September 2017, viewed 17/09/2020
<https://news-au.churchofjesuschrist.org/article/pacific-area-presidency-sends-letter-to-australian-latter-day-saints-on-marriage-and-family>

and the broader Australian Christian community was fraught, and political commentators criticised the growing influence of Latter-day Saints in Australian sexual politics. This chapter will examine the role the Church has taken in both New Zealand and Australian sexual politics. Most evidently, there has been an antithetical relationship between the Church and its adherents and the LGBTQIA+ community in Australia and New Zealand. In order to better understand the contentious relationship between the Church and the LGBTQIA+ community in Australia and New Zealand, this chapter will contextualise the Church's historical and contemporary doctrines and practices towards homosexuality, and its more international activism against LGBTQIA+ rights.

As well as anti-LGBTQIA+ activism, however, the Church has been thoroughly involved in sexual politics more broadly within Australia and New Zealand. This has been manifest mostly through the activism of individual members such as Dr. Ivan Stratov, who has become involved in Australian politics on an anti-abortion, anti-euthanasia, and anti-queer platform. In this vein, this chapter will closely examine the case of the very public controversy surrounding professional rugby player Israel Folau, who grew up as a faithful Mormon in Western Sydney. In 2018, Folau became embroiled in a public court case over what was claimed to be his unfair dismissal from Rugby Australia for inflammatory comments made about homosexual people. Though he was a member of the isolated Pentecostal Truth of Jesus Christ Church, founded by his father Eni, media discussion surrounding the Folau dispute almost exclusively mentioned Folau's upbringing as a Latter-day Saint. Conversely, however, there are a number of public ex-Mormons in both Australia and New Zealand who have championed the rights of the LGBTQIA+ community, the majority of them queer themselves. For example, from 2018, the Sydney

Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras has included a float for 'Peacock Mormons', those who have left the Church due to their sexuality. Many of these ex-Mormons have retained some aspect of their Latter-day Saint identity, much to the chagrin of the Church. This tension has been reported by various media, as will be discussed. This has influenced the way in which Mormonism, as well as current and former Latter-day Saints, are represented in Australian and New Zealand, and perceived by broader society.

This chapter contributes to two distinct strains of scholarship. It firstly seeks to broaden the literature surrounding Mormonism's grappling with homosexuality and queer activism more generally. This is quite extensive, but mostly focuses either on the broad, cosmological underpinnings of the Church's homophobia, or is focused on the anti-queer activism of the institution in the United States and its ramifications.⁵⁷⁶ This chapter will thus place the Church's anti-queer belligerency in Australia and New Zealand within a

⁵⁷⁶ Bryce Cook, 'What Do We Know of God's Will for His LGBT Children?: An Examination of the LDS Church's Position on Homosexuality', *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Volume 50, Issue 2, 2017, pp. 1-54

Ryan Cragun, Emily Williams, and J.E. Sumerau, 'From Sodomy to Sympathy: LDS Elites' Discursive Construction of Homosexuality Over Time', *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, Volume 54, Issue 2, 2015, pp. 291-310; John Dehlin, Renee Galliher, William Bradshaw, Daniel Hyde, and Katherine Crowell, and Terence Tracey, 'Sexual Orientation Change Efforts Among Current or Former LDS Church Members', *Journal of Counselling Psychology*, Volume 62, Issue 2, pp. 95-105; John Dehlin, Renee Galliher, William Bradshaw, and Katherine Crowell, 'Navigating Sexual and Religious Identity Conflict: A Mormon Perspective', *Identity*, Volume 15, Issue 1, pp. 1-22; Tyler Lefevor, Adlyn Perez-Figueroa, Samuel Skidmore, and Kirsten Gonzales, "'He Just Wanted Me to Do What Was Best for Me": Latter-day Saint Clergy's Counsel to Sexual and Gender Minorities and Its Impact', *Religions*, Volume 13, Issue 6, 2022, pp. 492

Taylor Petrey, *Tabernacles of Clay: Sexuality and Gender in Modern Mormonism*, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2020; D. Michael Quinn, *Same-Sex Dynamics Among Nineteenth-Century Americans: A Mormon Example*, Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1996; Robert Rees, "'In a Dark Time the Eye Begins to See": Personal Reflection on Homosexuality Among the Mormons at the Beginning of New Millennium', *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Volume 33, Issue 3, 2000, pp. 137-151; Shay Shuler, Korena Klimczak, and Amanda Pollitt, 'Queer in the Latter-days: An Integrated Model of Sexual and Religious Identity Development Among Former Mormon Sexual Minority Adults', *Journal of Homosexuality*, 2023, pp. 1-30; Edward Sumerau and Ryan Cragun, "'Why Would Our Heavenly Father Do that to Anyone": Oppressive Othering Through Sexual Classification Schemes in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints', *Symbolic Interaction*, Volume 37, Issue 3, pp. 331-352; Kendall White and Daryl White, 'Ecclesiastical Polity and the Challenge of Homosexuality: Two Cases of Divergence within the Mormon Tradition', *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Volume 37, Issue 4, 2004, pp. 67-89

broader discussion surrounding the Church's interactions with the LGBTQIA+ community. More broadly, this chapter carries on the themes discussed in the previous chapter. That is, how has the Church in Australia and New Zealand adapted, responded, and been challenged by its participation in the sexual politics of these nations. In this regard, literature surrounding broader religious interaction with sexual politics is important to ground this chapter. From here, how the Church has been perceived and represented by broader society and the media will be deliberated, and how its increased visibility has opened the Church up to scrutiny.

In New Zealand, emphasis has been made by scholars that religious organisations have generally resented the legislative changes that have granted LGBTQIA+ New Zealanders' broader rights. For context, same-sex marriage was legalised in New Zealand in 2013; unlike Australia, however, this was a conscious vote by already sitting Parliamentarians.⁵⁷⁷ This makes both the process and effect of the legalisation of same-sex marriage within these nations vastly different; as will be seen, in Australia, the Church had a greater opportunity to campaign against the legal recognition of same-sex

⁵⁷⁷ See, for example:

Chris Brickell, 'A Short History of Same-Sex Marriage in New Zealand', *Sexualities*, Volume 23, Issue 8, 2020, pp. 1417-1433; Mark Henrickson, 'Civilized Union, Civilized Rights: Same-Sex Relationships in Aotearoa New Zealand', *Journal of Gay & Lesbian Social Services*, Volume 22, Issue 1-2, 2010, pp. 40-55; Linda-Jean Kenix, 'A Straight Gay Wedding?: New Images of Same-Sex Marriage in the Mainstream and Alternative New Zealand Press', *Communication, Politics & Culture*, 2016, Volume 49, Issue 2, pp. 25-49; Brian Lewis, 'The Movement for Same-Sex Marriage', *Compass*, Volume 45, Issue 4, 2011, pp. 33-37; Aaron Lane, 'Freedom of Religion is More than just Freedom of Worship', *Review*, Volume 68, Issue 4, 2016, pp. 32-33; Geoffrey Lindell, 'Constitutional Issues Regarding Same-Sex Marriage: A Comparative Survey: North America and Australasia', *The Sydney Law Review*, Volume 30, Issue 1, pp. 28-60; Dan Meagher, 'Marriage Equality in New Zealand', *Public Law Review*, Volume 24, Issue 3, 2013, pp. 151-154; Thi Huyen Ling Nguyen, 'New Zealand Same-Sex Marriage Legislation in the Australian Media', *Continuum*, Volume 29, Issue 3, 2015, pp. 287-303; Alison Plumb, 'How Do MPs in Westminster Democracies Vote When Unconstrained by Party Discipline? A Comparison of Free Vote Patterns on Marriage Equality Legislation', *Parliamentary Affairs*, Volume 68, Issue 3, 2015, pp. 533-554; Paul Rishworth, 'Changing Times, Changing Minds, Changing Laws – Sexual Orientation and New Zealand Law, 1960 to 2005', *The International Journal of Human Rights*, Volume 11, Issue 1-2, 2007, pp. 85-107

marriage, as it was a postal survey. More broadly, in New Zealand, discussion erupted within both the media and scholarship about how the law should protect the religious freedoms of marriage celebrants who objected to providing marriage services to same-sex couples.⁵⁷⁸ This scholarship has extended to other aspects of the complicated relationship between religious individuals and the law in New Zealand, such as religious medical practitioners who protested against the decriminalisation of abortion legalisation in 2020.⁵⁷⁹ Thus, with major shifts in the sexual politics of New Zealand over the last couple decades, religions and their adherents have at times felt persecuted, misrepresented or threatened by increasing secularisation in the public sphere. This chapter thus explores how the Latter-day Saint Church has responded to these changes in sexual politics in New Zealand, and how this in turn has been represented and perceived by broader media.

Similar themes can be seen in literature that discusses changing laws in Australia. In particular, the same-sex marriage postal survey in which Australians expressed their opinion whether to legalise same-sex marriage in 2017 is a particularly important event

⁵⁷⁸ Rex Ahdar, 'Solemnisation of Same-Sex Marriage and Religious Freedom', *The New Zealand Law Journal*, 2014, pp. 397-400; Simon Wilson, 'Same-Sex Marriage and Religious Exemption Under the Marriage Act: Where Does Section 29 Leave Religious Objectors', *Victoria University of Wellington Law Review*, Volume 45, Issue 1, 2014, pp. 213-23

⁵⁷⁹ Yanshu Huang, Danny Osborne, and Chris Sibley, 'Sociodemographic Factors Associated with Attitudes Towards Abortion in New Zealand', *New Zealand Medical Journal*, Volume 132, Issue 1497, pp. 9-20; Amelia Lawley, 'Women Behaving Badly: Problematisation and Biopolitical Governance of Gender in the New Zealand Abortion Debate', *New Zealand Sociology*, Volume 37, Issue 2, pp. 81-93; Marita Leask, 'An Exceptional Choice?: How Young New Zealand Women Talk About Abortion', *Australian Feminist Studies*, Volume 30, Issue 84, 2015, pp. 179-198; Emma MacFarlane, 'Vigilance Needed Over New Zealand's Hard-Won Abortion Rights', *Nursing New Zealand*, Volume 28, Issue 6, 2022, pp. 30-31; B. Mackereth, 'Abortion – A Dilemma for a Christian General Practitioner', *New Zealand Medical Journal*, Volume 102 (Issue 881), pp. 649-649; Catriona Melville, 'Abortion Care in Australasia: A Matter of Health, Not Politics or Religion', *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Obstetrics & Gynaecology*, Volume 62, Issue 2, 2022, pp. 187-189; Keertana Kannabiran Tella, *Abortion Rights, Reproductive Justice, and the State: International Perspectives*, Routledge Publishing 2023

that will be discussed in detail. The scholarship engages with the legal rights of religions and gender and sexual minorities.⁵⁸⁰ As will be seen throughout the chapter, these questions extend to issues such as abortion and whether sexual and gender differences and experiences should be a part of public school education.⁵⁸¹ The main themes from this scholarship is the complicated way in which individual beliefs and rights, whether religious or in regards to sexual or gender identity, can co-exist in multicultural nations such as Australia. With this, the role of the state in guaranteeing ostensibly incompatible rights is particularly important. It is within this existent literature that this chapter seeks to explore the place of Mormonism within these broader debates in Australia and New Zealand, and how the Church's participation in sexual politics has been represented and received by broader society.

Sue-Ann Post: Australia's 'Favourite Six-Foot, Lesbian Ex-Mormon Comedian'

⁵⁸⁰ See, for example:

Richard Allsop, 'Religious Toleration and the Blueprint for Free Society', *Review (Institute of Public Affairs)*, Volume 68, Issue 1, pp. 46-49; Andrea Carson, Shaun Ratcliff, and Yannick Dufresne, 'Public Opinion and Policy Responsiveness: The Case of Same-Sex Marriage in Australia', *Australian Journal of Political Science*, Volume 53, Issue 1, pp. 3-23; Todd Donovan, 'The Irrelevance and (New) Relevance of Religion in Australian Elections', *Australian Journal of Political Science*, Volume 49, Issue 4, 2014, pp. 626-646; Elenia Poulos, 'The Bell Was Tolling': The Faming of Religious Freedom in *The Australian Editorials, 2015-2019*, *Australian Journal of Human Rights*, Volume 26, Issue 3, 2020, pp. 428-488; David Smith, 'No Longer a 'Christian Nation': Why Australia's Christian Right Loses Policy Battles Even When It Wins Elections', *Religion, State & Society*, Volume 49, Issue 3, 2021, pp. 231-247

⁵⁸¹ Clarissa Carden, 'Fiddling with Young Kiddies' Minds': Reporting on the Safe School Coalition in Australia', *Continuum*, Volume 33, Issue 3, 2019, pp. 297-309; Anthony Fisher, 'Same-Sex 'Marriage: Evolution or Deconstruction of Marriage and the Family', *Australasian Catholic Record*, Volume 93, Issue 2, 2016, pp. 145-158; Louise Anne Keogh, Lynn Gillam, Marie Bismark, Kathleen McNamee, Amy Webster, Christine Bayly, and Danielle Newton, 'Conscientious Objection to Abortion, the Law, and its Implementation in Victoria, Australia: Perspectives of Abortion Service Providers', *BMC Medical Ethics*, Volume 20, Issue 1, 2019, pp. 11; Melville, 'Abortion Care in Australasia: A Matter of Health, Not Politics or Religion', *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Obstetrics & Gynaecology*, Volume 62, Issue 2, 2022, pp. 187-189; Donna Wyatt and Katie Hughes, 'When Discourse Defies Belief: Anti-Abortionists in Contemporary Australia', *Journal of Sociology*, Volume 45, Issue 3, pp. 235-253

One of the first examples of Mormonism becoming more ingrained into the Australian public consciousness in the modern era is due to the work of comedian, activist, and author Sue-Ann Post. Post grew up as a member of the Church in Lithgow, rural New South Wales, but left the religion after she reconciled herself with her homosexuality at the age of 19. Following her dissent from the Church, which was further fuelled by issues with dogmas and history, Sue-Ann Post became a stand-up comedian. Her career began in the 1980s when she candidly discussed themes such as sexuality, religion, trauma, and identity. Post became well-known in the comedy scene in Australia and internationally and wrote numerous newspaper articles, a 2005 book *The Confession of an Unrepentant Lesbian Ex-Mormon (Or Hanging Out With Gay Mormons in Salt Lake City)* and featured in a docuseries for the Australian Broadcasting Corporation. This work shares common themes of leaving Mormonism, losing faith, and finding a new identity. She consistently sought to shine a comedic light on the Church's brutal homophobia, as well highlighting the broader cultural homophobia of late-twentieth century Australia's. Though Post's comedy juxtaposes the broader homophobia of Australia, she does emphasise the particular strain of doctrinal homophobia of Mormonism, and its influence on her own identity. In 2021, I interviewed Post about being a very public ex-Mormon, her book and documentary. Post's experiences were profoundly shaped by the compulsory heterosexuality of the Mormon faith and its increasingly public homophobia in the late 20th century.

For context, in the 1960s and 1970s, in response to the sexual revolution and gay liberation movement, the Church began to emphasise any form of non-heterosexual identity as an 'abomination' and encouraged queer members to seek various 'cures' to

their supposed Satan-incited behaviours.⁵⁸² For example, in 1969, then-prophet of the Church Spencer W. Kimball released a book entitled *The Miracle of Forgiveness*; which discussed homosexuality in detail. Kimball stated

Homosexuality is an ugly sin, repugnant to those who find no temptation in it, as well as to many past offenders who are seeking a way out of its clutches. It is embarrassing and unpleasant as a subject for discussion...

Of the adverse social effect of homosexuality, none is more significant than the effect on marriage and home. The normal, God-given sexual relationship is the procreative act between man and woman in honourable marriage...

After consideration of the evil aspects, the ugliness and prevalence of homosexuality, the glorious thing to remember is that it is curable... Certainly it can be overcome, for there are numerous happy people who were once involved in its clutches and have since completely transformed their lives.⁵⁸³

One of the Church's defences against homosexuality included instructing queer members to marry in heterosexual marriages.⁵⁸⁴ The Church continues to encourage 'mixed-orientation' marriages with the view that homosexuality could be exterminated through active heterosexual intercourse and the creation of families.⁵⁸⁵ Alternative solutions the Church hierarchy recommended were electroshock 'treatment' of homosexuality, and the encouragement of lifelong abstinence.⁵⁸⁶

⁵⁸² Spender W. Kimball, *The Miracle of Forgiveness*, Salt Lake City, Utah: Bookcraft Publishing, pp. 94

⁵⁸³ Kimball, *The Miracle of Forgiveness*, Salt Lake City, Utah: Bookcraft Publishing, pp. 92, 94, 96

⁵⁸⁴ John Dehlin, 'Sexual Orientation Change Efforts, Identity Conflict, and Psychosocial Health Amongst Same-Sex Attracted Mormons' (Doctorate), *All Graduate Theses and Dissertations*, Utah State University, Issue 4251, pp. 4

⁵⁸⁵ Taylor G. Petrey, 'My Husband's Not Gay: Homosexuality and the LDS Church', *Religion & Politics*, 4 February 2015, viewed 05/01/2022

<https://religionandpolitics.org/2015/02/04/my-husbands-not-gay-homosexuality-and-the-lds-church/>

⁵⁸⁶ John P Dehlin, Renee V Galliher, William S Bradshaw, Daniel C Hyde, and Katherine A Crowell. "Sexual Orientation Change Efforts Among Current or Former LDS Church Members." *Journal of Counseling Psychology* 62, no. 2 (2015): 95–105; Shay L Shuler, Korena Klimczak, and Amanda M Pollitt. "Queer in the

Sue-Ann Post was excommunicated from the Church in 1996, about fifteen years after she had started her stand-up career. Having spent over a decade publicly criticising the Church, its doctrines, and history, Post was not surprised with the news of her excommunication.⁵⁸⁷ What was unexpected, however, was the way in which it occurred. According to Post, she received a letter from the Church stating that she had been summoned to a Church Court to discuss her membership; this had been sent to her mothers' house but had not been passed on.⁵⁸⁸ As such, Post had her name removed from Church records without a Disciplinary Council. As this occurred before her documentary and book, Post is confident it was not these very public forms of cultural production that caused her excommunication.⁵⁸⁹ She later wrote that the 'Mormon Church in Australia knew' of her public criticisms of the faith, which not only drew upon her dissidence from Mormonism, but openly discussed her homosexuality. She had no doubt that wider Church leaders were aware of her career in the 1980s and 1990s.⁵⁹⁰

Perhaps Post's most mainstream intervention into Australian culture was the docuseries she produced for the ABC entitled *The Lost Tribes*. This was a detailed and nuanced account of what Post dubbed as her 'pilgrimage' to Salt Lake City, Utah, when she was invited to be the keynote speaker at the 2003 annual conference of Affirmation, a group of LGBTQIA+ Latter-day Saints. Affirmation was formed in California in June 1977 by

Latter Days: An Integrated Model of Sexual and Religious Identity Development Among Former Mormon Sexual Minority Adults." *Journal of Homosexuality* 71, no. 5 (2024): 1201–30.

⁵⁸⁷ Brenton Griffin, 'Interview with Sue-Ann Post', 31 January 2022

⁵⁸⁸ Griffin, 'Interview with Sue-Ann Post', 31 January 2022

⁵⁸⁹ Griffin, 'Interview with Sue-Ann Post', 31 January 2022

⁵⁹⁰ Griffin, 'Interview with Sue-Ann Post', 31 January 2022

Mormons who felt disillusioned with how the Church was treating homosexual members. At its creation, Affirmation was predominantly made up of Mormons who still believed the doctrines and cosmology of the Church, but had become disgruntled by their exclusion.⁵⁹¹ Although the Church had arguably decreased its aggressive homophobia, i.e. it no longer encouraged gay-conversion therapy, the doctrinal aspects remained. In Mormon cosmology, those who are not heterosexual are commanded to be celibate: those who act on their sexuality are, according to Mormon thought, at risk of eternal damnation.

Sue-Ann Post's documentary and later book not only focused on her experiences in attending the Affirmation Conference in Salt Lake City, but also her own struggles with losing her faith. This is essential to distinguish, as it further indicates this overarching theme: in 2003, the ABC, Australia's governmental broadcaster, produced and aired a personal memoir of an ex-Mormon struggling with her loss of faith and the consequences of this to her identity, familial relations, and psychological wellbeing. This is truly a unique example in the history of Australian Mormonism, and is evidence of the Church's further integration and visibility into the popular culture and consciousness of the country. In particular, the focus on the Church's homophobia and antagonism towards those of the LGBTQIA+ community is important here. In an early section of her book, Post details the mental anguish that came from realising she was a lesbian whilst still having faith in Mormonism:

It took two years of agonised internal debate with much fasting and praying before I finally made my decision. It all came to a head in my second year at college, when I got on my knees and prayed

⁵⁹¹ Alexandra Griffin, 'Queer Mormon Histories and the Politics of a Usable Past', *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Volume 54, Issue 1, pp. 6; Paul Mortensen, 'Our History: Affirmation – In the Beginning', *Affirmation Website*, viewed 07/01/2022
<https://affirmation.org/about/history/>

for a whole night seeking an answer. By this time, the question had changed from, 'Am I really a lesbian and is that okay?' to a simple plea for some small indication of the existence of God. I didn't want a big dramatic sign, a miracle or bolts of lightning... but I had been assured by my Church that the still, small voice of the Holy Ghost would provide guidance. That's all I wanted. But nothing happened. I got up from my knees the next morning and decided that that was it for me and God.⁵⁹²

Although only a snippet of an entire book, Post's honest portrayal of two years of doubts, fasting, and praying, all of which are Church instructions when faced with spiritual or personal crises, through to wrestling with her own homosexuality and disbelief, provides an important view of the complicated experiences of queer ex-Mormons. Though the entire book could be quoted to illustrate aspects of this theme, the passage above provides enough of an example to speak to the complicated nature of identity; this theme will be more thoroughly addressed later in the chapter. Nevertheless, through the activism of a lesbian advocate, the Church's response through excommunication, and the way in which this was captured by the Australian public broadcaster, indicates a complicated, nuanced representation and visibility of Mormonism, identity, and sexuality within Australia.

Recently, Post contributed a short, introspective memoir piece to activist and writer Benjamin Law's 2019 book *Growing Up Queer in Australia*. Post recounts being raised in rural New South Wales, describing herself as a tomboy, before she came out as a lesbian in her late teens.⁵⁹³ She recalls her struggle after realising she was a lesbian, writing that '[I] wrestled my demons and desperately prayed not to be gay for the next two years',

⁵⁹² Sue-Ann Post, *The Confessions of An Unrepentant Lesbian (Or Hanging Out With Gay Mormons in Salt Lake City)*, Sydney: ABC Books, 2005, pp. 5

⁵⁹³ Sue-Ann Post, 'So You Wanted Honesty', in Benjamin Law (ed.) *Growing Up Queer In Australia*, Carlton, Victoria: Black Inc. Publishers, 2019, pp. 208

while also realising that Australian society would not accept her.⁵⁹⁴ She notes that she had first discovered a definition of homosexuality in the university textbook *Abnormal Psychology*. This book, in a chapter that outlined 'Psychosexual Disorders', listed homosexuality 'after incest, paedophilia, voyeurism, sado-masochism and rape.'⁵⁹⁵

Interestingly, Post never mentions the Church by name, but instead refers to it as a 'fundamentalist Christian upbringing',⁵⁹⁶ a fascinating distinction from her earlier works. Nevertheless, one particular story is very revealing of her experience as a lesbian Mormon:

I looked back over my life and one incident in particular completely shocked me. When I was sixteen, another member of my Church suddenly started attending our branch despite the fact that it was a long drive from where she lived. She always brought her teenage son along, and she and my mother constantly threw the two of us together.

We ran Junior Sunday School together. We went to Church socials together. We were cast into a play together. It didn't last long – they eventually went back to their local Church branch – but later in life my gaydar kicked out a reading and I realise 'Oh my god He was gay. And not just a little bit. He was as camp as a row of tents...'

Despite my mother's protestations that she had no idea I was a lesbian, she quite obviously had suspected something and had conspired with this other woman to throw their two ugly-duckling queer kids together in the hope of creating the beautiful swan of heterosexual marriage. It failed.⁵⁹⁷

Although impossible to know whether this attempt was instigated individually by their mothers or by the Church hierarchy, Post's experiences confirm the accusations from

⁵⁹⁴ Post, 'So You Wanted Honest...', in *Growing Up Queer in Australia*, pp. 209

⁵⁹⁵ Post, 'So You Wanted Honest...', in *Growing Up Queer in Australia*, pp. 209

⁵⁹⁶ Post, 'So You Wanted Honest...', in *Growing Up Queer in Australia*, pp. 208

⁵⁹⁷ Post, 'So You Wanted Honest...', in *Growing Up Queer in Australia*, pp. 210

queer former Mormons that there has been a culture within the Church to remove homosexuality through coerced heterosexual relationships.

Sue-Ann Post is a key example of the overarching theme of this dissertation, the enmeshment of Mormonism into Australian society, and the reactions from the broader population and the Church itself. Through Post's public career, Australians were introduced to Latter-day Saint theology and history not from external sources, but instead from an insider, albeit one who was rejected from, and is hostile towards, the Church. Post's career represents this fusion of popular culture, official broadcasting, and Mormonism through the lived experiences of a famous comedian and LGBTQIA+ activist.

Individual Conservative Mormon Activists, 2010s

Whilst the Church has claimed neutrality in the realm of Australian and indeed global politics, there are individual members who have been active in their efforts to ensure the Church's ideologies and doctrines are part of broader Australian life. One of the most significant in this regard is Dr. Ivan Stratov, who in 2010 ran for Victorian parliament as a Family First candidate.⁵⁹⁸ Stratov has maintained that the spread of HIV and AIDS was punishment from God for humanity's increasing acceptance of homosexuality.⁵⁹⁹ An

⁵⁹⁸ 'News Release: Mormon Doctor and HIV Researcher Shares His Faith', *Australian Church Newsroom Website*, 10 November 2015, viewed 22/03/2020 <https://news-au.churchofjesuschrist.org/article/mormon-doctor-hiv-researcher-and-parliamentary-shares-his-faith>; Farrah Tomazin and Ben Schneiders, 'Senior Mormon Faces Probe Over Liberal Party Membership', *The Age Website*, 18 May 2018, viewed 22/03/2020 <https://www.theage.com.au/politics/victoria/senior-mormon-faces-internal-probe-over-liberal-party-membership-20180518-p4zg83.html>

⁵⁹⁹ Hirst, 'Anti-Safe Schools Campaigner Marijke Rancie Elected to Victorian Liberal Party', *QNews*, 2018; Jesse Jones, 'Anti-LGBTI Campaigner Marijke Rancie Elected to the Victorian Liberal Party', *The Star Observer Website*, 10 May 2018, viewed 22/03/2020

Australian Mormon Newsroom article, which documented and shared an interview with Stratov in the *Support Life Series* in 2015, stated:

Ivan also discussed having to deal with legislative changes that are troubling for medical practitioners with traditional Christian views. His commitment to his values and the importance he places on freedom of conscience led him to stand for the Victorian parliament in 2010.⁶⁰⁰

Stratov ran on a platform that was anti-same sex marriage, anti-euthanasia, anti-abortion, and pro-religious influence in public life.⁶⁰¹ Significantly, he was also against the idea that those who held positions in the medical field should be obliged to provide care for patients who did not conform to their own worldview.⁶⁰² As Victoria decriminalised abortion in 2008, and doctors had compulsory referral requirements, this political activism from a Mormon doctor is essential here.

Although Stratov's 2010 bid for parliament was unsuccessful, for half a decade he dedicated himself to private-citizen advocacy. In 2016 he became a senior member of the Victorian Liberal Party's administrative arm.⁶⁰³ Journalists Ben Schneiders and Farrah

<https://www.starobserver.com.au/news/national-news/victoria-news/rancie-elected-liberal-party/168637>

⁶⁰⁰ 'News Release: Mormon Doctor and HIV Researcher Shares His Faith', *Australian Mormon Newsroom*, 10 November 2015

⁶⁰¹ 'News Release: Mormon Doctor and HIV Researcher Shares His Faith', *Australian Mormon Newsroom*, 10 November 2015; Ivan Stratov, 'Euthanasia: What Must Patients do to Avoid Being Killed?' *National Civic Council Website*, 19 March 2011, viewed 22/03/2020

Royce Millar and Ben Schneiders, 'Mormon Influence Rising in the Liberal Party', *The Age Website*, 07 May 2018, viewed 22/03/2020

<https://www.theage.com.au/politics/victoria/mormon-influence-rising-in-liberal-party-20180505-p4zdjb.html>

⁶⁰² 'News Release: Mormon Doctor and HIV Researcher Shares His Faith', *Australian Mormon Newsroom*, 10 November 2015

⁶⁰³ Jane Norman, 'Victorian Liberals Claim Right Faction Stacking Branches with Mormons and Catholics', *ABC News Website*, 03 June 2017, 22/03/2020

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2017-06-30/victoria-liberals-religious-right-branch-stacking-fears/8667756>

Royce Millar and Ben Schneiders, 'Ivan Stratov Elected to Senior Position in Victorian Liberal Party', *Bendigo Advertiser Website*, 10 May 2018, viewed 22/03/2020

Tomazin reported that as well as Ivan Stratov, ten of the seventy-eight members of the Victorian Liberal Party's administrative body (13%) were Latter-day Saints, despite the fact that only 0.3% of the Australian population is Mormon.⁶⁰⁴ At the time of this announcement, Stratov was a high-ranking ecclesiastical leader in Melbourne.⁶⁰⁵ Stratov's political ambition is indicative of the way in which the Church has become entwined within Australian politics; whilst the Church claims 'political neutrality', individual members are encouraged to be politically active.⁶⁰⁶ Arguably, this

In response to the rise of individual Mormons within Australian politics, including those within the Victorian Liberal Party, in 2020 the Church again emphasised its official stance of political neutrality. Journalists Farrah Tomazin and Ben Schneiders quoted from a statement sent to them by the Church to these journalists:

[The Church] does not "endorse, promote, or oppose political parties, candidates or platforms; attempt to direct its members as to which candidate or party they should give their votes to." Nor does it

<https://www.bendigoadvertiser.com.au/story/5392092/doc-who-blamed-hiv-on-mans-love-elected-to-vic-liberal-party-post/>

⁶⁰⁴ '2016 Census: Religion', *The Australian Bureau of Statistics Website*, 27 June 2017, viewed 25/08/2020 <https://www.abs.gov.au/Ausstats/abs@.nsf/dd0ca10eed681f12ca2570ce0082655d/7e65a144540551d7ca258148000e2b85!OpenDocument>; Nick McKenzie, Joel Tozer and Paul Sakkal, "That's Politics': Inside the Liberal Party's Branch-Stacking Machine", *The Age Website*, 23 August 2020, viewed 25/08/2020 <https://www.theage.com.au/national/victoria/that-s-politics-inside-the-liberal-party-s-branch-stacking-machine-20200821-p55o1f.html>

⁶⁰⁵ 'News Release: Mormon Doctor and HIV Researcher Shares His Faith', *Australian Mormon Newsroom*, 10 November 2015

⁶⁰⁶ It was reported in August 2020 in *The Age* that Stratov had quit the Victoria Liberal Party's 'top decision-making body' in order to serve the Church in the Ukraine. This was confirmed, by the *Church News* website which posted a brief biography of Stratov and his wife, Sviltlana 'Callings: Read About These 16 New Mission Presidents and Companions', *Church News Website*, 19 January 2020, viewed 28/09/2020 <https://www.thechurchnews.com/callings/2020-01-19/new-mission-presidents-july-2020-171831>; Paul Sakkal and Nick McKenzie, 'Key Figure in Victorian Liberals' Religious Right Faction Quits Post', *The Age Website*, 11 August 2020, viewed 28/09/2020 <https://www.theage.com.au/national/victoria/key-figure-in-victorian-liberals-religious-right-faction-quits-post-20200811-p55kjh.html>

“attempt to direct or dictate to a government leader” or “allow its church buildings, membership lists or other resources to be used for partisan political purposes.”⁶⁰⁷

As Tomazin and Schneiders point out, however,

This statement raised eyebrows... not least because a Mormon church building is hosting a religious freedom event this weekend headlined by Liberal Senator James Paterson... Church spokesman Robert Dudfield added last week that the event was “an interfaith event about principles and values, not politics...”⁶⁰⁸

This appears to be the first time the Church has had to directly defend its political neutrality in Australia to the media, but it has had to repeatedly make this type of statement in other countries, particularly the United States.⁶⁰⁹ The perception of the Church’s political activity and interventions has become a source of near continuous concern that the Church’s official website has a topic page dedicated to it outlining its ostensible lack of political bias, despite its attempts at becoming more ingrained in the public life of the nations.⁶¹⁰ Arguably, this attempt shows an awareness of the religion, spoken of by Marjorie Newton, that the Church remains on the fringes of Australian society, and has thus, in response to this, sought to make itself more visible.

⁶⁰⁷ Farrah Tomazin and Ben Schneiders ‘Mormon Church ‘Politically Neutral’ Amid Liberal Party Power Shift’, *The Age*, 09 June 2018, viewed 07/08/2020
<https://www.theage.com.au/politics/victoria/mormon-church-politically-neutral-amid-liberal-party-power-shift-20180608-p4zk9z.html>

⁶⁰⁸ Tomazin and Schneiders, ‘Mormon Church ‘Politically Neutral’ Amid Liberal Party Power Shift’, *The Age*, 09 June 2018

⁶⁰⁹ Joanna Brooks, ‘Five Myths About Mormonism’, *The Washington Post* Website, 05 August 2011, viewed 27/06/2020, https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/five-myths-about-mormonism/2011/08/03/gIQAYlhTwI_story.html; Kelsy Hillesheim, ‘Presentation: Mormonism and the Limits of Political Neutrality’, *Sunstone Magazine* Website, 1 January 2017, viewed 27/06/2020 <https://www.sunstonemagazine.com/mormonism-and-the-limits-of-political-neutrality/>; Michael Lipka, ‘U.S. Religious Groups and Their Political Leanings’, *Pew Research Center* Website, 23 February 2016, viewed 27/06/2020

<https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2016/02/23/u-s-religious-groups-and-their-political-leanings/>

⁶¹⁰ ‘Topic: Political Neutrality’, *Church Newsroom* Website, viewed 27/06/2020

<https://newsroom.churchofjesuschrist.org/official-statement/political-neutrality>

As well as elected representatives, individual Mormons have been involved in various political issues. One of the most significant examples of this is conservative activist Marijke Rancie, who has been vocal in condemning the LGBTQIA+ community. Rancie is most known for her social media campaigns, under the penname 'Political Posting Mumma.'⁶¹¹ She has advocated against both the legislation of same-sex marriage and the implementation of the 'Safe Schools Program', which has sought to provide a safe space for LGBTQIA+ teenagers in public schools. The Safe Schools program has been lambasted by the Christian and political-right in Australia; this rhetoric was increased in the debate surrounding the postal survey.⁶¹² Within this context, in the lead up to the postal survey, Rancie was active on social media promoting her views that only heteronormative educational discussions in public and private schooling should be legal.⁶¹³

Rancie has encountered legal issues for her activism; most significantly, against 'Minus18', a youth organisation that seeks to provide LGBTQIA+ students an opportunity to safely express their gender and sexual identities with other queer youths.⁶¹⁴ Rancie

⁶¹¹ Jesse Jones, 'Anti-LGBTI Campaigner Marijke Rancie Elected to the Victorian Liberal Party', *The Star Observer* Website, 10 May 2018

<https://www.starobserver.com.au/news/national-news/victoria-news/rancie-elected-liberal-party/168637>

⁶¹² Dan Flynn, 'Victorians Know the Truth About Safe Schools', *Australian Christian Lobby*, 21 November 2018, viewed 23/08/2023

<https://www.acl.org.au/media/victorians-know-the-truth-about-safe-schools/>

⁶¹³ 'Department Program: Safe Schools', *Victoria State Government, Education and Training* Website, Last Updated 08 October 2018, 17/07/2020

<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/Pages/safeschools.aspx>; 'The Safe Schools Coalition Australia', *Safe Schools Coalition Australia* Website, Updated 2020, viewed 17/07/2020

<http://www.safeschoolscoalition.org.au/who-we-are>

⁶¹⁴ 'About Us: Minus18', *Minus18* Website, viewed 17/07/2020

<https://www.minus18.org.au/about>; Jesse Jones, 'Conservative Mother Slammed for Online Tirade Against Queer Youth Group Minus18', *The Star Observer*, 14 December 2017, viewed 17/07/2020

<https://www.starobserver.com.au/news/national-news/victoria-news/lgbti-youth-group-slams-conservative-online-figure-attack/164761>

actively disputed the intentions of Minus18, and instead argued that this was an effort by the queer community to confuse Australia's youth and pervert God-created heteronormative gender and sexual identities. Rancie went so far as to criticise one of the directors of Minus18, Delsi Moleta, labelling her a paedophile, and accusing her of 'grooming.'⁶¹⁵ In 2018, Rancie was sued for libel and settled out of court, paying Moleta \$100,000 AUD.⁶¹⁶

Despite these legal issues, Rancie continued her activism. In 2019, she was a speaker in the 'Church and State' summit, a politically conservative convention that has been held throughout Australia and New Zealand since 2018.⁶¹⁷ This multi-day event has been attended by numerous Christian pastors, lobbyists, doctors, journalists, and academics from across the world. It has also hosted keynote addresses from Australian policymakers, such as Eric Abetz and George Christensen.⁶¹⁸ Both Abetz and Christensen are former Liberal Party MPs, although Christensen has also been associated with the reactionary One Nation Party.⁶¹⁹ Both are known for their right-wing views, and have

⁶¹⁵ 'Homophobic Mommy Blogger Apologises to LGBT Youth Leader', *Gay Star News* Website, 04 June 2019, viewed 28/09/2020

<https://www.gaystarnews.com/article/homophobic-mommy-blogger-apologizes-to-lgbt-youth-leader/> ; Staff Writers, 'Marijke Rancie Apologises for Comments About LGBTIQ Youth Worker', *OutInPerth* Website, 06 June 2019, viewed 28/09/2020

<https://www.outinperth.com/marijke-rancie-apologises-for-comments-about-lgbtqi-youth-worker/>

⁶¹⁶ 'Federal Court of Australia: Adele Moleta v Marijke Rancie', *Commonwealth Courts* Website, Filled 04 December 2018, Finalised 03 June 2019, viewed 20/09/2020

<https://www.comcourts.gov.au/file/Federal/P/VID1583/2018/actions>; 'Marijke Rancie Had to Pay \$100,000 to End Defamation Action', *OutInPerth* Website, 19 June 2019, viewed 20/09/2020

<https://www.outinperth.com/marijke-rancie-had-to-pay-100000-to-end-defamation-action/>

⁶¹⁷ 'The Church and State Summit 2019 Speakers', *Church and State Summit* Website, 2019, viewed 20/09/2020 <https://churchandstate.com.au/archive/cas19/speakers-2019/>

⁶¹⁸ 'The Church and State Summit 2019 and 2020 Speakers', *Church and State Summit* Website, 2019 and 2020', viewed 20/09/2020 <https://churchandstate.com.au/archive/cas19/speakers-2019/>

<https://churchandstate.com.au/speakers/>

⁶¹⁹ Matthew Doran and Stephanie Borys, 'George Christensen to get \$100k Payout After Defecting to One Nation and an Unwinnable Senate Spot', *ABC News* website, 13 April 2022

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2022-04-13/george-christensen-to-run-as-one-nation-candidate/100986990>

been controversial in Australian politics.⁶²⁰ During the 2019 conference, Rancie was described on the Summit's website as an

Ordinary mum whose personal experience and concerned research led her to raising the alarm about the hidden, inappropriate sexual content of the so-called "Safe Schools" resources. A high profile target of online hate from extreme LGBIQAX+ activists, she is resolute in her determination to protect her own and Australia's children and families from the normalisation of sexual and gender confusion and promiscuity.⁶²¹

Importantly, this website does not mention Rancie's Mormonism, again complicating the Church's involvement in the broader Christian-right political alliance, though this omission, arguably, would be to reduce the interdenominational hostility. Moreover, in July 2020, Rancie featured on a podcast with George Christensen, who interviewed her about her experiences. In an episode called 'How They're Destroying Your Family', she voiced her vehement opposition to same-sex marriage and the Safe Schools program; again, her religious views were omitted here.⁶²² Whilst Rancie may not represent the Latter-day Saint Church in an official capacity, she is reflective of the Church's ideologies, doctrines, and even political strategies in their opposition to the LGBTQIA+ community in Australia. Rancie's activism further indicates the complicated place of Mormonism within the sexual politics of Australia: through her activism, the Church has become more

⁶²⁰ Emily Baker and Staff, 'Tasmanian Premier Calls on PM to 'Consider' Accusation Eric Abetz 'slut-shamed' Brittany Higgins', *ABC News* website, 24 March 2021
<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2021-03-24/mp-accuses-senator-eric-abetz-of-slut-shaming-brittany-higgins/100016180>

Mathew Doran, 'George Christensen Steps Down as Chair of Parliamentary Committee After Controversial COVID-19 Vaccine Comments', *ABC News* website, 19 January 2022
<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2022-01-19/george-christensen-resigns-chair-committee-covid-vaccine-comment/100767918>

⁶²¹ 'The Church and State 2019 Speakers', *Church and State Summit* Website, 2019
<https://churchandstate.com.au/archive/cas19/speakers-2019/>

⁶²² George Christensen and Marijke Rancie, 'Conservative One Podcast: Marijke Rancie Tells How They're Trying to Destroy Your Family', *George Christensen: Liberal National Federal Member for Dawson* Website, 25 July 2020, viewed 20/09/2020
<https://www.georgechristensen.com.au/podcast/marijkerancie>

visible in Australia's public realm, especially through LGBTQIA+ publications, which frequently mentioned her religion in their reports.

Mormonism and the Australian Same-Sex Marriage Postal Survey, 2017

The most public example of the Church and its members actively participating in Australian sexual politics occurred in relation to the Same-Sex Marriage Postal Survey. In 2016, the conservative Australian Coalition government, under the leadership of Malcolm Turnbull, announced its plan to hold a Postal Survey on the issue of same-sex marriage.⁶²³ Participation was voluntary, and enrolled voters did not have to respond to the mail-in ballot.⁶²⁴ In the following nine months, until the results were released in September 2017, there was intense public debate regarding the legalisation of same-sex marriage.⁶²⁵ Advocates and opponents paid for advertisements, lobbied politicians, and held rallies.⁶²⁶

⁶²³ Peter J. Chen, 'Civic Discourse on Facebook During the Australian Same-Sex Marriage Postal Plebiscite', *Australian Journal of Social Issues*, Volume 54, Issue 3, September 2019, pp. 285-7; Michael Koizol, 'Malcolm Turnbull Introduces Same-Sex Marriage Plebiscite Legislation to Parliament', *The Sydney Morning Herald* Website, 14 September 2016, viewed 13/07/2020

<https://www.smh.com.au/politics/federal/malcolm-turnbull-introduces-samesex-marriage-plebiscite-legislation-to-parliament-20160914-grfyjg.html>; Louise Yaxley, 'Plebiscite, Budget, and Senate Pressure for Malcolm Turnbull After One Year as Prime Minister', *ABC News* Website, 13 September 2016, viewed 13/07/2020

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2016-09-14/malcolm-turnbull-under-pressure-after-one-year-as-pm/7842158>

⁶²⁴ Ian Mcallister and Feodor Snagovsky, 'Explaining Voting in the 2017 Australian Same-Sex Marriage Plebiscite', *Australian Journal of Political Science*, Volume 53, Issue 4, 2018, pp. 409-10

⁶²⁵ 'Same-Sex Marriage Survey: 'Yes' and 'No' Campaigns Ramp Up Across Australia', *SBS News* Website, Updated 23/09/2017, viewed 13/07/2020

<https://www.sbs.com.au/news/same-sex-marriage-survey-yes-and-no-campaigns-ramp-up-across-australia>; Chen, 'Civic Discourse on Facebook During the Australian Same-Sex Marriage Postal Plebiscite', *Australian Journal of Social Issues*, Volume 54, Issue 3, September 2019, pp. 285-304

⁶²⁶ 'Same-Sex Marriage Survey: 'Yes' and 'No' Campaigns Ramp Up Across Australia', *SBS News* Website, Updated 23/09/2017; Christen Tilley and Nathan Hoad, 'SSM: Keeping Track of the Ugly Side of the Same Sex Marriage Debate', *ABC News* Website, 26 October 2017, viewed 13/07/2020

Social media became essential in the debate, as thousands of Australians supported or condemned the proposition to broaden the legal definition of marriage.⁶²⁷

Although it claimed to be politically neutral, the Church was fiercely against the 'Yes' vote. Its actions in Australia were part of a global effort against same-sex marriage. For example, in 2009, the Church was directly involved in Proposition 8, which successfully repealed the right of same-sex marriage within California.⁶²⁸ Members of the Church canvassed neighbourhoods to encourage citizens to repeal same-sex marriage. The Church created both print and media advertising that emphasised the 'traditional' nature of marriage between a man and a woman.⁶²⁹ Although not alone in these efforts, the Church was part of a staunch alliance of anti-gay rights of various religious denominations, predominantly Christian but also Muslim and Jewish.⁶³⁰

⁶²⁷ Chen, 'Civic Discourse on Facebook During the Australian Same-Sex Marriage Postal Plebiscite', *Australian Journal of Social Issues*, Volume 54, Issue 3, September 2019, pp. 285-304

⁶²⁸ 'Same-Sex Marriage and Proposition 8', *Church Newsroom: Salt Lake City*, 16 October 2008, viewed 28/09/2020

<https://newsroom.churchofjesuschrist.org/article/same-sex-marriage-and-proposition-8>; Jesse McKinley and Kirk Johnson, 'Mormons Tipped Scale in Ban on Gay Marriage', *The New York Times* Website, 14 November 2008, viewed 28/09/2020

<https://www.nytimes.com/2008/11/15/us/politics/15marriage.html>; Michaela Morgan, 'Leaked Documents Show Mormon Church Played Key Role in Passing Prop 8', *SBS News* Website, 26 March 2017, viewed 28/09/2020

<https://www.sbs.com.au/topics/pride/agenda/article/2017/03/24/leaked-documents-show-mormon-church-played-key-role-passing-prop-8>; Nicholas Riccardi, 'Mormons Feel the Backlash Over Their Support of Prop. 8', *The LA Times* Website, 17 November 2008, viewed 28/09/2020

<https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-2008-nov-17-na-mormons17-story.html>

⁶²⁹ Riccardi, 'Mormons Feel the Backlash Over Their Support of Prop. 8', *The LA Times* Website, 17 November 2008

⁶³⁰ 'A Statement of Orthodox Christian Bishops of California in Support of Proposition 8: A Constitutional Amendment to Restore the Definition of Marriage', *Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America* Website, 2008, viewed 17/09/2020

<http://www1.antiochian.org/node/18321>; 'Prop. 8 Trial Unmasks Role of Religious Groups in California Marriage Vote', *Church and State Magazine*, through *Americans United for Separation of Church and State* Website, March 2010, viewed 17/09/2020

<https://www.au.org/church-state/march-2010-church-state/people-events/prop-8-trial-unmasks-role-of-religious-groups-in>; Rebecca Spence, 'Orthodox Join Fight Against Gay Nuptials', *Forward, A Jewish Journal*, 28 August 2008, viewed 17/09/2020

<https://forward.com/news/14106/orthodox-join-fight-against-gay-nuptials-02446/>; Tom Tugend, 'Rabbis on Anti-Gay Marriage: Yes, No, Maybe', *Jewish Journal* Website, 10 October 2008, viewed 17/09/2020

<https://jewishjournal.com/community/66467/>

Similarly, when the issue of same-sex marriage was discussed in Hawai'i in 2013, the Church was involved. The major political opposition to the *Hawai'i Marriage Equality Act*, was Republican senator Richard Fale.⁶³¹ Fale is a faithful member of the Church, and 'the first Tongan elected representative' in the United States.⁶³² It should be noted that Fale also enlisted the aid of other conservative senators, most predominantly the Catholic Republican Bob McDermott.⁶³³ This anti-same-sex marriage alliance, that transcends denominationalism, is important to highlight here, as this is how the Church has approached the political sphere in Australia, as has been discussed. The Church also had individual members, including ecclesiastical leaders such as Stake President Owen Matsunaga, a lawyer, creating petitions against the legalisation of same-sex marriage.⁶³⁴ According to this article, these Church members were not employed lobbyists, but rather were utilised by the Church as politically involved citizens.⁶³⁵ The Church initiated similar strategies to combat the same-sex marriage postal survey in Australia.

⁶³¹ 'LDS Opposes Hawai'i Marriage Equality Bill', *KUER Public Radio, Charter of National Public Radio*, 28 October 2013, viewed 17/09/2020 <https://www.kuer.org/religion/2013-10-28/lds-church-opposes-hawaii-marriage-equality-bill>; 'LDS Opposition to Same-Sex Marriage in Hawai'i', *KUER Public Radio, Charter of National Public Radio*, 12 November 2013, viewed 17/09/2020, <https://www.kuer.org/religion/2013-11-12/lds-opposition-to-same-sex-marriage-in-hawaii>

Anita Hofschneider, 'North Shore Races Heat Up as Election Nears', *Honolulu Civil Beat Website*, 31 October 2014, <https://www.civilbeat.org/2014/10/north-shore-races-heat-up-as-election-nears/>

⁶³² Hofschneider, 'North Shore Races Heat Up as Election Nears', *Honolulu Civil Beat Website*, 31 October 2014

⁶³³ 'LDS Opposition to Same-Sex Marriage in Hawai'i', *KUER Public Radio, Charter of National Public Radio*, 12 November 2013

⁶³⁴ 'LDS Opposition to Same-Sex Marriage in Hawai'i', *KUER Public Radio, Charter of National Public Radio*, 12 November 2013

⁶³⁵ 'LDS Opposition to Same-Sex Marriage in Hawai'i', *KUER Public Radio, Charter of National Public Radio*, 12 November 2013

In Australia, on both the 10th and 17th of September 2017, local ecclesiastical leaders read out a letter to members of each Australian congregation. This letter, sent from the Pacific Area Presidency, under the direction of Salt Lake City, read in part:

Because Australian adults will soon have the opportunity to participate in a postal vote on the legal definition of marriage, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints re-states and re-affirms that “marriage between a man and a woman is ordained of God and that the family is central to the Creator’s plan for the eternal destiny of His children.”

The Church also teaches that “children are entitled to birth within the bonds of matrimony, and to be reared by a father and a mother who honour marital vows with complete fidelity.”

We urge Church members to vote with their conscience and let their voices be heard on this critical issue.⁶³⁶

Evidently, this letter sought to convince members that they needed to vote in the upcoming non-compulsory postal survey and reiterated the Church’s belief in the divinity of heterosexual marriage. It is important to note, however, that the Church did attempt to present themselves as ‘politically neutral’, although this is dubious. Whilst it is not known how many Latter-day Saints voted in the same-sex marriage postal survey, the Church strongly encouraged its members to participate.

There were diverse public and cultural reactions to the Church’s opposition to the postal survey. For example, likely in response to the Church’s statements on same-sex marriage,

⁶³⁶ ‘News Release: Pacific Area Presidency Sends Letter to Australian Latter-day Saints on Marriage and Family’, *Church Newsroom Australia* Website, 12 September 2017, viewed 17/09/2020 <https://news-au.churchofjesuschrist.org/article/pacific-area-presidency-sends-letter-to-australian-latter-day-saints-on-marriage-and-family>

the Leura chapel, located in the New South Wales Blue Mountains, was vandalised.⁶³⁷ The *Australian* noted that the ‘architecturally significant’ chapel, designed by famous Australian architect Kenneth Frank Charles Woodley, had the words ‘Vote Yes’ graffitied over the building.⁶³⁸ Stephen Johnson of the *Daily Mail* claimed that the Leura chapel had been graffitied despite the Church not having ‘told its parishioners how to vote in the gay marriage postal survey.’⁶³⁹ Though not entirely accurate, the letter’s emphasis on the ‘divine nature’ of heterosexual marriage would have been well understood by parishioners. According to Johnson, one congregant at the Leura chapel posted on social media: ‘disgusting bullying tactics. Where’s the ‘love’ and ‘anti-discrimination’ that the Yes side are all about?’⁶⁴⁰

For context, other Christian denominations throughout Australia were also graffitied with slogans such as ‘Vote Yes’ and ‘Christians are Nazis’; the Waverley Baptist Church in Wheelers Hill was sprayed with the phrase ‘Crucify ‘No’ Voters.’⁶⁴¹ Graffiti and vandalism was not solely directed at opponents of same-sex marriage. During this same weekend

⁶³⁷ Stephen Johnson, “Disgusting Bullying Tactics’: Mormon Church Defaced with ‘Vote Yes’ Graffiti – Even Though It Hasn’t Told Worshippers to Vote Against Gay Marriage’, *Daily Mail United Kingdom Website*, 26 September 2017, viewed 21/09/2020

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-4917982/Mormon-church-sprayed-Vote-Yes-gay-marriage.html>; Stephen Johnson, “Christians are Nazis: Church Sprayed With Vile Graffiti Telling People to ‘Bash Bigots’ and ‘Crucify No Voters’”, *Daily Mail United Kingdoms Website*, 15 October 2017, viewed 21/09/2020, <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-4981608/Anglican-church-sprayed-Vote-Yes-bash-bigots.html>

⁶³⁸ Rebecca Urban and Tessa Akerman, ‘Yes Vote Graffiti on Church’, *The Australian Website*, 26 September 2017, viewed 21/09/2020

<https://www.theaustralian.com.au/news/nation/yes-vote-graffiti-sprayed-on-church/news-story/74bbc293360986c3c83de6f50056e550>

⁶³⁹ Johnson, “Disgusting Bullying Tactics’: Mormon Church Defaced with ‘Vote Yes’ Graffiti – Even Though It Hasn’t Told Worshippers to Vote Against Gay Marriage’, *Daily Mail United Kingdom Website*, 26 September 2017

⁶⁴⁰ Johnson, “Disgusting Bullying Tactics’: Mormon Church Defaced with ‘Vote Yes’ Graffiti – Even Though It Hasn’t Told Worshippers to Vote Against Gay Marriage’, *Daily Mail United Kingdom Website*, 26 September 2017

⁶⁴¹ Johnson, “Christians are Nazis: Church Sprayed With Vile Graffiti Telling People to ‘Bash Bigots’ and ‘Crucify No Voters’”, *Daily Mail United Kingdoms Website*, 15 October 2017

private properties and rainbow flags, symbolising support for the Yes Vote, in Victoria, New South Wales, and Queensland, were defaced with swastikas.⁶⁴² Nonetheless, during the tumultuous period in the lead up to the 2017 results of the postal survey on same-sex marriage, the Mormon Church was amongst those targeted by aggressive tactics that aimed to highlight their opposition.

It was not just the Church's stance on homosexuality, or their emphasis to members on the divine nature of heterosexual marriage, that involved the Church within the Australian postal survey debate. Further information regarding this case study has been gleaned from an interview with Dr. Neville Rochow, King's Counsel. Rochow was a prominent Latter-day Saint in Adelaide for most of his life, and has served various high-ranked ecclesiastical positions, including as the Church's representative to the European Union in Brussels.⁶⁴³ In early 2022, Rochow was featured on John Dehlin's *Mormon Stories* Podcast, where he discussed numerous aspects of his life in the Church, as well as the reasons for his recent disassociation from it.⁶⁴⁴ I interviewed Dr. Rochow in March 2022; his candid responses to my questions help to further contextualise the role that the Church had in fighting same-sex marriage in Australia, even before the postal survey had been announced. According to Dr. Rochow, he had been instrumental in the early 2010s in challenging efforts to legalise or advocate for same-sex marriage to various Parliaments around Australia.⁶⁴⁵ Either by himself, or with other like-minded (non-Mormon) barristers, Rochow claimed that he successfully challenged the Tasmanian

⁶⁴² Johnson, "Christians are Nazis': Church Sprayed With Vile Graffiti Telling People to 'Bash Bigots' and 'Crucify No Voters'", *Daily Mail United Kingdoms Website*, 15 October 2017

⁶⁴³ Brenton Griffin (interviewer), Interview With Neville Rochow, 26 March 2022

⁶⁴⁴ Griffin (interviewer), Interview With Neville Rochow, 26 March 2022

⁶⁴⁵ Griffin (interviewer), Interview With Neville Rochow, 26 March 2022

Parliament's attempt to broaden the definition of marriage.⁶⁴⁶ Although he acted as an individual and not as an official representative of the Church, Rochow stated that the hierarchy were aware of and encouraged his efforts.

The Church's use of individual Latter-day Saints, not in an official capacity but with the hierarchy's blessing, is an important tactic utilised throughout the Church's engagement with the State in various parts of the world, as has been shown previously; yet, historical happenstance was also important in this regards. Rochow reminisced how during the 2012 United States election campaign of Mitt Romney, a Latter-day Saint Republican who challenged Barack Obama, he was instructed to continue his individual efforts, but the Church did not want to be seen interfering with Australian politics. However, after Romney lost the election, Church leaders were eager to more directly attempt to sway political thought and opinion in Australia.⁶⁴⁷ To this end, Rochow facilitated a meeting in either 2014 or 2015 between Latter-day Saint Apostle Quentin L. Cook and the Catholic Archbishop of Sydney, Anthony Fischer. According to Rochow, Cook 'in no uncertain terms', stated that the Church was fully committed to halting same-sex marriage and sought an alliance with the Catholic Church in these efforts.⁶⁴⁸ It was during this time that Rochow, as a representative of the Church, further sought to collaborate with other anti-same-sex marriage advocates; this was heightened when the postal survey was officially announced in 2017. For instance, Rochow stated that the Church paid almost a million dollars (AUD) in a donation to the Australian Christian Lobby, headed by Lyle Shelton, in order to 'get a seat at the table' of the avid anti-same-sex marriage campaign.⁶⁴⁹ Rochow

⁶⁴⁶ Griffin (interviewer), Interview With Neville Rochow, 26 March 2022

⁶⁴⁷ Griffin (interviewer), Interview With Neville Rochow, 26 March 2022

⁶⁴⁸ Griffin (interviewer), Interview With Neville Rochow, 26 March 2022

⁶⁴⁹ Griffin (interviewer), Interview With Neville Rochow, 26 March 2022

claims that whilst the Australian Christian Lobby accepted the donation, there was nonetheless a strained relationship between the Latter-day Saints and other anti-same-sex marriage campaigners. Rochow articulated that those on the Australian Christian Lobby, including its head, Lyle Shelton, were doctrinally opposed and antagonistic towards Mormons, but nonetheless required their monetary donation. This clandestine donation suggests a desire to wield greater influence in the sexual politics of Australia from a distance, in order to reduce visibility and scrutiny of this controversial alliance.

When I asked Rochow about how much influence the Church had in Australian politics, his reply was that they were ‘wannabes’ who desired the political sway that the Church held within the United States.⁶⁵⁰ Rochow argued that this is due to the fact that Mormonism is a marginal, foreign religion in Australia, while it is a well-known, homegrown religion within America.⁶⁵¹ Differences in both the political and cultural landscapes of these nations mean that the direct influence over politics that the Church in America revels in is not readily translated within the Australian context. Nevertheless, Rochow maintains that the Church’s claim of ‘political neutrality’ is ‘utter bollocks’; he stated that whilst political direction is not shouted down from the pulpit, the institutional Church works tirelessly in order to increase their influence within Australia. As discussed elsewhere, this extends to the Church’s finances. The interview with Dr. Rochow was invaluable in contextualising the role of the Church during this tumultuous period of Australian political history from an insider’s perspective.⁶⁵² Rochow, both as an individual and as a representative of the church, worked to slow the legalisation of same-sex

⁶⁵⁰ Griffin (interviewer), Interview With Neville Rochow, 26 March 2022

⁶⁵¹ Griffin (interviewer), Interview With Neville Rochow, 26 March 2022

⁶⁵² Griffin (interviewer), Interview With Neville Rochow, 26 March 2022

marriage in Australia, and has admitted to the clandestine, albeit sanctioned, nature of his endeavours. What is also important here is that the Church has dedicated time, resources, and finances to increasing its political power within Australia. The same-sex marriage postal survey is perhaps the most prominent of these attempts.

In relation to this, in 2019 *The Sydney Morning Herald* published an article recounting the story of Brad Harker. Harker had left Mormonism as an adult, around the time of the postal survey, after accepting his homosexuality. He had been a missionary, married in the Temple, and had four children, yet had known about his sexuality since he was a teenager.⁶⁵³ Harker recalls that he was consistently ‘shamed’ by the Church, and told by leaders and faithful family to remain closeted. Journalist Ben Schneiders writes that for Harker,

The same-sex marriage debate was painful too, and Harker suffered at his Mormon father voting no: ‘It was an awful experience to have your family vote against who you are.’

But he had the support of his children and is married for a third time, to Scott, and last year led a float called the ‘Temple of Equality’ at Mardi Gras with 80 supporters, half of them Mormon.

They dressed in Mormon missionary attire with nametags reading “Elder Equality.” “It stood out as a sore thumb in the glam of Mardi Gras,” he says “My family hated it, my father. My brother supported me and attended the march.”⁶⁵⁴

This recounting of a Latter-day Saint family divided by the Same-Sex Marriage postal survey is revealing. It shows the way in which the doctrines and advocacy of the Church led to a breakdown in familial relations. Its reporting in the Australian media,

⁶⁵³ Schneiders, “Conditioned to Lying’: How Mormon Sexual Questioning is ‘Child Abuse’, *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 9 March 2019,

⁶⁵⁴ Schneiders, “Conditioned to Lying’: How Mormon Sexual Questioning is ‘Child Abuse’, *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 9 March 2019

represented a further enmeshment of the Church in Australian and New Zealand sexual politics, albeit through ex-Mormons. In this vein, the ‘Temple of Equality’ float has been a feature of the Sydney Mardi Gras since 2016, and is an indication of the way in which Mormonism, even its dissidents, have become more entangled in Australian culture. It is arguable that the overt opposition of the Church to the postal survey has led to a more vocal dissidence from queer ex-Mormons. This will be discussed further at the end of the chapter.

The International Response to Jacinda Ardern’s Disaffection, 2017

As stated in the previous chapter, an important indicator in how the Church and its beliefs regarding sexual politics have been represented in Australia and New Zealand, was how media responded to Jacinda Ardern’s public condemnation of homophobic Latter-day Saint doctrine. It is crucial here to articulate that, although the media discussion of this prominent ex-Mormon did produce increased visibility surrounding Latter-day Saint doctrines and beliefs, it was usually in a way that posited Ardern’s disaffection as a rejection of these marginal ideologies. Australian public broadcaster *SBS News*, for example, described Ardern’s opposition to gay conversion therapy and then noted that ‘Ms. Ardern was raised a Mormon but left the Church in her 20s in solidarity with friends.’⁶⁵⁵ Other articles within Australia, including an article by Matthew Wade for queer publication the *Star Observer*, follow a similar narrative: ‘having been raised in the Mormon Church, she said she began questioning her faith after living with three gay

⁶⁵⁵ ‘Jacinda Ardern Pledges Gay Conversion Therapy If Re-Elected’, *SBS News*, 05 October 2020, viewed 31/10/202 <https://www.sbs.com.au/news/jacinda-ardern-pledges-gay-conversion-therapy-ban-if-re-elected>

friends in a share house.’⁶⁵⁶ Jordan Hirst, writing for *QNews*, an Australian LGBTQIA+ publication, emphasised the importance of the 2003 film *Latter Days* on her Mormon beliefs. The film depicts a secret relationship between a Mormon missionary and an openly homosexual neighbour.⁶⁵⁷ The article summarised Ardern’s upbringing in the Church and quoted her as saying,

I still remember watching the film *Latter Days* at the film festival in Wellington some years ago. That film never left me... It’s one of the reasons I feel quite strongly about this policy... If we are able to form a government this will be on our agenda. I will commit our numbers to delivering this.⁶⁵⁸

This story was reported by news outlets *ABC News*, *Sydney Morning Herald*, and *Illawarra Mercury*.⁶⁵⁹ This dissidence from the Church over the issue of LGBTQIA+ recognition is important to note, as it illustrates the influence that Mormonism has had on the politics of New Zealand. Though this is through an ex-Mormon Prime Minister, Ardern herself has noted the formative role of religion on her own worldview.

⁶⁵⁶ Mathew Wade, ‘New Zealand’s New PM Left the Mormon Church Because She Supports Gay Rights’, *Star Observer* Website, 20 October 2017, viewed 31/10/2020

<https://www.starobserver.com.au/news/international-news-news/new-zealand-pm-mormon-church-gay-rights/163054>

⁶⁵⁷ Jordan Hirst, ‘Jacinda Ardern Vows to Ban Conversion Therapy if Re-Elected’, *QNews* Website, October 2020, viewed 31/10/2020

<https://qnews.com.au/jacinda-ardern-vows-to-ban-conversion-therapy-if-re-elected/>

⁶⁵⁸ Hirst, ‘Jacinda Ardern Vows to Ban Conversion Therapy if Re-Elected’, *QNews* Website, October 2020

⁶⁵⁹ Antony Green, ‘A Guide to the New Zealand Election and the MMP Electoral System’, *ABC News* Website, 23 September 2017, viewed 31/10/2020

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2017-09-22/new-zealand-election-guide/8967298?nw=0>; Ben McKay, ‘Ardern Pledges Conversion Therapy Ban’, *Illawarra Mercury* Website, 05 October 2020, viewed 31/10/2020

<https://www.illawarramercury.com.au/story/6954754/ardern-pledges-conversion-therapy-ban/>; Jeff Jeff Sparrow, ‘What Makes Jacinda Ardern Such A Special Political Presence’, *The Sydney Morning Herald* Website, 08 May 2020, viewed 31/10/2020

<https://www.smh.com.au/culture/books/what-makes-jacinda-ardern-such-a-special-political-presence-20200505-p54pzz.html>

Around the world, various news outlets and popular media discussed Ardern's Latter-day Saint upbringing. One of the most revealing is *Time Magazine's* November 2017 article about Ardern written by New Zealand writers Liam Fitzpatrick and Casey Quackenbush. This article not only described the success of the Ardern campaign and her achievement of being the world's youngest female leader at the time of her election, but also goes into depth about the history of Mormonism in New Zealand, as well as Ardern's own childhood.⁶⁶⁰ This representation of the Church by these New Zealand writers to a global, albeit United States-centric, audience is interesting; it is the narration of a faith that originated in the United States and became localised in New Zealand. This rich source shows the globalisation of the Church, and the varied means by which a religion can become localised.

Other United States publications, including but not limited to *CNN*, *The New York Times*, queer publication *Gay Star News*, and the Church-owned *Deseret News*, discussed Ardern's connection and dissociation from the Church.⁶⁶¹ One opinion piece for *The Salt Lake Tribune* lamented the fact that Ardern did not stay within the Church, using it to

⁶⁶⁰ Liam Fitzpatrick and Casey Quackenbush, 'Jacinda Ardern, New Zealand's 37-Year-Old Leader, Rolls Up Her Sleeves', *Time Magazine* Website, 20 November 2017, viewed 31/10/2020

<https://time.com/5028891/jacinda-ardern-worlds-youngest-female-leader-new-zealand/>

⁶⁶¹ 'New Zealand's New Prime Minister Left the Mormon Church Because She Believes in Gay Rights', *Gay Star News* Website, 19 October 2017, viewed 31/10/2020

<https://www.gaystarnews.com/article/new-zealands-new-prime-minister-left-the-mormon-church-because-she-believes-in-gay-rights/>; Damien Cave, 'Jacinda Ardern Sold A Socratic Lockdown With Straight Talk and Mom Jokes', *The New York Times* website, Updated 07 October 2020, viewed 31/10/2020

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/23/world/asia/jacinda-ardern-coronavirus-new-zealand.html>; David Noyce, 'Russell Nelson Meets With New Zealand's Prime Minister, Praises the Former Latter-day Saint as a Peacemaker', *The Salt Lake Tribune* Website, Updated 21 May 2019, viewed 31/10/2020

<https://www.sltrib.com/religion/2019/05/20/russell-nelson-meets-with/>; Julia Hollingworth, 'The Small-Town Takeout Store Worker Who Won Over New Zealand – And the World', *CNN World News* Website, Updated 12 October 2020, viewed 31/10/2020

<https://edition.cnn.com/2020/10/10/asia/jacinda-ardern-new-zealand-election-intl-hnk-dst/index.html>; Tad Walch, 'President Nelson Meets New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern, Says Church Will Donate to Mosque', *Deseret News* Website, 19 May 2019, viewed 31/10/2020

critique the Church's stance on LGBTQIA+ issues.⁶⁶² Similarly, publications in Great Britain, such as *BBC News*, *The Daily Mail*, and *The Independent*, all mentioned Ardern's former connection to the Church, as well as her exit due to the Church's doctrinal rejection of queer people.⁶⁶³ This is also the case for a number of Canadian news organisations, including *CTV News* and *The Toronto Star*.⁶⁶⁴ Within the Anglophone world, Jacinda Ardern and her religious upbringing as a Latter-day Saint has been represented within a plethora of news organisations. This representation mirrors the entrenchment of the Church in New Zealand, even global, politics. Though still a fringe religion, the election of Jacinda Ardern, and the subsequent media coverage surrounding her moral disaffection from Mormonism, placed the beliefs and doctrines of the Church directly into the mainstream. Important to note here, the tone of most publications was one of sympathy and admiration of Ardern for rejecting the homophobia of the Church. This media representation complicates the Church's existence in New Zealand. The global

⁶⁶² Jana Riess, 'Commentary: It's Mormonism's Loss That New Zealand's Dynamic Leader Couldn't Find A Home in the Faith', *The Salt Lake City Tribune*, 21 May 2019, viewed 31/10/2020, <https://www.sltrib.com/religion/2019/05/20/commentary-its-mormonisms/>

⁶⁶³ Jacinda Ardern: New Zealand's Prime Minister', *BBC News Website*, 17 October 2020, viewed 31/10/2020

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-54565381>; 'Jacinda Ardern Vows to Ban Gay Conversion Therapy in New Zealand and Reveals the One Film 'That Has Never Left Her'', *The Daily Mail Website*, 05 October 2020, viewed 31/10/2020, <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-8805173/Jacinda-Ardern-vows-ban-gay-conversion-therapy-New-Zealand.html>; Lydia Smith, 'New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern Left Mormon Church to Support LGBT Rights', *The Independent Website*, 21 October 2017, viewed 31 October 2020, <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/australasia/new-zealand-prime-minister-jacinda-ardern-quit-mormon-church-lgbt-rights-a8012676.html>

Jeff Wallenfeldt, 'Jacinda Ardern: Prime Minister of New Zealand', *Encyclopaedia Britannica Biographies Website*, Last Updated 21 October 2020, viewed 31/10/2020

<https://www.britannica.com/biography/Jacinda-Ardern>

⁶⁶⁴ Penny Collette, 'Jacinda Ardern's Inspiration in the Face of Terrorism', *The Star (Subsidiary of the Toronto Star) Website*, Updated 31 May 2019, viewed 31/10/2020

<https://www.thestar.com/opinion/star-columnists/2019/03/31/jacinda-arderns-inspiration-in-the-face-of-terrorism.html>; Brooklyn Neustaeter, 'Jacinda Ardern Admits to Past Cannabis Use During N.Z. Election Debate', *CTV News Website*, 30 September 2020, viewed 31/10/2020

<https://www.ctvnews.ca/world/jacinda-ardern-admits-to-past-cannabis-use-during-n-z-election-debate-1.5126416>

reporting of Ardern's clash over politics and belief painted the Church in an unfavourable light, but nevertheless cemented its complicated localisation in New Zealand.

Homophobia of Israel Folau, 2018-2021

One of the most controversial figures to be associated with Australian Mormonism is professional athlete Israel Folau. Folau grew up a Mormon but lost faith in his late teens, around the early 2010s, instead becoming a staunch evangelical Christian.⁶⁶⁵ Following a public disaffection from Mormonism, Folau and his family joined a Tongan-speaking congregation of the Assemblies of God, a Pentecostal sect.⁶⁶⁶ In an article for *The Australian* in 2011, when Folau was interviewed about joining the Australian Football League, Folau stated that

I had a personal experience with the holy spirit touching my heart. I've never felt that while I was involved in the Mormon Church – until I came to the AOG and accepted Christ. It's been an amazing experience for me personally and I know a lot of people on the outside have been saying stuff about why we left [the Mormon Church]... some people assuming that we left because of money... I know for myself that it wasn't.⁶⁶⁷

According to this interview, Folau had 'instigated the change himself after researching the history of Mormonism, and said the move was easy.'⁶⁶⁸ However, after a schism between the Folau family and the Assemblies of God, in 2013 Israel's father, Eni, founded

⁶⁶⁵ Rob Forsaith, 'Folau Content After Ditching Mormonism', *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 08 November 2011

<https://www.smh.com.au/sport/folau-content-after-ditching-mormonism-20111108-1n597.html>

⁶⁶⁶ 'New Faith for Folau in AFL', *The Australian*, Canberra, ACT, 09 November 2011, pp. 32

⁶⁶⁷ 'New Faith for Folau in AFL', *The Australian*, Canberra, ACT, 09 November 2011, pp. 32

⁶⁶⁸ 'New Faith for Folau in AFL', *The Australian*, Canberra, ACT, 09 November 2011, pp. 32

his own congregation in Kenthurst, New South Wales in 2013, called The Truth of Jesus Christ Church.⁶⁶⁹ In 2019, only thirty people, the majority family members of the Folaus, had joined this denomination; their severely fundamentalist worldview has caused the congregation to be labelled an ‘isolated hate group.’⁶⁷⁰

In 2019, Folau made a series of controversial homophobic and religiously conservative statements that caused the cancellation of his four-year, \$4 million contract with Australia’s national rugby union team the Wallabies.⁶⁷¹ For context, Folau had made similarly homophobic remarks before signing on with Rugby Australia; a clause was inserted in his contract that stated he would not make these publicly homophobic remarks on his social media.⁶⁷² Despite the clause, Folau publicly claimed that the devastating bushfires that had recently ravaged Australia were the result of ‘same-sex marriage and abortion.’⁶⁷³ He also stated that ‘hell awaits’ a whole host of supposed sinners, including ‘homosexuals, adulterers, liars, fornicators, thieves, atheists, [and] idolators.’⁶⁷⁴ According to the *Otago Daily Times*, Folau’s ‘church also preaches... that homosexuality is a sin “worthy of death”.’⁶⁷⁵ These comments understandably led to a

⁶⁶⁹ Kate McClymont, ‘Inside the Radical Beliefs of Folau Family Church’, *The Sydney Morning Herald*, New South Wales, 20 July 2019, pp. 12

⁶⁷⁰ ‘Isolated Hate Group’: Inside Israel Folau’s Radical Church’, *Otago Daily Times*, 20 July 2019
<https://www.odt.co.nz/sport/rugby/isolated-hate-group-inside-israel-folaus-radical-church>

⁶⁷¹ Shaun Giles, ‘Israel Folau’s Rugby Union Contract Terminated as Punishment for Players’ Code of Conduct Breach’, *ABC News*, 17 May 2019
<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2019-05-17/israel-folau-sacked-over-social-media-posts/11090938>

⁶⁷² Jamie Tarabay and Isabella Kwai, ‘How a Rugby Star’s Homophobic Posts Got Australians Arguing About Religion’, *The New York Times*, 01 July 2019
<https://nytimes.com/2019/07/01/world/australia/israel-folau-rugby-homophobic.html>

⁶⁷³ Jamie Pandaram, ‘I Won’t Make a Deal with the Devil’, *The Courier-Mail*, Brisbane, Queensland, 02 June 2019, pp. 17

⁶⁷⁴ McClymont, ‘Inside the Radical Beliefs of Folau Family Church’, *The Sydney Morning Herald*, New South Wales, 20 July 2019, pp. 12

⁶⁷⁵ Pandaram, ‘I Won’t Make a Deal with the Devil’, *The Courier-Mail*, Brisbane, Queensland, 02 June 2019, pp. 17

furor in large segments of Australian society.⁶⁷⁶ Whilst Folau was no longer a practicing Mormon, and had publicly severed his ties with the Church for at least a decade, his beliefs were shaped by Latter-day Saint doctrines in the first instance and then further hardened by a fundamentalist approach. While Mormonism is doctrinally homophobic, and Folau's background as a Latter-day Saint informed his worldview, it is also his involvement with his father's Truth of Jesus Christ Church that has further contributed to his outspoken homophobia.

Folau resisted the termination of his contract and sought legal advice. His lawyers argued that this 'issue was not just about saving a multi-million contract, but a crusade for the right to express his religious beliefs without discrimination.'⁶⁷⁷ Folau decided to sue Rugby Australia for \$14 million for breach of contract, receiving financial support for his legal fees from a grassroots campaign and assistance from the Australian Christian Lobby.⁶⁷⁸ Folau had support from some of his fellow athletes. For example, Taniela Topou published on his personal social media site:

Might as well sack me and all the other Pacific Islands rugby players around the world because we have the same Christian beliefs... I will never apologise for my faith and what I believe in, religion never had nothing to do with rugby anyways.⁶⁷⁹

⁶⁷⁶ 'Qantas CEO Breaks Silence on Israel Folau', *New Zealand Herald*, 10 May 2019

<https://www.nzherald.co.nz/sport/qantas-ceo-breaks-silence-on-israel-folau/XJH2ZRJJYO67JFLTFQ3MY3PXY/>

⁶⁷⁷ Bret Harris, 'Israel Folau's Fight for Religious Freedom Leaves Behind Ugly Mess', *The Guardian*, 18 May 2019

<https://www.theguardian.com/sport/2019/may/18/israel-folau-s-fight-for-religious-freedom-leaves-behind-ugly-mess>

⁶⁷⁸ Mark Jennings, 'Why did the Australian Christian Lobby Throw Their Unqualified Support Behind the Heterodox Israel Folau', *ABC News*, 9 December 2019

<https://www.abc.net.au/religion/the-australian-christian-lobby-and-the-heterodox-israel-folau/11776738>

⁶⁷⁹ 'Israel Folau Case Sparks Potential Wallabies Player Divide as Taniela Tupou Weighs In', *ABC News*, 1 May 2019

Although Folau's legal battle was ultimately mediated, the incident made national and global news, sparking a political and academic debate in Australia surrounding religion, public figures, and sport.⁶⁸⁰ Many publications noted this has been an uncomfortable process for Australians. Jamie Tarabay and Isabella Kwai, writing for *The New York Times*, indicated that Folau's actions meant that Australian sport, and in particular athletes, had become the focal point of recent 'culture wars.'⁶⁸¹ The Israel Folau story was reported on by queer-friendly publications, including QNews, in which Folau's religious beliefs, both as a Latter-day Saint and a Pentecostal, is mentioned.⁶⁸² Even the satirical news website

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2019-05-01/israel-folau-wallabies-player-divide-over-religious-beliefs/11061858>

⁶⁸⁰ 'Australia: Australian Sports Star Faces Dismissal Over Homophobic Slurs', *Asia News Monitor*, Bangkok, Thailand, 17 April 2019; 'Bill Shorten 'Uneasy' About Folau Sanction', *AAP General News Wire*, Sydney, New South Wales, 08 May 2019; Michael Coren, 'The Faith-Tarnishing Tragedy of Rugby's Israel Folau', *Maclean's*, Toronto, Canada, 19 April 2019; Julia Hollingsworth and Emily Dixon, 'Australian Rugby Star Israel Folau set to get Dumped over Homophobic Social Media Posts', *CNN Wire*, 11 April 2019; Rhiannon Hoyle, 'Australian Rugby Star's Anti-Gay Post Exposes Fault Lines Over Religious Freedom', *Wall Street Journal*, New York, 30 June 2019; Rhiannon Hoyle, 'Australian Rugby Star's Firing Sparks Debate', *Dow Jones International News*, New York, 01 July 2019; Paul Karp, 'Israel Folau's Beliefs Are Ugly But Censoring Him Will Not Weed Out Homophobia', *The Guardian*, London, England, 10 April 2018; Isabella Kwai, 'As New York Celebrates Pride, Australia Debates Freedom', *The New York Times*, New York, 27 June 2019; Isabella Kwai and Jamie Tarabay, 'Rugby Star Starts Fight on Religion and Speech', *New York Times*, New York, 02 July 2019; Jaquelyn Osborne and Chelsea Litchfield, 'Social Media and Free Speech: The Case of Israel Folau and Rugby Australia', *International Journal of Sport and Society*, Volume 12, Issue 2, 2021, pp. 45; Michael Pelly and David Marin-Guzman, 'PM Dragged into Folau Saga', *The Australian Financial Review*, Melbourne, Victoria, 18 May 2019; Rosie Perper, 'One of the World's Top Rugby Players is Fighting to Keep His Job After Saying that 'Hell Awaits' Gay People', *Business Insider*, 17 April 2019; Tom Rabe, 'I Stand With Israel Folau: Mark Latham', *AAP General News Wire*, Sydney, New South Wales, 08 May 2019

John Roskam, 'Folau Sets Minefield for Bosses', *The Australian Financial Review*, Melbourne, Victoria, 07 May 2019; Sally Rugg, 'Freedom of Speech does not Preclude Israel Folau from Consequences', *The Guardian (U.K.)*, London, 12 April 2019; Jamie Smyth, 'Rugby Australia Sacks Folau After Homophobic Instagram Post', *Financial Times*, London, U.K., 17 May 2019; Jay Daniel Thompson, 'Freedom of Speech is Not Freedom from Ethics: the 2019 Israel Folau Media Controversy as a Case Study', *Media International Australia*, Volume 181, Issue 1, 2021, 87-102; Patrick Walsh and Tiffany Walsh, 'Folau v Rugby Australia: Protecting a Business' Brand in the Age of Social Media', *Bulletin (Law Society of South Australia)*, Volume 41, Issue, 6, 01 July 2019, pp. 12 – 13; John Wilson and Kieran Pender, 'Free Speech at Work: Folau, Banerji, and Beyond?' *Ethos (The Law Society of the Australian Capital Territory)*, Issue 255, Autumn 2020, pp. 30-36; Graham Young, 'Folau Issue Leaves Libs Mid-Field, as Free Speech Curbs Reflect Labor's Culture War Win', *CE Think Tank Newswire*, Miami, Florida, 07 May 2019

⁶⁸¹ Tarabay and Kwai, 'How a Rugby Star's Homophobic Posts Got Australians Arguing About Religion', *The New York Times*, 01 July 2019

⁶⁸² Destiny Rogers, 'Folau's Truth of Jesus Christ Church an 'Isolated Church'', *QNews*, 20 July 2019 <https://qnews.com.au/folaus-truth-of-jesus-christ-church-an-isolated-hate-group/>; Destiny Rogers, 'Israel 'Hellfire' Folau's Sunday Sermon – More of the Usual', *QNews*, 17 June 2019

The Betoota Advocate covered the story, lightly suggesting that ‘the Mormon Church [were] glad they let this one [Folau] go through the keeper’, before stating that ‘Folau, a staunch Pentecostal Christian who converted from the Mormon Church around about the time where most young men would have to sacrifice [two years] to go on a mission.’⁶⁸³ Thus, this association of Mormonism with Folau, even though he had distanced himself from the religion, has not only been discussed in serious commentary surrounding the controversy, but also broader Australian culture.

In May 2023, the *ABC* released a two-part documentary series about Israel Folau and his fall from Rugby Australia.⁶⁸⁴ This documentary is a nuanced and thoughtful source that looks at the intersection of sexuality, faith, race, and multiculturalism within Australia; the documentary argues Folau’s homophobia became a ‘flashpoint’ of these competing identities and realities. Importantly, the documentary mostly focused on first-hand accounts, including interviews from rugby players and coaches, queer activists, journalists, Pasifika people, faithful Christians, and lawyers. As part of the contextualisation of Folau’s actions, the documentary features the Folau’s former Latter-day Saint bishop, Salesi Tupou, who describes his interactions with the Folau family. Importantly, Tupou explains that Eni Folau had served in various leadership capacities in the Church both in Tonga and Western Sydney, before the family’s break from it in

<https://qnews.com.au/israel-hellfire-folaus-sunday-sermon-in-fathers-church-fire-and-brimstone-qm-magazine/>

⁶⁸³ Clancy Overall, ‘Mormon Church Glad They Let This One Go Through to the Keeper’, *The Betoota Advocate*, 2019

<https://www.betootaadvocate.com/headlines/mormon-church-glad-they-let-this-one-go-through-to-the-keeper/>

⁶⁸⁴ ‘Folau: Episode 1’, *ABC*, May 2023

<https://iview.abc.net.au/show/folau>

2009.⁶⁸⁵ Whilst the inclusion of Tupou is rather brief, he does provide an insight into Folau's life in the Mormon Church, as well as Eni's fundamentalist views even at this point. Interestingly, in response to Folau's condemnation of homosexuality, Tupou emphatically claims he is 'not a judge, that is not his role.'⁶⁸⁶ This framing of the Mormons as less fanatical than the Truth of Jesus Christ Church, founded by Eni, and in which Folau has been involved, is important. It shows this differentiation, at least from the view of the documentary, between Folau's Latter-day Saint upbringing and his more recent fanaticism. Thus, whilst Israel Folau's homophobia and public dismissal from Rugby did not occur when he was a faithful Mormon, media outlets around the world have emphasised his Latter-day Saint upbringing. This framing by media outlets situates Mormonism's homophobia at the centre of a public furore, which is part of a larger story about the sometimes competing identities and experiences of faith, multiculturalism, free speech, and sexuality in Australia.

Peacock Mormons, 2023

In March 2023, Australian state-broadcaster *ABC*, as part of the series *Compass*, discussed the experiences of queer Latter-day Saint and former Mormons, who, since 2018, have appeared at Mardi Gras under the banner of the 'Peacock Mormons.'⁶⁸⁷ Led by Brad Harker and his husband Scott, this documentary looks at the emergence of a queer ex-Mormon identity and community that has developed within Australia.⁶⁸⁸ At the forefront

⁶⁸⁵ 'Folau: Episode 1', *ABC*, May 2023

<https://iview.abc.net.au/show/folau>

⁶⁸⁶ 'Folau: Episode 2', *ABC*, May 2023

<https://iview.abc.net.au/show/folau>

⁶⁸⁷ 'Series 37, Episode 2: Peacock Mormons', *Compass on ABC*, March 2023

<https://iview.abc.net.au/show/compass/series/37/video/RN2211H002S00>

⁶⁸⁸ 'Series 37, Episode 2: Peacock Mormons', *Compass on ABC*, March 2023

of this, the Peacock Mormons have sought to reclaim part of their religious identity. The documentary episode delves into Brad Harker's life as a staunch Mormon, realising he was homosexual at a young age, seeking to 'pray away the gay', his missionary experience, marriage in a Mormon Temple, having children and finally coming out in his mid-30s.⁶⁸⁹ It further discusses Latter-day Saint doctrine on homosexuality, positioning the stance as hypocritical; for example, the Church's view that homosexuality is permissible if a person remains celibate. Harker emphasises however, that by being in a homosexual relationship Mormon doctrine dictates that that person would not be able to be with their family in the afterlife.

One of the programme's other interviewees, Kira had grown up in a different Christian religion, come out as lesbian, and then joined the Mormon Church as a late teen.⁶⁹⁰ Kira described the experience of the baptismal interview questions, conducted by the missionaries, and what happened when she answered to the affirmative of having been in a same sex relationship. Latter-day Saint practice then dictates that a higher-ranking ecclesiastical authority, such as the Mission President, has to conduct a secondary interview that includes far more invasive questions, such as, if she had committed bestiality, if she had molested a child, and if she herself had been molested as a child, amongst other questions.⁶⁹¹ Despite the conflicting aspects of her identity, Kira went on a mission and later became engaged to a faithful Latter-day Saint man. Ultimately, she left the relationship and the Church due to her sexuality. As an interesting aside, Kira notes that she was worried that she would be excommunicated for participating in the

⁶⁸⁹ 'Series 37, Episode 2: Peacock Mormons', *Compass on ABC*, March 2023

⁶⁹⁰ 'Series 37, Episode 2: Peacock Mormons', *Compass on ABC*, March 2023

⁶⁹¹ 'Series 37, Episode 2: Peacock Mormons', *Compass on ABC*, March 2023

programme. The episode similarly interviews others who have not been Mormon, but are drawn to the Peacock Mormons' unique perspective, such as a Muslim man, Ratmin, from Iran, and two queer men who believe in God, but are drag queens.⁶⁹²

Perhaps the most interesting aspect of the Peacock Mormons, however, is the reclamation and usage of Mormon imagery in Sydney's Mardi Gras. For example, in 2018, at the first Peacock Mormon float, dozens of former and current queer Mormons dressed in the traditional black and white missionary uniform, with ties and name badges that read 'Elder Equality', as seen above.⁶⁹³ This indicates crucial elements that can be unpacked. For one, the reclamation of Mormon identity, even if it is through a complicated combination with spirituality, is evidenced. Second, the utilisation of the 'Mormon image' of the missionary, at Mardi Gras, can be read as an intersection of faith, sexuality, representation, marginalisation, and integration. This visual, of queer ex-Mormons reclaiming some aspect of their identity through the donning of missionary attire, shows a fascinating deviation of the standard Latter-day Saint representation by broader Australian media. Importantly, this documentary and the visibility of the Peacock Mormons has been reported on in more mainstream media, as well as LGBTQIA+ publications.⁶⁹⁴ In this *Compass* series, the national broadcaster has publicised the

⁶⁹² 'Series 37, Episode 2: Peacock Mormons', *Compass on ABC*, March 2023

⁶⁹³ Nick Baker, 'Brad Found Himself 'Living a Lie' as a Missionary. Now He Celebrates His Sexuality as a Peacock Mormon', *ABC Radio National*, 4 March 2021

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2021-03-04/peacock-mormons-celebrate-sexuality-at-mardi-gras/13209996>

⁶⁹⁴ 'Brad Harker', *LGBTI Conversations Podcast*, updated 2023

<https://lgbticonversations.com/brad-harker/>

Madelaine Achenza, 'Reformed Mormon Missionary, Now Star of Mardi Gras Parade', *The West Australian*, 04 March 2022

<https://thewest.com.au/news/rainbows-always-follow-rain-sydney-mardi-gras-launched-c-5928073>;

Madelaine Achenza, 'Reformed Mormon Missionary, Now Star of Mardi Gras Parade', *The Australian*, 04 March 2022

nuances and complexities of the LGBTQIA+ Mormon experience within Australia. At its core, the documentary presents a complicating of the Australian Mormon identity, and the unique place of the religion within Australia's sexual politics.

Conclusion

Since the turn of the twenty-first century, there has been an increase in the Church's influence on the sexual politics of Australia and New Zealand. This has been seen in the Church's efforts to become involved with the broader Christian-right's efforts in the 'No Campaign' during the Australian same-sex marriage postal survey. Though this alliance was strained, it does represent a pivot towards more confidence by the institutional Church to enforce its doctrines globally. As has been seen, however, this is part of a global strategy that has been employed by the Church in order to maintain what is perceived in Latter-day Saint cosmology as the sanctity of heterosexual marriage, particularly in the United States. As the Church has become more localised within Australia and New Zealand, there has been a more open involvement in the politics of these nations. This has resulted in backlash that has manifested in numerous ways. For example, during the same-sex marriage postal survey, Latter-day Saint chapels in Australia were vandalised for the Church's active opposition to the 'Yes Campaign', as evidenced by pastoral letters.

<https://www.theaustralian.com.au/breaking-news/rainbows-always-follow-rain-sydney-mardi-gras-launched/news-story/4e339fe717d0d931b1210e65b06d437f>; Jordan Hirst, 'Gay Couple Brad and Scott, Faces of 'Yes' Vote, Marry in Brisbane', *QNews*, 17 September 2018
<https://qnews.com.au/brad-and-scott-the-gay-couple-who-went-viral-on-yes-day-have-wed-in-brisbane/>; Jeremy Fernandez, 'Growing Up in the Mormon Church, Zaide was told his father was 'the Worst Thing You Could Be'', *ABC Radio National*, 26 March 2023
<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2023-03-26/compass-peacock-mormon-missionary-lgbt-coming-out/102107396>; Destiny Rogers, 'Peacock Mormons Doco with Jeremy Fernandez', *QNews*, 26 March 2023
<https://qnews.com.au/peacock-mormons-doco-with-jeremy-fernandez/>

Moreover, in this context Australian media understandably criticised the Church's claims of political neutrality in the realm of sexual politics.

An important distinction, however, is that there have also been individual Latter-day Saints who have become involved in the sexual politics of Australia and New Zealand. Though not officially condoned or supported by the Church, their activism has been informed by Mormon doctrine and in some cases encouraged by the Church. Two key examples of this are Marijke Rancie and Dr. Ivan Stratov. Rancie has been active in challenging the Safe School Programs, as well as the same-sex marriage postal survey. Rancie has similarly been involved within broader right-wing Christian programs, such as the Church and State Summit and George Christensen's podcast. In a similar vein, Stratov was involved in anti-abortion and anti-euthanasia politics within Victoria, before becoming involved with the Victorian Liberal Party. This involvement of individual Latter-day Saints in activism promoting conservative sexual politics is essential to the themes of this dissertation. The more confident activism in regards to sexual politics in Australia and New Zealand represents a more thorough visibility, although with a continual peripherality, of the religion and its adherents within the broader societies of these nations, in particular in the realm of sexual politics. It has been argued, however, that this increased visibility is not necessarily a sign of broader acceptance, but rather could be viewed as the Church's efforts to become more mainstream within Australia's multicultural, secular society.

Further complicating this account of sexual politics, is the involvement of ex-Mormons within the public sphere of Australia and New Zealand. This has been most evident from

individuals such as Sue-Ann Post and Brad Harker who have retained or reclaimed part of their Latter-day Saint identity in their pro-LGBTQIA+ activism. The nuanced and complex identity adopted by these individuals has been reported on widely throughout various media. As part of this reporting, more intimate doctrines of the Church, such as their stance on homosexuality, have received widespread attention. In the case of Israel Folau, his upbringing in Mormonism has been reported on throughout the world and interpreted as an essential aspect of his public anti-LGBTQIA+ stance. This has even been emphasised in the *Folau* documentary in which the Folau's former Latter-day Saint bishop, Salesi Tupou, was interviewed. However, the framing of the Latter-day Saints as more tolerant and accepting than Folau's fundamentalist The Truth of Jesus Christ Church suggests the divergent ways in which the media has represented Mormonism's sexual politics. Thus, the distinction between the institutional Church, individual members and ex-Mormons shows the complex and varied way in which Mormonism has become involved within the sexual politics of Australia and New Zealand. This has mirrored its further, although complicated and not unchallenged, syncretisation and entanglement within these nations.

CHAPTER VII

'You've Seen The Musical, Now Read the Book'¹:

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Mormonism in Twenty-First Century Australian & New Zealand

Popular Culture and Mass Media

Introduction

The final chapter of this dissertation will examine the way in which the Church and its members have become entwined within popular culture in Australia and New Zealand. This has become more apparent during the last few decades, and represents some of the distinct ways in which the Church has been localised in these two nations. It will reinforce the overarching argument of this dissertation, and evaluate how Latter-day Saints and their religion have been represented in the media and received by broader society. It will argue that whilst the Church has become more visible within public consciousness through this popular culture, it remains a marginal spirituality, particularly in Australia, but also to an extent in New Zealand. This chapter will include an examination of aspects of popular culture that show both the broader integration of the religion on the one hand, with the continued peripheral nature of Mormonism on the other. In particular, the way in which the Church and its adherents have grappled with mass-consumption of popular representations of themselves within media in the modern era will be at the forefront of

¹ Alina Eacott, 'The Book of Mormon Musical Destined for Adelaide and Brisbane After Runs in Melbourne, Sydney', *ABC News* website, 1 August 2018, viewed 17/01/2022
<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2018-08-01/book-of-mormon-destined-for-adelaide/10061318>

this final chapter, and argues this era has been difficult for the Church to navigate. This unofficial representation reiterates and reinforces historic marginalisation, and presents a difficult relationship between Mormonism and the broader societies of Australia and New Zealand. This relationship reflects a more nuanced localisation of the religion: rather than increased visibility through the efforts of the Church, for example the building of Temples and proselytisation, it is instead at this intersection of mass media and representation. Key case studies that will be examined throughout this chapter that speak to this theme include the *Book of Mormon Musical* and the documentaries *Shaun Micallef's Stairway to Heaven* and *Christians Like Us*, both of which were produced by Australian broadcaster SBS. In earlier periods, as discussed, there are examples of popular culture representations of Mormons, for example *The Mormon Maid*, examined in Chapter 2. However, the period since 2010, a time of intense mass media, has brought with it a greater number of depictions of Mormonism. Due to this, though there has been a shift in how the Church is represented and presented, marginalisation remains.

Building upon these case studies, this chapter argues that Australian and New Zealand popular perceptions of Mormonism continue to be shaped through interactions with media or ex-Mormons, rather than directly with Latter-day Saints or the institutional Church. This dichotomy is important. Although there has been a more thorough integration of the religion in the public consciousness and culture in the last decade, it has not been through official Church representation. Speaking to this theme, this chapter will discuss the success of former and current Latter-day Saints in Australia's underground music industry, such as the 'drill' collective OneFour. To contextualise, this chapter will similarly discuss the media's attention on violent criminality that is

associated not only with these musicians, but also has been associated with Mormonism and its adherents in more recent years. In addition, this chapter will discuss the way in which Mormonism has become a linguistic trope within Australia's underground music industry, with references to unique Mormon culture utilised by artists. It is asserted that this represents a further integration and localisation of Mormonism within popular culture in twenty-first century Australia and New Zealand. This chapter also discusses a documentary created by the Church in 2022, *Building For Eternity*, focussed on the construction of the Hamilton Temple, Church College, and Temple View Village. This documentary has been analysed within this chapter, rather than in Chapter 4, as it is a cultural artefact in which the Church has sought to reclaim its own narrative within the age of mass media. As argued, however, the audience of this film is not the broader public, but instead Mormonism's own adherents.

This chapter is situated within a broader literature of how religions have been represented within popular culture, whether through theatre, documentaries, or music. Common threads within this research suggest that, carrying from the themes of the previous chapters, the way in which religion and spirituality are portrayed through popular culture and media can vary from the sacrilegious to the faith-promoting.² Though

² See, for example:

Dan Clanton and Terry Clark, *Understanding Religion and Popular Culture; Theories, Themes, Products, and Practices*, New York: Routledge Publishing 2012; Elizabeth Coody, Dan Clanton Jr., Terry Clark (eds.), *Understanding Religion and Popular Culture*, Abingdon: Routledge Publishing, 2023; Ann Hardy, 'Hidden Gods – Religion, Spirituality and Recent New Zealand Cinema', *Studies in Australasian Cinema*, Volume 6, Issue 1, 2012, pp. 11-27; Peter Horsfield, 'Down the Tube: Religion on Australian Commercial Television', *Media International Australia Incorporating Culture and Policy*, Volume 121, Issue 1, 2006, pp. 136-148 ; John Lyden and Eric Mazur, *The Routledge Companion to Religion and Popular Culture*, New York: Routledge, 2015; Anthony Lambert and Holly Randell-Moon, 'Imaging Religion and Spirituality: An Introduction', *Studies in Australasian Cinema*, Volume 6, Issue 1, 2012, pp. 3-10; Brigit Meyer and Annelies Moors, *Religion, Media, and the Public Sphere*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006; Louisa Mitchell and Michael Samuel (eds.), *Streaming and Screen in Asia-Pacific*, Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave

these sources do not mention Mormonism specifically, the overarching themes are useful for situating the religion within the popular culture of Australia and New Zealand. However, as Terry Ray articulates, both popular culture and religion are in constant dialogue and interaction, and, arguably, one cannot exist without the other.³ Using this theory, these cultural texts would be non-existent within Australia and New Zealand if Mormonism was non-existent in public consciousness. Thus, this chapter argues that though Mormonism is still a peripheral religion within both Australia and New Zealand, its consistent portrayal in popular culture indicates the way in which it has become more syncretised and entangled within these two nations. As will be addressed in this chapter, this has not only been through the portrayals of Mormonism, but also the actions of former or current Latter-day Saints in Australian and New Zealand popular culture. Thus, as Mormonism becomes more firmly established in the public consciousness, and whilst there is a begrudged acceptance of the religion and its adherents within broader Australian and New Zealand culture, it is nonetheless a marginal religion in the broader societal landscape of these nations.

With this, scholarship exists surrounding how Mormonism more broadly has been represented in popular culture. Brenda Weber, for instance, examines the way in which the conservative dogmas and culture of the Church have come under increased scrutiny due, in part, to the numerous television shows, movies, and theatrical productions that lambast Mormon beliefs and even adherents.⁴ Weber further argues that more recent

Macmillan, 2022; Enqi Weng and Anna Halafoff, 'Media Representations of Religion, Spirituality, and Non-Religion in Australia', *Religions*, Volume 11, Issue 7, 2020, pp. 332

³ Terry Ray Clark, 'Introduction', in Coody, Clanton Jr., and Clark (eds.), *Understanding Religion and Popular Culture*, pp. 10-12

⁴ Brenda Weber, *Latter-day Screens: Gender, Sexuality, and Mediated Mormonism*, Durham: Duke University Press, 2019

popular culture trends, such as social media and podcasts, have democratised the criticism of the Church, and provided a host of cultural texts that can be analysed.⁵ Other scholars have examined specific case studies, such as the pervasiveness of Latter-day Saint caricatures in various popular culture texts in the United States, as in Mark Decker and Michael Austin (eds.) *Peculiar Portrayals: Mormons on the Page, Stage, and Screen*.⁶ Discussing a distinctive thread of Mormon portrayals, Patrick Mason has similarly chronicled the consistent trope of violence and fanaticism that has, both contemporarily and historically, featured so heavily in the perception of Latter-day Saints in global popular culture. Similarly, Julie Allen has examined the impact of Mormonism on Danish cultural identity, in her book *Danish, But Not Lutheran*; this source includes a chapter that examined the 'provocative portrayals' of Latter-day Saints in late nineteenth and twentieth century Danish popular culture.⁷ Allen argues that popular representations of Mormonism, by the turn of the twentieth century, reduced in theological denunciations and warnings for Danish women against polygamy and migration to Utah (though these still did exist), to more entertainment-focused satire of unique Mormon peculiarities and culture. Allen compares, for example, the theatrical plays and *skillviser* ('penny songs' or 'penny ballads') that were popular during this time in Danish culture, featured mockery of Mormon beliefs and culture with a comparable intent and method of *The Book of Mormon Musical*.⁸ This chapter is somewhat modelled on this particular idea, and argues that by the twenty-first century, bar some notable exceptions that will be discussed, popular culture representations of Mormonism have largely shifted away from theological and religious-based condemnations, to a more satirical mockery of unique

⁵ Weber, *Latter-day Saint Screens*, pp. 14-17

⁶ Mark Decker and Michael Austin, *Peculiar Portrayals: Mormons on the Page, Stage, and Screen*, Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2010

⁷ Allen, *Danish, But Not Lutheran*, pp. 130-183

⁸ Allen, *Danish, But Not Lutheran*, pp. 132

peculiarities and cultural differences perceived to be distinctly 'Mormon.'⁹ Thus, this chapter will seek to expand upon these two threads of literature, and place Mormonism within broader discussions of religious portrayal and representation in contemporary Australian and New Zealand popular culture, as well as the transnational links of these portrayals. This chapter contends that a survey of popular culture representations of Mormonism, as with Temple building and interactions with the state and politics, is another way in which both the visibility and marginalisation of the religious minority has increased.

The Book of Mormon Musical

Perhaps the most evident of the ways in which Mormonism has become ingrained in Australian and New Zealand popular culture was the success of *The Book of Mormon Musical*. In the mid-2010s, *The Book of Mormon Musical* came to Australian and New Zealand shores, sparking an intense media frenzy that discussed not only the actual show, but the religion that had inspired it. It is hard to convey the surrealism of seeing *The Book of Mormon Musical* as a former Latter-day Saint. I attended the show in Adelaide in 2018, along with my father and brother, both of whom had also become disillusioned with our religion. To sit, surrounded by thousands of people, and have actors make light of previously sacred beliefs was not the cathartic experience I had expected it to be. The well-constructed jokes at the expense of Latter-day missionaries, culture, and doctrines

⁹ Patrick Q Mason, *Mormonism and Violence: The Battles of Zion*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019

perhaps only added to the confusion that I felt at the end of the show. I was not alone in this, as both my brother and father were also somewhat uncomfortable afterwards; the array of insular references was clearly constructed by someone with intimate knowledge of Latter-day Saint doctrine and culture. It was shocking to see the missionaries sitting in their 'garments' at the end of the day; though this was a familiar yet mundane occurrence on both mine and my father's missions, it is a part of the secret-sacred aspect of Mormonism.

The immensely successful Broadway musical debuted in 2011, but was first staged in Australia in Melbourne in 2017, before going on to Sydney, Adelaide, Perth, Brisbane, and finally Auckland in 2020. The response from the general public was enormous; by the end of its run in Australia, the show had broken numerous Australian theatre records, including for attendance, and had been performed over one thousand times; tens of thousands of Australians thus came into contact with Mormonism through this production.¹⁰ Just as essential, however, was the way in which the show was both advertised and discussed in the media. Moreover, the official reaction from the Church is important to the overarching themes of this dissertation. This case study will explore how Mormonism has been represented and received by the societies of both Australia and New Zealand, and how the Church has responded.

¹⁰ A. A. Cristi, 'Final Tickets Released for *The Book of Mormon Musical* Australian Tour', *Broadway World Australia* Website, 4 December 2019, viewed 15/01/2022
<https://www.broadwayworld.com/australia-melbourne/article/Final-Tickets-Released-For-THE-BOOK-OF-MORMON-Australian-Tour-Must-Close-14-February-20191204>

In analysing the reception of the Musical in Australia, it is critical to note that the late 2010s were a crucial era in broader Australian debates over the role and place of religion in an ostensibly secular nation. In 2018, Scott Morrison, a devout Pentecostal Christian, was elected Prime Minister of Australia: in response, he stated after his successful campaign that he was called to do 'God's work' as head of the nation.¹¹ Morrison, though voted out at the next election, attempted to pass a controversial 'Religious Discrimination Bill.' Opponents to this heavily debated bill feared that it would add further discrimination, by allowing legally-protected discrimination, if articulated within the context of religious belief.¹² Ironically, the Bill was reportedly shelved by Morrison's own government in 2022, after pressure from the Australia Christian Lobby, who stated that amendments made to the Bill were unacceptable.¹³ Thus, the success of *The Book of Mormon Musical*, and the ensuing visibility of Mormonism, came at a time of increased debate surrounding the role of religion in contemporary Australian society and politics. Arguably, the wildly successful nature of this Musical, that satirised key tenets and experiences of Mormons and their religion, indicates the marginal nature of the religion within Australia.

¹¹ Sarah Martin, 'Scott Morrison Tell Christian Conference He Was Called to do God's Work As Prime Minister', *The Guardian*, 26 April 2021

<https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2021/apr/26/scott-morrison-tells-christian-conference-he-was-called-to-do-gods-work-as-prime-minister>

¹² 'Explainer: What Happened to the Religious Discrimination Bill', *Australian Human Rights Institute (UNSW)*, n.d.

<https://www.humanrights.unsw.edu.au/research/commentary/explainer-what-happened-religious-discrimination-bill>

¹³ Sarah Martin and Paul Karp, 'Coalition Shelves Religious Discrimination Bill After Christian Lobby Says Changes do 'More Harm Than Good'', *The Guardian*, 10 February 2022

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/feb/10/coalition-shelves-religious-discrimination-bill-after-christian-lobby-says-changes-do-more-harm-than-good>

Advertisements for the staging of the Musical are a significant historical artefact, as these produced numerous reactions from media outlets and the Church itself. Beginning in Melbourne, whenever the show came to a city, there were posters plastered proclaiming ‘The Mormons Are Coming!’:

According to *ABC News*, the Church was ‘creative in its response’ to *The Book of Mormon Musical*. For example, in Melbourne, the Church ‘ran advertising in some of the city’s busiest locations and prime-time TV advertising, with slogans like “you’ve seen the show, now read the book.”’¹⁴ This is similar to the reactions of the Church in other countries such as the United States and Britain where *The Book of Mormon Musical* has been performed. For the showing in New York, Los Angeles, and London the Church advertised in the Musical’s playbill.¹⁵ This joviality has undoubtedly been to the Church’s advantage; multiple Australian news agencies reported their surprise and approval at the light-hearted nature of the Church’s reaction.¹⁶ Journalist Peter Goers, discussed in the previous chapter, is one such journalist who was impressed with this response.¹⁷ However, as well as a relaxed reaction, the Church utilised the popularity of the Musical to increase their evangelical efforts. For instance, in the major cities of Melbourne and Sydney, the Church became creative with their proselyting. Giant Books of Mormon, accompanied by missionaries, were set up in both Liverpool City Centre and Federation

¹⁴ Eacott, ‘The Book of Mormon Musical Destined for Adelaide and Brisbane After Runs in Melbourne, Sydney’, *ABC News* website, 1 August 2018, viewed 17/01/2022

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2018-08-01/book-of-mormon-destined-for-adelaide/10061318>

¹⁵ Jordan Lee, ‘LDS Church Advertises with ‘The Book of Mormon’ Musical’, *The Daily Universe (BYU)* website, 18 September 2012, viewed 17/01/2022,

<https://universe.byu.edu/2012/09/18/lds-church-joins-with-book-of-mormon-musical/>

¹⁶ Peter Walker, ‘Book of Mormon Not a Problem for the Latter-day Saints’, *The Guardian*, 08 April 2013, viewed 12/02/2022

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/apr/07/book-mormon-musical-south-park>

¹⁷ Griffin (interviewer), *Interview With Peter Goers*, 12 June 2021

Square respectively. Interestingly, the Book of Mormon in Federation Square was 'set up... opposite St Paul's Cathedral.'¹⁸

These encouraged people to approach the missionaries and discuss their faith, as well as disperse the myths surrounding the religion, some of which were supposedly spread by *The Book of Mormon Musical*.¹⁹ The Church also pre-emptively launched an online and social media campaign to capitalise on the publicity garnered by the Musical. One of the most prominent was to publish several videos that showed Australian Latter-day Saints discussing their faith. Famous rugby player Will Hopoate shared how the Book of Mormon had helped him to make difficult life decisions, one of which was to refuse to play national rugby on Sundays in order to uphold his religious tenets.²⁰ This coordinated media response from the Church in response to the *Book of Mormon Musical* within the

¹⁸ 'The Big Book of Mormon Returns to Melbourne's Federation Square', *Church News Australia*, 03 March 2017, viewed 17/01/2022

<https://news-au.churchofjesuschrist.org/article/the-big-book-of-mormon-returns-to-melbournes-federation-square>; 'Sydney Latter-day Saints Have Their Say on the Book of Mormon', *Church News Australia*, 15 March 2018, viewed 17/01/2022

<https://news-au.churchofjesuschrist.org/article/sydney-latter-day-saints-have-their-say-on-the-book-of-mormon>; Margaret Burin, 'What Real Australian Mormons Think About the Book of Mormon Musical', *ABC News* website, 04 February 2017, viewed 17/01/2022

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2017-02-04/what-real-mormons-think-about-the-book-of-mormon-musical/8239188>; Louise Talbot, 'Mormons Use Scandalous Musical *The Book of Mormon* to Promote Religion', *The New Daily*, 02 February 2017, viewed 17/01/2022

<https://thenewdaily.com.au/entertainment/stage/2017/02/02/the-book-of-mormon-melbourne/>; Madelaine Wong 'THE BOOK OF MORMON – What the Mormons Really Want You to Know', *Liverpool City Champion*, 12 March 2018, viewed 17/01/2022

<https://www.liverpoolchampion.com.au/story/5280010/the-real-book-of-mormon/>

¹⁹ Burin, 'What Real Australian Mormons Think About the Book of Mormon Musical', *ABC News* website, 04 February 2017; Talbot, 'Mormons Use Scandalous Musical *The Book of Mormon* to Promote Religion', *The New Daily*, 02 February 2017

²⁰ 'The Real Mormon Mission', *ABC Radio National*, 29 April 2018, viewed 17/01/2022

<https://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/archived/spiritofthings/mormons/9692480>; Brooke Facer, 'LDS Church Launches New Media Campaign as 'The Book of Mormon' Musical Opens in Australia', *Deseret News*, 18 January 2017, viewed 17/01/2022

<https://www.deseret.com/2017/1/18/20604319/lds-church-launches-new-media-campaign-as-the-book-of-mormon-musical-opens-in-australia>

context of Australia shows not only how the Church is perceived within the country, but also how the Church attempted to both counter that image while also using the opportunity to proselytise.

Various news outlets sought to understand how Australia's Mormon population reacted to the musical. The ABC interviewed 'real Australian Mormons' about not only the musical but also their experiences as a religious minority within Australia. An important aspect to note here is the marginalisation of the Mormons; although the article is supportive of the individuals it interviews, the focus on 'real Australian Mormons' concretises this idea of their 'otherness' and outsider status. In addition to information about the Church this article provides rich insights into how the spotlight of an unaffiliated cultural phenomenon impacted the subjects of musical satire. For instance, Grant Leeworthy, a fishery scientist who lives in Melbourne stated:

We're OK with people poking fun at us, Christian doctrine is to turn the other cheek. Engagement in religion doesn't reduce your freedom. If I wanted to become a secular atheist, which I find incredibly boring, I could be a secular atheist tomorrow. People accuse us of being naive or being ignorant. That's the thing with our faith, we want to keep learning. We want to keep pushing humanity forward and bringing them out of the Middle Ages.²¹

Another Latter-day Saint, Ballarat woman Jennadene Williams, was a little more forward with her displeasure

It kind of paints missionaries as being naive and brainwashed and not really knowing much about life. When we decide to serve our missions, which is what the young men are doing in the musical,

²¹ Burin, 'What Real Australian Mormons Think About the Book of Mormon Musical', *ABC News* website, 04 February 2017

we fully are aware of what we're doing. It's a choice, we're volunteering to do it. We're sacrificing schooling, careers, dating, marriage, just to serve and help people.

Hannah Parton, who lives in Melbourne and served a mission in Utah, shared that

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Obviously it's not a great representation of what we believe, but I just went 'wow this is incredible that people are going to know who we are'. We're normal people. I just hope from the musical people realise we're here in Australia, a lot of people think Mormons are only in America.²²

Although none of these interviewees thought that *The Book of Mormon Musical* was an accurate representation of their faith or experiences in the Church, it did bring about a certain amount of publicity that allowed members to 'set the record straight.'²³ In particular, the idea that the Church had been existent in Australia since the 1840s, but was still seen as a largely American religion, was a particularly sensitive issue.

In New South Wales, *The Liverpool Champion* interviewed the Stake President (ecclesiastical leader of the Liverpool, Sydney area) Leo Gomez in 2018 about the Musical coming to the city and the Church's response. Gomez stated that:

I've read the script from the musical and I know contents of the musical. I think it's another example of an opportunity for freedom of speech. It doesn't resemble the truth, it's satirical.

But it introduces many questions and is an opportunity for members of the church to clarify misrepresentations. And as people ask questions they find out quickly it's a satire and not an accurate commentary on the church...

²² Burin, 'What Real Australian Mormons Think About the Book of Mormon Musical', *ABC News* website, 04 February 2017

²³ Burin, 'What Real Australian Mormons Think About the Book of Mormon Musical', *ABC News* website, 04 February 2017

[Describing the proselyting tool established in Paramatta] The book is about three metres high and looks like an open book which people can walk into and where they can select chapters.

The answers are from the Mormon Scripture and hopefully people learn about it in an interactive way. We invite the community to come and take a photo in it and we're happy to answer any questions people will have.²⁴

The way that Australian Latter-day Saints, both as individuals and as representatives of the Church, have reacted to *The Book of Mormon Musical* is largely in-line with official statements from the Church. This duality is important; of course, the Church's utilisation of the Musical was at the risk of further perpetuation of stereotypes that it has attempted to dispel, for example that it is not Christian or that polygamy is still practised. Nevertheless, the Church has taken both a jovial as well as evangelical approach to the showing of the *Book of Mormon Musical*. It is important too, that whilst this reaction from the Church was informed by an international approach, it was still localised to the Australian context.

One further response by a Church member, however, was to stage a counter-play, touted by *Church News* as 'the real Book of Mormon musical', entitled *From the Dust*. Staged in 2015 and again in 2017, the creator was a Latter-day Saint from Melbourne, Scott Hamilton, who wrote the musical in response to the international attention *The Book of Mormon Musical* had received prior to its showing in Australia. Though this did not have the direct backing of the Australian Church, it was performed by, and likely exclusively created for, Latter-day Saints. As described by *From the Dust's* website,

²⁴ Wong 'THE BOOK OF MORMON – What the Mormons Really Want You to Know', *Liverpool City Champion*, 12 March 2018, viewed 17/01/2022
<https://www.liverpoolchampion.com.au/story/5280010/the-real-book-of-mormon/>

From the pages of the Book of Mormon, the story traces the saga of an ordinary Old World family that migrates to the New World or Promised Land (Meso-America) - where its members develop a rich, cultural heritage.

Spanning the centuries, the story sweeps from 600 BC through to present-day.

Loves, dreams, losses, family tensions, heroic struggles and heart-warming triumphs by turns take centre stage as this remarkable story unfolds and builds to an awe-inspiring climax with the Saviour's visit to the Americas after His resurrection.²⁵

Hamilton has had a long career as a classical singer, including with the Melbourne City Opera, the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra, and the Melbourne Chamber Choir. According to the director of the 2017 iteration, another Latter-day Saint, Bridget Allen:

'From The Dust', is pure inspiration! ... I feel and recognise the Lord's influence in the compositions written by Scott Hamilton and am deeply impressed by not only the musical scores but also the lyrics. It has been gratifying to work closely with Scott, the cast members, the orchestra and conductor as well as the technical crew as we lay this inspired work at the feet of a discerning audience.²⁶

This grassroots theatre show, that sought to present the message of the Book of Mormon and its place in Latter-day Saint theology, highlights the local tension surrounding the *Book of Mormon*. Even before it was staged in Australia, some local Mormons sought to challenge the supposedly incorrect perceptions generated by the musical, creating their own forms of cultural production to evangelise, educate, and entertain.

²⁵ 'The Story', *From The Dust: The Musical* Website, viewed 17/01/2022

<https://www.fromthedustmusical.net/biography>

²⁶ 'The Real Book of Mormon Musical Comes to Melbourne', *Church News Australia* website, 24 August 2017

<https://news-au.churchofjesuschrist.org/article/the-real-book-of-mormon-musical-comes-to-melbourne>

Another indicator of how pervasive the *Book of Mormon Musical* was is the sheer number of reviews it received, both within Australia and New Zealand. The majority acknowledged that the musical, whilst certainly not presenting the Church in an uncritical way, was not the anti-Mormon production that some believed it would be.²⁷ Will Cox, writing for *Broadsheet*, stated that the Musical was more pro-Mormon than hostile, as it succeeded to 'tow the line so elegantly between mocking a belief system and accepting the virtue in it.'²⁸ Others still indicated that whilst the show presented the missionaries as naive or even ignorant, each was shown as being fundamentally sincere in their desire to help others, as well as the conviction that their faith was the solution to the world's woes.²⁹ Another reviewer, James Murphy of *Scenestr*, viewed the musical as reflecting on

²⁷ 'The Book of Mormon', *Australian Arts Review*, 1 July 2019 <https://artsreview.com.au/the-book-of-mormon-2/>; Virginia Balfour, 'Review: The Book of Mormon, QPAC', *Arts Hub*, 22 March 2019 <https://www.artshub.com.au/news/reviews/review-the-book-of-mormon-qpac-257572-2362607/>; Simone Grogan, 'The Book of Mormon Review – Bawdy Broadway Brilliance', *The Curb*, 3 October 2019 <https://www.thecurb.com.au/the-book-of-mormon-review-bawdy-broadway-brilliance/>; Scott Hocking, 'Review: The Book of Mormon', *Stack*, 6 February 2017, <https://stack.com.au/music/review-book-mormon/>; Jo Litson, 'The Book of Mormon Wickedly Funny', *Daily Telegraph*, 10 March 2018, <https://www.dailytelegraph.com.au/entertainment/arts/the-book-of-mormon-wickedly-funny/news-story/09c66b02a2b681ea6dab1088284f1451>; Angus McPherson, 'The Book of Mormon', *Limelight*, 4 February 2017 <https://limelightmagazine.com.au/reviews/review-the-book-of-mormon-john-frost-princess-theatre/>; Stephanie Van Schilt, 'The Book of Mormon Review', *The Guardian*, 6 February 2017 <https://www.theguardian.com/stage/2017/feb/06/the-book-of-mormon-review-a-visionary-musical-masterpiece-genital-jokes-and-all>; Pat Wilson, 'Theatre Review: The Book of Mormon', *Glam Adelaide*, 1 July 2019 <https://glamadelaide.com.au/theatre-review-the-book-of-mormon/>

²⁸ Wil Cox, "'Book of Mormon' Review: Crass, Sacrilegious, Brilliant', *Broadsheet*, 08 February 2017, <https://www.broadsheet.com.au/sydney/entertainment/article/book-mormon-review-crass-sacrilegious-brilliant>

²⁹ Jane Howard, 'The (Very Sweary, Very American) Religious Experience of 'The Book of Mormon'', *Junkee*, 7 February 2017 <https://junkee.com/swearly-american-religious-experience-book-mormon/95403>; Will Huxley, 'The Book of Mormon: Finally A Musical that Stands Up To The Hype', *ABC Arts*, 7 February 2017 <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2017-02-07/book-of-mormon-a-musical-that-stands-up-to-the-hype/8248360>; Emily Saint-Smith, 'Theatre Review: *The Book of Mormon*', *The AU Review*, 10 March 2018 <https://www.theaureview.com/arts/theatre-review-the-book-of-mormon-will-make-you-laugh-til-it-hurts-even-if-you-feel-you-shouldnt-sydney-lyric-theatre/>; Heather Taylor Johnson, 'Review: The Book of Mormon', *InDaily*, 1 July 2019 <https://indaily.com.au/inreview/2019/07/01/review-the-book-of-mormon/>; Cameron Woodhead, 'The Book of Mormon Review: South Park Creators' Musical is an un-PC Delight', *The Sydney Morning Herald*, Updated 5 February 2017

faith beyond Mormonism, suggested it was a ‘sophisticated critique of organised religion’ and showed the inability of religions, particularly those headquartered in privileged nations, to adequately address the everyday realities of most of humanity.³⁰

Though the musical certainly is not favourable towards the Church or its doctrines, none of the reviewers mentioned that the show made them more hostile towards Mormonism. Only a small number of reviewers mentioned specific beliefs lampooned in the show, such as the doctrine that God resides on a planet named Kolob, the translation of gold plates by Joseph Smith, or that Jesus Christ visited the Americas after His resurrection.³¹ This in and of itself is crucial, as it confirms what the creators of *the Book of Mormon Musical* have always maintained, that the production was not inherently hostile to Latter-day Saints or their faith, which perhaps explains the Church’s response. Once again, this dichotomy is important: the Church has maintained that it is an inaccurate representation, yet has utilised the popularity of the production for proselyting purposes and to increase visibility. Moreover, some of the songs referenced specific cultural and theological aspects of the Latter-day Saint religion. The song ‘All American Prophet’, for instance, includes the lyrics

<https://www.smh.com.au/entertainment/art-and-design/the-book-of-mormon-review-south-park-creators-musical-is-an-unpc-delight-20170204-gu5hzo.html>

³⁰ James Murphy, ‘The Book of Mormon Review @ Adelaide Festival Centre’, *Scenestr*, 02 July 2019 <https://scenestr.com.au/arts/the-book-of-mormon-review-adelaide-festival-centre-20190702/>; Ben Neutze, ‘The Book of Mormon Theatre Review (Melbourne)’, *Daily Review*, 5 February 2017 <https://dailyreview.com.au/book-mormon-review-princess-theatre-melbourne/>; Tara Watson, ‘Review: Melbourne’s ‘The Book of Mormon’ is Not What You Expected, It’s Even Better’, *Punkee*, 06 February 2017 <https://punkee.com.au/review-melbournes-book-mormon-not-expected-even-better/23631>

³¹ Maxim Boon, ‘The Book of Mormon’, *The Music*, 4 February 2017, <https://themusic.com.au/reviews/the-book-of-mormon-review-maxim-boon/QqVVVdWWWg/05-02-17/>; Wil Cox, ‘“Book of Mormon” Review: Crass, Sacrilegious, Brilliant’, *Broadsheet*, 08 February 2017, <https://www.broadsheet.com.au/sydney/entertainment/article/book-mormon-review-crass-sacrilegious-brilliant/>; Heather Taylor Johnson, ‘Review: The Book of Mormon’, *InDaily*, 1 July 2019 <https://indaily.com.au/inreview/2019/07/01/review-the-book-of-mormon/>

Have you heard of the All-American prophet?

The blonde-haired, blue-eyed voice of God!

He didn't come from the Middle East like those other Holy Men! Page | 440

No, God's favourite prophet was... All-American!³²

This clearly is an indication of the Latter-day Saint doctrine of United States exceptionalism.³³ Although this overt nationalism is no longer as central to Mormon thought, the primacy of the United States and its supposed favour from God, is still emphasised by the Church and its teachings.³⁴ This mocking of what Mormons hold sacred, as well as secret, is an important aspect of this vast cultural phenomenon that is only articulated by faithful Latter-day Saints.

In New Zealand, there were far fewer reviews as the majority of the planned shows were cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic.³⁵ Despite this, the announcement of the Musical coming to New Zealand indicates the importance of this show as a phenomenon that directly links the Church to the broader culture of both Australia and New Zealand.³⁶

³² Original Broadway Cast of the Book of Mormon, 'All-American Prophet', *Genius Lyrics* website, May 2011, viewed 18/01/2022

<https://genius.com/Original-broadway-cast-of-the-book-of-mormon-all-american-prophet-lyrics>

³³ Bruce A. Van Orden, 'What Do We Know About the Location of the Garden of Eden?', *The Ensign*, January 1994, viewed 18/01/2022

<https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/ensign/1994/01/i-have-a-question/what-do-we-know-about-the-location-of-the-garden-of-eden?lang=eng>

³⁴ Jeffrey R. Holland, 'A Promised Land', *The Ensign*, June 1976, viewed 18/01/2022

<https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/ensign/1976/06/a-promised-land?lang=eng>

³⁵ 'New Zealand Performance of Book of Mormon Cancelled', *Broadway World New Zealand*, 17 March 2020, <https://www.broadwayworld.com/new-zealand/article/New-Zealand-Performances-of-BOOK-OF-MORMON-Cancelled-20200317>

³⁶ 'The Mormons Are Coming to New Zealand', *13th Floor*, 2 August 2019

<https://www.13thfloor.co.nz/the-mormons-are-coming-to-new-zealand/>

'Satirical Musical The Book of Mormon Is Coming to Auckland Next Year', *Stuff New Zealand*, 2 August 2019 <https://www.stuff.co.nz/entertainment/stage-and-theatre/114700838/satirical-musical-the-book-of-mormon-is-coming-to-auckland-next-year>; Hana Okada, 'Drop Everything, The Book of Mormon Musical is Coming to New Zealand', *Urban List*, 2 August 2019

<https://www.theurbanlist.com/nz/a-list/drop-everything-the-book-of-mormon-is-coming-to-new-zealand>

These mention the dramatic success of the Musical across the Tasman, as well as the response of the Church in purchasing advertising in playbills in various stagings of the show. The reviews of the *Book of Mormon Musical*, played in Auckland, reiterate similar themes as those in Australia. Ethan Sills, writing for *New Zealand Herald*, states that ‘religion as a whole is ruthlessly mocked... [yet] for all the hoopla about how it portrays religion, the musical itself is filled with heart.’³⁷ Sharu Delikan and Tim Booth, writing for *Theatre Scenes*, called the missionaries in the show ‘well-meaning, and somewhat earnest young men’, but concluded that the musical ‘is not just a religious pisstake but also a celebration of... humanity’s desire to do good.’³⁸ The review from *Keeping Up With New Zealand* similarly highlights the dichotomy between the lampooning of religion, including Mormonism, and the musical’s emphasis on the genuine nature of the individual missionaries.³⁹

The only official Church response to *The Book of Mormon Musical* in Australia and New Zealand came from Richard Hunter, Pacific Area Communication Director for the Church, who wrote an op-ed for the *New Zealand Church Newsroom*.⁴⁰ Although Hunter admitted that he had not actually seen the Musical, this article shows disdain for the mockery of Latter-day Saint scripture and cosmology. As well as criticising the content, Hunter also

³⁷ Ethan Sills, ‘The Book of Mormon is a Modern-Day Miracle’, *New Zealand Herald*, 12 March 2020 <https://www.nzherald.co.nz/entertainment/the-book-of-mormon-is-a-modern-day-miracle/JLZ4SDPJBNCXT3CUXY4I72ILXQ/>

³⁸ Sharu Delikan and Tim Booth, ‘Review: The Book of Mormon (The Civic)’, *Theatre Scene New Zealand*, 14 March 2020 <http://www.theatrescenes.co.nz/review-the-book-of-mormon-the-civic/>

³⁹ ‘The Book of Mormon is at Theatrical Delight and Rapturous Satirical Comedy’, *Keeping Up With New Zealand*, 15 March 2020, <http://keepingupwithnz.com/2020/03/15/the-book-of-mormon-civic-theatre-review/>

⁴⁰ Richard Hunter, ‘Why I Won’t Be Seeing the Book of Mormon Musical in Auckland’, *Church Newsroom New Zealand*, 1 March 2020 <https://news-nz.churchofjesuschrist.org/article/why-i-wont-be-seeing-the-book-of-mormon-musical-in-auckland>

lists the humanitarian efforts of the Church in Africa and globally. Despite the polemic nature of Hunter's article, he does highlight the cultural affect that the *Book of Mormon Musical* has had within New Zealand, as well as globally. Hunter's important publication, which would have been released with direct hierarchical backing, also indicates how the Church and its adherents have pushed back against this unsanctioned, increased visibility of the religion, brought about through satirical and mocking elements.

Another critique was published by Dr Melissa Wei-Tsing Inouye, an official historian for the Church and Senior Lecturer in Asian Studies at the University of Auckland who has sadly since passed. Inouye has published prolifically on the intersections of race, religion, and decolonisation. Although Dr Inouye did not attend the musical in Auckland, she did see it in the United States and afterwards warned her fellow Latter-day Saints against viewing it.⁴¹ Inouye noted that whilst the musical's jokes about the Church were problematic, she admitted that some were 'on point'. However, it was the racism that she viewed as more offensive and thus worthy of boycott. Grounding Inouye's perspective is the fact that, as she highlights, the majority of Latter-day Saints within Auckland are ethnic minorities. Inouye critiques the Musical's depiction of Ugandans, and more broadly Africans, as it hastily moves from insults against missionaries and Latter-day Saint beliefs into a "white saviour" narrative.⁴² Her critique was published on *Church Newsroom New Zealand*, the local Mormon news website, and the University of Auckland website.⁴³

⁴¹ Melissa Wei-Tsing Inouye, 'Worst Thing About 'Book of Mormon' Musical is the Racism', *Newsroom New Zealand*, 5 September 2019, <https://www.newsroom.co.nz/@ideasroom/2019/09/05/790213/worst-thing-about-mormon-musical-is-the-racism>

⁴² Inouye, 'Worst Thing About 'Book of Mormon' Musical is the Racism', *Newsroom New Zealand*, 5 September 2019

⁴³ Melissa Wei-Tsing Inouye, 'Worst Thing About 'Book of Mormon' Musical is the Racism', News and Opinion, Faculty of Arts, Education, and Society, *University of Auckland Website*, 05 September 2019

Inouye's thoughts are summarised and reiterated in an article for Utah-based *The Salt Lake Tribune*.⁴⁴

The importance of *The Book of Mormon Musical* in the localisation and recognition of the Church and its members within Australia and New Zealand cannot be understated. The high number of reactions to the musical's performances, from both the media of these countries and the Church, is indicative of the way in which this popular cultural phenomenon influenced the representation of Latter-day Saints in these countries. The sheer volume of material that was produced to advertise the musical undoubtedly cemented Mormonism within Australian and New Zealand public consciousness, even if it was through a somewhat sardonic cultural phenomenon. As part of this increased public awareness, there was a defence of Mormons and their beliefs by the state-owned broadcasters within Australia. The Church was also aggressive in its media campaign in response to its staging, and utilised marketing and evangelical strategies to capitalise on the exposure. Individual Mormons had different, more complex reactions, but these were subsumed by the coordinated effort from the Church, which followed a pattern first established in the United States, and left little space for more complex or ambivalent reactions.

<https://www.auckland.ac.nz/en/news/2019/09/05/worst-thing-about-book-mormon-is-racism.html>

⁴⁴ David Noyce, 'This Week in Mormon Land: Thumbs Down for 'Book of Mormon' Musical', *The Salt Lake Tribune*, 6 September 2019

<https://www.sltrib.com/religion/2019/09/05/this-week-mormon-land/>

The only academic source that mentions *The Book of Mormon Musical* in New Zealand and Australia was written by Byron Rangiwai, and published in *Te Kaharoa*.⁴⁵ Rangiwai begins with a description of his own conversion to Mormonism, before delving into a dissection of various songs, themes, and doctrines that are presented in the musical. Rangiwai juxtaposes this with his own experiences as a gay Māori, including his missionary work in 2002-2003, and his eventual excommunication. Rangiwai, whose prolific academic work on Indigenous and Māori Studies, theology, culture, and religion, presents a unique exploration of the more cosmological underpinnings of the musical. In this article, Rangiwai also quotes official and semi-official Latter-day Saint polemicists and Mormon historians, such as Bruce R. McConkie and Richard Bushman. This fusion of personal reflection within a discussion of a cultural phenomenon, published in a journal dedicated to Indigenous and Māori Studies, is a unique exploration of the deep proliferation of *The Book of Mormon Musical*, and the representation of this in broader New Zealand public consciousness and academia.

Mormons, Music, And Criminality

One of the more unusual examples of how the Church and its members has become visible and localised within the popular culture of Australia and New Zealand is the rise of controversial drill and rap music collectives, as well as broader links to criminality. The most prominent of these is OneFour, a group made up of Pasifika Mormon young men from the Western Sydney suburb of Mt Druitt. OneFour rose to infamy following the highly publicised death of Tinorei Henry in 2018, as well as an altercation at the Rooty

⁴⁵ Byron Rangiwai, 'Reflections on *The Book of Mormon Musical*: Flirtations with Mormon Theology', *Te Kaharoa*, Volume 11, 2018, pp. 284-314

Hill Returned Serviceman's League (RSL) Club.⁴⁶ Tinorei Henry was stabbed near the Parramatta Westfield in 2018 by three teenagers who were affiliated with organised crime based in Mt Druitt, although it is debated as to how closely connected they were to the OneFour music collective.⁴⁷ Henry later died of his injuries, and two of the teenagers were charged with his death.⁴⁸ Henry was not reported to have been associated with organised crime, but was believed to have been loosely affiliated to a rival criminal organisation situated in the inner-western suburbs.⁴⁹ The Rooty Hill RSL incident occurred in July 2018, when members of OneFour were involved in a violent row with other patrons. According to *ABC News*, Justice James Bennett acknowledged 'racial comments, perhaps extending to racial slurs' as a precursor to OneFour member Dahcell Ramos striking an individual with a hammer in the head multiple times; Ramos was sentenced to ten years imprisonment.⁵⁰ Two other OneFour members, Pio Misa and Salec Lua were also jailed for their participation, although with lessened sentences; Lua has since been deported to New Zealand.⁵¹ Descriptions and footage of the incident, as well as further violence connected to OneFour, have been widely circulated by the news.⁵²

⁴⁶ Osman Faruqi, 'Who Wants War With Sydney's Realest?', *ABC News*, 13 December 2019 <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2019-12-13/australian-drill-rappers-onefour-battle-police/11779746?nw=0&r=HtmlFragment>; Jessica Kidd, 'OneFour Rapper Pio 'YP' Misa and Former Member Dahcell Ramos Jailed Over Western Sydney Pub Brawl', *ABC News*, 5 December 2019 <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2019-12-05/onefour-rapper-jailed-over-violent-brawl-in-rooty-hill/11768448>; Christopher Riley, 'OneFour: The Rise of Australia's Most Exciting And Most Controversial Music Group', *GQ*, 21 January 2020

⁴⁷ 'Two Teens Charged With Murder Over Alleged Stabbing in Sydney's West', *Nine News*, 07 October 2018 <https://www.9news.com.au/national/parramatta-stabbing-sydney-man-dies-in-hospital-three-arrested/e41971ab-cac2-477f-a694-8c4e3e516b35>

⁴⁸ 'Two Teens Charged With Murder Over Alleged Stabbing in Sydney's West', *Nine News*, 07 October 2018

⁴⁹ 'Two Teens Charged With Murder Over Alleged Stabbing in Sydney's West', *Nine News*, 07 October 2018

⁵⁰ Kidd, 'OneFour Rapper Pio 'YP' Misa and Former Member Dahcell Ramos Jailed Over Western Sydney Pub Brawl', *ABC News*, 05 December 2019

⁵¹ 'OneFour's Sua Deported', *The Courier-Mail*, Brisbane, Queensland, 09 January 2023, pp. 6

Josh Hanrahan, 'OneFour Member Salec 'Lekks' Sua Deported from Australia', *The Daily Telegraph (Online)*, 08 January 2023

⁵² 'OneFour Rappers Jailed Over Vicious Pub Brawl Assaults', *The Daily Telegraph*, 05 December 2019, pp. 7; Gary Hamilton-Irvine, 'Dahcell Ramos: OneFour Member in Pub Hammer Attack Appeals Jail Sentence', *The Daily Telegraph*, 01 March 2021; 'Vigorous Aggressor' L OneFour Rapper Jailed Over Brawl', *The Daily*

In response to Henry's death, in March 2019, OneFour published the song 'The Message' to their YouTube channel.⁵³ This song went viral, and has been viewed almost fifteen million times.⁵⁴ The lyrics of 'The Message', as well as the accompanying music video, indicate a glorification of violence and criminality. For example, one of the members Pio 'YP' Misa states:

I got friends looking at ten, you watched yours get put in a box
 Who wants smoke? Trust me, mothers, them boys ain't ready.
 Twenty-one what? But one got knocked, ha I guess that makes them twenty.⁵⁵

This line in reference to Tino Henry's death is important, as it also acknowledges a rival Sydney criminal and musical outfit, 21 District. Due to their success, OneFour went on to release a number of similarly successful songs and announced a national tour.⁵⁶ Continuing to discuss public displays of violent criminality, OneFour unsurprisingly did not go unnoticed by either New South Wales authorities or the rival criminal associations spread throughout Sydney.⁵⁷

Telegraph, New South Wales, 07 December 2019, pp. 7; Heath Parkes-Hupton, 'OneFour Rapper Dahcell 'Celly' Ramos Has Prison Sentence Quashed Over Pub Attack', *News.com.au.*, 31 March 2021, <https://www.news.com.au/entertainment/music/onefour-rapper-dahcell-celly-ramos-has-prison-sentence-quashed-over-pub-attack/news-story/43273e3ff14af66e055822de72650498>

⁵³ Faruqi, 'Who Wants War With Sydney's Realest?', *ABC News*, 13 December 2019
 OneFour, *The Message* Lyrics, Genius website, 30 March 2019, viewed 22/03/2022
<https://genius.com/Onefour-the-message-lyrics>

⁵⁴ OneFour, *The Message* Lyrics, Genius website, 30 March 2019

⁵⁵ OneFour, *The Message* Lyrics, Genius website, 30 March 2019

⁵⁶ Osman Faruqi, 'Popular Youtube Rappers OneFour Forced to Cancel First National Tour Dates Following Police Pressure', *ABC News*, 25 November 2019, viewed 04/02/2022
<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2019-11-25/one-four-drill-tour-dates-cancelled/11731062>; Geordie Gray, 'OneFour Have Cancelled Their Entire Australian Tour', *ToneDeaf* website, 28 November 2019, viewed 04/02/2022
<https://tonedeaf.thebrag.com/onefour-have-cancelled-their-entire-australian-tour/>

⁵⁷ Matt Bungard, 'Banned From Performing In Our Own Country': OneFour National Tour Cancelled', *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 28 November 2019, viewed 04/02/2022
<https://www.smh.com.au/culture/music/banned-from-performing-in-our-own-country-onefour-national-tour-cancelled-20191128-p53f7t.html#:~:text=Sydney%20rap%20group%20OneFour%20have.Auckland%20will%20proceed%20a>

As such, a number of other musical collectives with connections to Sydney's criminal underworld sprang to refute OneFour's narrative. One of the most prominent of these is 21 District, who were referenced in *The Message*.⁵⁸ 21 District is also made up of predominantly Pasifika youth, who are mostly located in the western Sydney suburbs of Granville and Guildford.⁵⁹ There were also other musical collectives that rose to challenge OneFour's narrative; these included Hooligan Hef's and Hooligan Skinny from Duneside, Yungn Lipz from Cabramatta, Shely210 from Bankstown, Ay Huncho and Nasa Nova from Guildford, and Pistol Pete and Enzo from Campbelltown.⁶⁰ As such, a new genre of Australian music erupted that publicly discusses violence and organised criminality and the very complex alliances and politics of the criminal underground. This has both reflected and reinforced the tensions surrounding what has been dubbed the 'postcode wars' of major Australian cities, particularly Sydney and Melbourne.⁶¹

The response by NSW police was swift and severe. In 2019, OneFour announced a national tour, however the Sydney shows were cancelled by the police. OneFour's

[s%20planned.&text=been%20cancelled%2C%22%20the%20band%20said%20in%20a%20statement.&text=Despite%20this%20pressure%20has%20been.sell%20out%20national%20tour.%22](#)

⁵⁸ OneFour, *The Message*; Faruqi, 'Who Wants War With Sydney's Realest?', *ABC News*, 13 December 2019; Levi Parsons, 'Inside the Terrifying New 'Drill Gangs' Obsessed with Rap Music and Gun Culture Feuding over Postcodes in the Suburbs of Melbourne and Sydney', *The Daily Mail Australia*, 31 March 2021, viewed 04/02/2022

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-9420853/New-gangs-OneFour-21District-Gen-shooters-obsessed-rap-terrorising-Melbourne-Sydney.html>

⁵⁹ Faruqi, 'Who Wants War With Sydney's Realest?', *ABC News*, 13 December 2019; Parsons, 'Inside the Terrifying New 'Drill Gangs' Obsessed with Rap Music and Gun Culture Feuding over Postcodes in the Suburbs of Melbourne and Sydney', *The Daily Mail Australia*, 31 March 2021

⁶⁰ Parsons, 'Inside the Terrifying New 'Drill Gangs' Obsessed with Rap Music and Gun Culture Feuding over Postcodes in the Suburbs of Melbourne and Sydney', *The Daily Mail Australia*, 31 March 2021

⁶¹ Parsons, 'Inside the Terrifying New 'Drill Gangs' Obsessed with Rap Music and Gun Culture Feuding over Postcodes in the Suburbs of Melbourne and Sydney', *The Daily Mail Australia*, 31 March 2021

management claimed that venues in Adelaide and Melbourne were threatened with the revocation of their liquor license if they hosted OneFour performances, and these were also cancelled.⁶² Due not only to the violent lyrics and associated criminality, but also a well-publicised altercation between OneFour and strangers at the Rooty Hill RSL, three of the five founding members have been arrested.⁶³ J-Emz, a founding member, has been released on bail for both drug related crimes and possession of 'an unauthorised firearm.'⁶⁴

Most of the founding members of OneFour grew up as Latter-day Saints. This was discussed in an interview with Christopher Riley for popular magazine *GQ*:

J-Emz: ... we grew up knowing each other through Church... we're Mormon boys. We're like Christians. Yeah, that was our faith growing up

Riley: Can you describe the Mormon Church?

J-Emz: A lot of singing.

Spenny: A lot of troubled kids, too...

Riley: So, was Church your first interaction with music?

⁶² 'Mystery on Cancelled Rap Show', *The Advertiser*, Adelaide, South Australia, 27 November 2019, pp. 15; Faruqi, 'Popular YouTube Rappers OneFour Forced to Cancel First National Tour Dates Following Police Pressure', *ABC News*, 25 November 2019; Kidd, 'OneFour Rapper Pio 'YP' Misa and Former Member Dahcell Ramos Jailed Over Western Sydney Brawl', *ABC News*, 05 December 2019

⁶³ Kidd, 'OneFour Rapper Pio 'YP' Misa and Former Member Dahcell Ramos Jailed Over Western Sydney Brawl', *ABC News*, 05 December 2019

⁶⁴ 'Facing the Music on Pistol Rap', *The Daily Telegraph*, Surry Hills, New South Wales, 29 September 2020, pp. 9; Kate Lockley, 'OneFour Jemz: Jerome Misa, Rekindle Tautalaga, Alai Ahio, Sione Lausii Fight Gun Charges', *Blacktown Advocate*, Blacktown, New South Wales, 27 May 2021

https://www.dailytelegraph.com.au/subscribe/news/1/?sourceCode=DTWEB_WRE170_a_GGL&dest=htps%3A%2F%2Fwww.dailytelegraph.com.au%2Fnewslocal%2Fblacktown-advocate%2Fonfour-jemz-jerome-misa-rekindle-tautalaga-alai-ahio-sione-lausii-fight-gun-charges%2Fnews-story%2F204504f7a52e7476e97539c38253bf8d&memtype=anonymous&mode=premium&v21=GROUP-A-Segment-1-NOSCORE

J-Emz: I'd say so, yeah... we grew up with our parents, our aunties, uncles and cousins in the choir. They were all singing. Sometimes we were forced to sing in the choir too. But we hated it, getting dragged to choir practice. Nothing against the religion but it just wasn't our thing. So we got out... and [ended up] on the streets.

Moreover, in a song entitled 'Like We Do' with artist SVNO, J-Emz sings 'I grew up washing dishes / my faith was strong in the Church / Don't want my younger siblings to see me in a hearse.'⁶⁵ Thus, one of Australia's most controversial and successful underground music collectives were raised and met in the Mt Druitt congregation of the Church. It highlights one of the major themes, that is the gradual, complicated syncretism and entanglement of Mormonism into Australian society. In this example, of course, this group is not representative of the institutional Church or its beliefs, but it does show the affect that individual Latter-day Saints, even if non-practicing, have had on the cultural landscape of Australia. In November 2023, a documentary about OneFour, *Against All Odds*, was released on popular streaming service Netflix.⁶⁶ This documentary indicated the difficulties the group had with police, especially around performing live; no mention is made of their religion, but does show the members of OneFour praying before a live concert.⁶⁷ The only academic article written about OneFour does not mention their connection to Mormonism.⁶⁸ Importantly, however, one of the original members of

⁶⁵ SNVO feat. J-Emz, 'Like We Do', *Youtube*, August 2020, viewed 05/02/2022

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=52TsQU5tWY&ab_channel=SVNO

⁶⁶ Craig Mathieson, 'Notorious Hip-Hop Group OneFour Have Their Say in an Uncompromising Doco', *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 1 November 2023

<https://www.smh.com.au/culture/tv-and-radio/notorious-hip-hop-group-onefour-have-their-say-in-an-uncompromising-doco-20231027-p5efnk.html>

Parry Tritsinotis, 'Behind the ONEFOUR Documentary: How Filmmakers Shared Western Sydney with the World', *ABC News*, 31 October 2023

<https://www.abc.net.au/triplej/news/onefour-against-all-odds-documentary-review-western-sydney-drill/103040146>

⁶⁷ Gabriel Gasparinatos (dir.), *ONEFOUR: Against All Odds*, Entropico and Stranger Than Fiction Films, 2023

⁶⁸ Murray Lee, Toby Martin, Jioji Ravulo, Ricky Simandjuntak, '[Dr]illing in the name of The Criminalisation of Sydney Drill Group OneFour', *Current Issues in Criminal Justice*, Volume 34, Issue 4, 2022, pp. 339-359

OneFour, Pio ‘YP’ Misa, was ordained to the Church’s Priesthood in 2024, with media reporting he had renounced his previous music. Curiously, though pictures on his own social media and in broader news outlets across the country showed the rapper juxtaposed with a quote from Latter-day Saint Apostle Dallin H. Oaks, none of these media articles mentioned that his ordination was connected to the Latter-day Saint Church.⁶⁹ Arguably, this indicates that though the news of the rapper returning to his faith has made national headlines, information surrounding his connection to Mormonism is less well-known.

It is not just OneFour that has ties to Mormonism in Australia’s underground music scene. Numerous other artists have discussed Mormonism, both as their own religion but also as a lyrical trope. For example, Pistol Pete, from Campbelltown, Inner-Western Sydney, has noted numerous times his loss of faith in Mormonism. In the song ‘Out The Vault’, Pistol Pete states ‘Grew up Mormon, but I knew that shit weren’t right / But these missions that I take could take two years from my life.’⁷⁰ He similarly states in ‘Worst Days’ that he ‘grew up in Church, was taught to serve a mission / sorry mum, phone is calling, I’m going on missions.’⁷¹ Another artist from Brisbane, Lawd Lance, sings that ‘After I came back from my mission / I fell into a deep hole known as depression.’⁷² These

⁶⁹ ‘YP From Sydney Rap Groups OneFour Has Quit to Become a Priest’, *News.com.au*, 29 February 2024 <https://www.news.com.au/entertainment/celebrity-life/yp-from-sydney-rap-group-onefour-has-quit-to-become-a-priest/news-story/22b961779aceb20c56355656b23a0cfc>; Ellie Robinson, ‘OneFour’s Pio ‘YP’ Misa Has Been Ordained a Priest’, *The Music*, 26 February 2024, <https://thefour.com.au/news/onefour-s-pio-yp-misa-has-been-ordained-as-a-priest/HyvdMz11NDc/26-02-24>; James Wilson, ‘I’m Not Proud of the Music I’ve Made’: Rapper-Turned-Priest Denounces His Past’, *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 21 March 2024, <https://www.smh.com.au/culture/music/i-m-not-proud-of-the-music-i-ve-made-rapper-turned-priest-denounces-his-past-20240321-p5fe73.html>

⁷⁰ Pistol Pete and Enzo, ‘Out The Vault, Part 2’, *Soundcloud Website*, 08 December 2020 <https://soundcloud.com/biordimusic/pistol-pete-enzo-out-the-vault-otv-1-otv-2>

⁷¹ Pistol Pete and Enzo, ‘Worst Days’, *Spotify Website*, 2021 <https://open.spotify.com/track/30xE6ymwQYYE8ohljyMS9x>

⁷² Lawd Lance, ‘Better Man’, *Genius Website*, 24 July 2020

artists and their open discussion of their beliefs, or loss of them, indicate a more thorough entrenchment of the religion within Australia. The fact that these lyrics openly discuss the Church and the artists' dissidence from it indicates that Mormonism and its adherents are not just what has been perceived or perpetuated to be through other forms of popular culture, as in the *Book of Mormon Musical*. The complexity of Mormon identity, experiences, and visibility, and its association with criminality shows a more complicated Latter-day Saint experience that is further informed by class and race.

In a similar albeit different phenomena, Australian musical artists who have not publicly discussed a connection with the Church have used the Church and its cultural attributes as a lyrical technique. This is a unique development, as references to Mormonism have become a cultural phenomenon within Australian music; this occurs, most significantly, with euphemisms for violence and organised criminality. For example, Lisi, an artist based in the Brisbane suburb of Goodna has made numerous references to Mormonism in his music. In 'Concrete Jungle', he states he 'ain't a Mormon, but a man on a mission.'⁷³ Furthermore, in the song 'Fists Up', Lisi utilises Latter-day Saint imagery again 'could of sworn we were missionaries / because when we pull up, they call more men [Mormon].'⁷⁴ In yet another song, which coincidentally was released by Lawd Lance, Lisi is featured, and again uses Mormonism when he threatens that he will 'send him home disgraced / like a Mormon caught smoking up on his mission.'⁷⁵ Even Yorta Yorta rapper Briggs, in

<https://genius.com/Lawd-lance-around-here-lyrics>

⁷³ Lisi, 'Concrete Jungle', *Genius Website*, 10 July 2020

<https://genius.com/Lisi-concrete-jungle-lyrics>

⁷⁴ Lisi feat. Vic C, 'Fists Up', *Genius Website*, 2 May 2020

<https://genius.com/Lisi-fists-up-lyrics>

⁷⁵ Lawd Lance feat. Lisi and Amuthamc, 'Around Here', *Genius Website*, 24 July 2020

<https://genius.com/Lawd-lance-around-here-lyrics>

his song 'Sheplife', states that 'Jehovah's Witnesses are going to court / and Mormons, they won't even knock on your door.'⁷⁶ This utilisation of Mormonism as a linguistic and cultural trope by modern Australian musicians is a unique indicator of the way in which the Church and its attributes has become integrated within the popular culture of Australia. Mormonism has become engrained to such an extent through music that it has become much more of a cultural touchstone. Whilst certainly not within the mainstream Australian music scene, the rise of both Mormon musicians, as well as the utilisation of Mormonism as a lyrical device, is an important aspect of this dissertation; it shows a more complex and complicated integration of Mormonism within Australian society.

More indicative and further contextualising the complicated relationship between Mormonism, music, and criminality, however, is that there have been numerous violent incidents involving Mormons at Latter-day Saint chapels. For instance, a violent brawl in 2018 occurred at the Manly chapel during a Church-sanctioned young adult dance which saw half a dozen people charged, including National Rugby League player Manase Fainu. As a result of the legal proceedings, Fainu was subsequently forcibly retired by the NRL.⁷⁷ The brother of Fainu's Manly teammate, Jona Faingaa, has similarly been charged in relation to the brawl.⁷⁸ According to *The Sydney Morning Herald*, Faingaa was the lifelong

⁷⁶ Briggs, 'Sheplife', *Genius.com*, August 2014,
<http://www.songlyrics.com/briggs/sheplife-lyrics/>

⁷⁷ 'NRL Player Manase Fainu Charged Over Alleged Stabbing at Church Dance', *The Guardian*, 29 October 2019, viewed 04/02/2022
<https://www.theguardian.com/sport/2019/oct/29/nrl-player-manase-fainu-charged-over-alleged-stabbing-at-church-dance>

⁷⁸ Antonette Collins, 'NRL Star Manase Fainu Charged Over Stabbing During Sydney Church Brawl', *ABC News Website*, 29 October 2019
<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2019-10-29/manlys-manase-fainu-charged-over-alleged-church-stabbing/11649682>

best friend of Fainu.⁷⁹ According to ABC News, ‘Liverpool Local Court Magistrate Joanne Leigh accepted police concerns that Fainu was suspected to be a member of Pacific Islander criminal group’; this has not been confirmed, however.⁸⁰ Justice Stephen Rothman, who is presiding over the case, stated that Fainu’s crime was ‘as close to murder as you can get.’⁸¹ It is not just in Sydney, however, that violence connected to Mormonism has been recorded.

Most notably, in July 2020, the tragic death of a 15-year-old due to a violent brawl in the Victorian suburb of Deer Park.⁸² This young man, Solomone Taufeulungaki, was a member of the Church, as are his parents.⁸³ Taufeulungaki’s death occurred opposite a Mormon Church, although unlike the brawl involving Manase Fainu, it was not during an official activity. Instead, Solomone was walking home from school with his younger cousin Aki, when they were approached by ten ‘youths’ with weapons.⁸⁴ According to Aki, Solomone had told her to ‘run ... across the road’ to the nearby Latter-day Saint Church,

⁷⁹ Sarah Keoghan, ‘Fainu’s Lawyer Yet to See CCTV Footage of Alleged Mormon Church Dance Stabbing’, *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 03 February 2020
<https://www.smh.com.au/sport/nrl/fainu-s-lawyer-yet-to-see-cctv-footage-of-alleged-mormon-church-dance-stabbing-20200203-p53x63.html>

⁸⁰ Collins, ‘NRL Star Manase Fainu Charged’, *ABC News*, 29 October 2019

⁸¹ Adrian Prosenko and Lucy McCormack, ‘Brother of Fainu’s Manly Teammate Charged Over Church Dance Brawl’, *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 15 November 2019
<https://www.smh.com.au/sport/nrl/new-charges-laid-over-church-dance-stabbing-involving-manly-star-fainu-20191115-p53avm.html>

⁸² Matilda Boseley, ‘Melbourne Stabbing: Six Teens Charged after Death of 15-year-old Solomone Taufeulungaki at Deer Park’, *The Guardian*, 17 June 2020
<https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2020/jun/17/melbourne-stabbing-boy-16-stabbed-to-death-at-deer-park>

⁸³ Boseley, ‘Melbourne Stabbing: Six Teens Charged after Death of 15-year-old Solomone Taufeulungaki at Deer Park’, *The Guardian*, 17 June 2020; Rachael Dexter, Anthony Colangelo and Erin Pearson, ‘Run Aki’: The Moment Solomone told his Young Cousin to Run for Her Life’, *The Age*, 18 June 2020
<https://www.theage.com.au/national/victoria/run-aki-the-moment-solomone-told-his-young-cousin-to-run-for-her-life-20200617-p553p3.html>

⁸⁴ Dexter, Anthony Colangelo and Erin Pearson, ‘Run Aki’: The Moment Solomone told his Young Cousin to Run for Her Life’, *The Age*, 18 June 2020

where he was going to follow.⁸⁵ Solomone, who it has been repeatedly claimed was not affiliated with any organised crime, was stabbed multiple times by the group, and later died in hospital of his wounds. Police charged eleven people with the killing, nine of whom are aged between thirteen and seventeen; a number of these are known to have connections to various criminal groups.⁸⁶ The night after Solomone's death, there was another brawl at the memorial established in the Latter-day Saint Church carpark, involving over thirty youths.⁸⁷ According to *Nine News*, mounted police patrolled the area before and after the brawl; journalist Chanel Zagon claimed that 'one person could be heard shouting "I'll kill you."' ⁸⁸

It is unclear whether this was related to organised crime or was instead due to family or friends seeking revenge. It should be emphasised here, however, that his parents pleaded for a cease in the violence, insisting that they 'don't want justice.'⁸⁹ Instead, his father, Atunaisa Taufeulungaki, told reporters that 'I believe ... every Sunday his spirit (will) join with us in this true Church.'⁹⁰ Moreover, his mother Salome told reporters that she believed it was 'the time for him to go on and live with his Heavenly Father. Dying is a

⁸⁵ Dexter, Colangelo and Pearson, "Run Aki": The Moment Solomone told his Young Cousin to Run for Her Life', *The Age*, 18 June 2020

⁸⁶ 'Police Charge 11 People with Murder of Melbourne Teenager Solomone Taufeulungaki in Deer Park', *ABC News*, 22 October 2020
<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2020-10-22/police-charge-11-people-with-murder-following-deer-park-death/12802274>

⁸⁷ Benita Kolovos and Christine McGin, 'Tensions After 15y/o Killed in Melbourne', *The Canberra Times*, 17 June 2020
<https://www.canberratimes.com.au/story/6797166/tensions-after-15yo-killed-in-melbourne/>

⁸⁸ Chanel Zagon, 'Deer Park Stabbing: Family of Slain Teenager Solomone Taufeulungaki Say The Don't Justice', *Nine News Website*, 17 June 2020
<https://www.9news.com.au/national/deer-park-stabbing-family-of-slain-teenager-do-not-want-justice/6568bb29-bdce-453c-a634-21e004f5799b>

⁸⁹ Zagon, 'Deer Park Stabbing: Family of Slain Teenager Solomone Taufeulungaki Say The Don't Justice', *Nine News Website*, 17 June 2020

⁹⁰ Kolovos and McGin, 'Tensions After 15y/o Killed in Melbourne', *The Canberra Times*, 17 June 2020

blessing for our family.’⁹¹ According to Zagon, ‘the parents said their forgiveness stemmed from their religious and spiritual beliefs.’⁹² As well as this, the Taufeungaki family offered their ‘love and forgiveness to those accused of attacking their boy.’⁹³ Later in the week,

Hundreds of friends, community members and elders of Melbourne’s Tongan community gathered at the site... Groups of classmates performed a traditional Tongan dance and sang hymns as they walked from their school to the site of the violence...

Elders from Melbourne’s Pasfika community then held a vigil [at the chapel] to bless the site where Solomone died...⁹⁴

This connection between Mormonism and its members and highly publicised violence is an important aspect of the localisation of the religion and Australian society, and one that is not connected with the official institution. However, it is at this intersection of criminality, music, and public violence that the more complex place Latter-day Saints hold within Australian society is evident. Not only is Mormonism a religion that has a host of contemporary and historical stereotypes, as well as a staunch ‘outsider’ status assigned by broader society, but it has experienced a unique syncretism with broader multicultural and diasporic Australian culture. Through underground musicians and lyrical tropes, that the religion has become more engrained within the public consciousness of Australia, albeit on the margins.

⁹¹ Zagon, ‘Deer Park Stabbing: Family of Slain Teenager Solomone Taufeungaki Say They Don’t Want Justice’, *Nine News Website*, 17 June 2020

⁹² Zagon, ‘Deer Park Stabbing: Family of Slain Teenager Solomone Taufeungaki Say They Don’t Want Justice’, *Nine News Website*, 17 June 2020

⁹³ Elias Clure, ‘Parents of Boy Stabbed to Death at Melbourne’s Brimbank Shopping Centre Offer Forgiveness’, *ABC News*, 17 June 2020
<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2020-06-17/charges-laid-over-solomone-taufeungaki-stabbing-death/12363088>

⁹⁴ ‘Police Charge 11 People with Murder of Melbourne Teenager Solomone Taufeungaki in Deer Park’, *ABC News*, 22 October 2020

Shaun Micallef's Stairway to Heaven (Special Broadcasting Service SBS)

In the late 2010s, two documentaries were released by the *Special Broadcasting Service (SBS)* that contained discussions related to Mormonism. The first, an episode in the series *Shaun Micallef's Stairway to Heaven*, was released in 2016; this follows famous Australian comedian Shaun Micallef in his quest to understand the rise and prominence of Mormonism. The second, a two-part series called *Christians Like Us*, which aired in 2019, brought together ten Christians from diverse denominations and backgrounds, who lived together for a week. For different reasons, both of these are important indicators of the way of which the Latter-day Saints and their faith are viewed within Australia, whilst simultaneously shaping 21st century understandings of Mormonism.

In his effort to learn about Mormonism, Micallef began by travelling to Salt Lake City; there he attended the General Conference and even sang in the world-famous Mormon Tabernacle Choir. Micallef noted that although the 'prophet, seer, and revelator' of the Church, who at the time was Thomas S. Monson, seemed 'well intentioned', he was not exactly a rousing public speaker. Despite his own firm agnosticism, Micallef was impressed with the sincerity of the individual members, even if he could not escape what he described as his own cynicism surrounding some of the Church's claims. He commented that he was shocked at the magnitude of the Church's success, and was

amused at how it was all created 'from a teenage vision almost two centuries ago.'⁹⁵ Significantly, when he was filming in the 'centre piece of Salt Lake City... Temple Square', Micallef stumbled across a statue of Joseph Smith, Jr. with his wife Emma. Although he noted the beauty of the statue, he wryly mused that if he 'was going to be picky, there should be about another thirty or forty wives behind her.' Micallef was also incredulous about other aspects of the Church, and questioned the Latter-day Saint family he was staying with about these; one of which was the Mormon doctrine stating that the Garden of Eden is actually in Missouri. Contrarily, something that seemed to surprise Micallef was that he felt welcomed by members of the Church, that he did not feel any 'condescension, [or] sanctimoniousness [sic]'.

Micallef took the time to read the Book of Mormon, although he admitted that 'the more [he] read... the more that [he was] perplexed.' He did not understand the logistics of the grand narrative, and queried how an offshoot of the Israelites travelled from Jerusalem to what is now the Americas, where they became 'among the principle ancestors of the Native Americans.' As part of his exploration of Mormonism, Micallef also attended the Missionary Training Centre in Provo, Utah; from here, he travelled to Fiji to spend time with missionaries. Although he was pleasantly surprised by the dedication and kindness of the missionaries, Micallef stated that he was 'disappoint[ed] that [condemning] homosexuality was right there next to the Ten Commandments.' When he questioned some Latter-day Saints about this, including a missionary, there was a consensus that although there was no 'hatred' towards queer people, there was a certain hostility, and

⁹⁵ Shaun Micallef (Host); Russell Vines (Director), *Shaun Micallef's Stairway to Heaven: Mormons*, SBS Productions, Created 2016, Broadcast 18 January 2017

adamance that it was a 'choice' and 'sin.' One of the Elders emphasised that 'in our religion we don't accept it or tolerate it... we'll very much love the person, support them if they want to quit', to which Micallef notes that 'the Church would encourage abstinence and prayer.' In regard to the missionaries' injunction that missionaries can only speak to their families twice a year, he states that 'it doesn't make any sense to me, except to have a lack of connection or distraction.'

Micallef further observed that 'Mormon society is structured to maximise belief and minimise doubt.' He commented that 'the mission is just as important as securing the faith and dedication of the missionaries as it is to convert others.' In his discussions with various Latter-day Saints, Micallef notes the utmost imminence of 'personal revelation', insisting 'every Mormon I have met has had it.' Despite reading the Book of Mormon, and being instructed to pray about whether it truly was sacred scripture, Micallef states that he could not comprehend how God could have directed Joseph Smith to translate the Book of Mormon from 'reformed Egyptian' through 'seer stones in a hat.' Despite his disbelief, Micallef travelled to Palmyra, New York where Mormonism was first conceived. He entered the so-called 'Sacred Grove', where Joseph Smith is supposed to have had his 'First Vision'; here, he was instructed by a member of the Church to kneel and pray about whether Mormonism was true. Although reticent, it does appear that Micallef actually took up the offer, although he states that 'I am afraid there was no vision, or voice, or Man in the Sky.'

This episode of *Stairway to Heaven* reveals much about the way in which Mormonism is represented in twenty-first century Australian media. A famous comedian from Australia

travelled to the heart of Mormonism to attempt to understand the faith and religion and to share his findings with viewers. Although Micallef is polite and is certainly not anti-Mormon, and indeed was complimentary of most of the individual Mormons he encountered, the episode critiqued the history, central beliefs, and even culture of Mormonism. It also challenged the way the Church has continued to present itself to the world in a sanitised, censored manner. By turns respectful and cynical, it is clear to viewers that Micallef was not overly impressed with Mormonism, thus shaping the way in which his Australian audience would perceive the Church and its members. It is significant that Micallef barely mentions the presence of the Church and its acolytes within Australia. This 2016 documentary episode reflects the perpetually contentious place of Mormonism within Australia. As in the mid-nineteenth century, the Church is envisaged as a foreign, American, faith, and the central beliefs are presented as perplexing: this reinforces the narrative that the religion and its members are 'other' within Australia. Thus, though the inclusion of Mormonism in this documentary series helped to bring it more into mainstream Australian society with a greater visibility, it also suggested its marginalisation.

Christian Like Us (SBS)

Just as revealing of this theme is the SBS documentary *Christians Like Us*, released in 2019. During a week of living together, ten Christian roommates discussed many controversial issues within their faiths, such as female preachers, abortion, and homosexuality. This was quite contentious, as each of the housemates had passionate opinions surrounding their interpretation of scripture, dogma, and faith. One of the housemates was Hannah, a 26-year-old Latter-day Saint from Brisbane. Indicating her feelings of marginalisation,

she divulged to the producers at the start of the show that she was ‘truly terrified of feeling like a sheep among wolves because I know my Christian beliefs are different to others.’⁹⁶ Hannah revealed, too, that her ‘entire life [she had] felt marginalised because [supposedly] I am not “a Christian.”’ Hannah’s fear proved not unfounded, with events in the house rapidly revealing the cultural and spiritual perceptions that Australian Christians had about Latter-day Saints. Reverend Tiffy, an Anglican Priest from Melbourne, stated that

There are significant differences between Mormons and essentially the rest of Christianity... it was certainly my education that they were not a part of the mainstream Christian Church...

Similar comments were made by at least two other housemates, Daniel Nour (a Coptic Catholic) and Assumpta (an Anglican convert from Hinduism). Nour admitted that he did not consider Latter-day Saints as ‘representative of Apostolic Christianity... because they have beliefs that are not Orthodox.’ Assumpta similarly states that

There are a number of things about the Mormon faith that I am not able to legitimately, genuinely make sense of... with all due respect, I am not able to say I ... agree with how Mormons express their faith.

All of these exchanges occurred within the first episode, with comments about her faith continuing into the second episode. The housemates travelled to Speaker’s Corner in Hyde Park, Sydney, an open-air setting dedicated to free-speech and discussion amongst members of the public. The first to speak was Hannah, who stated to other attendees that her faith had brought her ‘happiness and peace.’ Daniel Nour stated that it was ‘ironic that Hannah got up to defend Christianity even though she does not hold to the traditions of Christianity historically.’

⁹⁶ ‘Christians Like Us, Episode 1’, SBS, 03 April 2019

Although the majority of the other housemates did not consider Hannah 'Christian', her faith meant she shared a significant number of beliefs, particularly with the more conservative individuals. For instance, Hannah was opposed to abortion and homosexuality. She stated that 'God has clearly said that marriage is between a man and a woman, and anything contrary to that is considered a sin' before continuing, 'I have the deepest respect for anyone who is religious and gay, because they are treading the hardest path.' Part of the program was that each of the housemates was to bring in something that was special or important to their faith. Chris, who is gay, decided to bring in a manual that his Baptist Church had used in its efforts to 'change' his sexuality for over seven years. He also shared stories about how damaging and dangerous the practice of 'gay conversion therapy' truly is. Hannah responded, 'I have many examples of many people who were once gay and [who] have chosen to put that aside and return to a heterosexual relationship.' This particular reply is in line with official Latter-day Saint beliefs and teachings, as has been discussed previously. Interestingly, however, Hannah and Chris both stated that they had developed a mutual respect for each other. Despite this, Hannah stated 'I still maintain that acting on gay feelings is a sin. However, I have so much more empathy and love for the gay community.'

An issue that was discussed at length by the housemates was the topic of abortion. Shortly before the series was filmed Queensland had decriminalised abortion and NSW was considering decriminalisation legislation. Carol, a Uniting Church elder and doctor, revealed she performed abortions throughout her career. This was unsettling to most of the housemates, and Hannah declared that

I wasn't happy with what Queensland decided, it's not a black and white issue for me. I personally have never been sexually active, and I do think that having an abortion due to social inconvenience is a sin. It's one of the ten commandments, that thou shalt not commit murder.

The fact that Hannah stated that it was 'not a black and white issue' may have also come from official Church teachings. The Church certainly has strong views on abortion and is avidly against termination on the grounds of what it calls 'social inconvenience.' However, in comparison to many fundamentalist religions, it has more moderate views. The Church has repeatedly stated that abortions may be necessary in the case of

Incest or rape, when the life or health of the mother is judged by competent medical authority to be in serious jeopardy, or when the foetus is known by competent medical authority to have severe defects that will not allow the baby to survive beyond birth.

Even these circumstances do not automatically justify an abortion. Those who face these circumstances should consider abortion only after consulting with... Church leaders and receiving confirmation through earnest prayer.⁹⁷

Interestingly, this view of abortion put Hannah at odds with the more conservative Christians in the house, who stated there was no justification to abortion, whilst at the same time being in conflict with the more liberal Christians.

By the end of the experiment, despite personally feeling 'more accepted', Hannah still felt she needed to defend her beliefs and 'made an impassioned plea to the housemates to accept that Mormons are Christians.' As part of this, Hannah took the other housemates to the Sydney city of Paramatta, where she participates in 'street contacting', and attempting to give out free Books of Mormon to passers-by. The other Christian

⁹⁷ 'Abortion', *The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* website, <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/manual/gospel-topics/abortion?lang=eng>

participants were relatively unimpressed, with Reverend Tiffy stating that whilst it may be an effective and even accepted part of worship in other parts of the world, Sydney was not receptive. Hannah, who had been a full-time missionary previously, seemed to agree: 'some people avoid me like the plague.' Later the same day, Hannah revealed the object that she had brought into the house, a Book of Mormon; this was accompanied by Hannah again attempting to convince the other housemates that Latter-day Saints were Christians. When she stated that 'the whole purpose of me being here is to feel accepted as a Christian, and express why there are differences', she received a sharp response from Reverend Tiffy 'we are different.' Even Chris who, although non-denominational, had grown up a conservative Baptist, stated 'I am not too sure what they believe, but I was always taught that they weren't Christian because they have added things to Christianity.'

The specifics of Hannah's faith were foregrounded for viewers through the narration. While most of the discussion focused on Joseph Smith and Mormon scripture, other elements of spiritual practice were also referred to. When Hannah and Assumpta were discussing their efforts to 'refrain from sex before marriage', the narrator mentions that Hannah wears 'a daily reminder of her commitment to chastity.' This mentioning of the Temple Garments, which Hannah is quick to claim are not 'magic underwear', is followed by her brief explanation of the clothing:

[it is] sacred underwear, it is simply a white garment that I wear everyday. It's a very personal choice to remind me of the choices I have made to live a pure and chaste life. Not every member of the Church wears them.⁹⁸

⁹⁸ 'Christians Like Us, Episode 2', SBS, 03 April 2019

Although discussion of the Temple Garments is not new in the context of media discourse in Australia, Hannah's effort to clarify is unique. It is extremely rare for members of the Church to explain what the Garments are and what they represent, particularly on nationally broadcasted television. Arguably, this represents a tacit acknowledgement of the marginalisation of the religion, and a utilisation of the visibility of the documentary to control the narrative of their sacred/secret identity.

By far the most contentious issue between Hannah and the other Christian roommates was the insistence and fundamental belief of Latter-day Saints that revelation from God did not end with the Apostles, which includes the belief that Joseph Smith was a modern-day prophet and that the Book of Mormon is additional scripture. The other housemates had numerous questions for Hannah, including how Joseph Smith received his calling as prophet, and the narrative behind the Book of Mormon. Hannah states that it was written in an ancient language, correcting someone who asked 'Aztec?', though Reformed Egyptian, the official lingua of the Book of Mormon, was not mentioned by Hannah. Reverend Tiffy asked whether there were 'tablets, or stones involved', to which Hannah replies 'there were gold plates but these were returned to the angel [Moroni]'; this is only partly accurate, as the Church has claimed that Joseph Smith used 'seer stones' in the translation of the Book of Mormon, though this narrative is more recent.⁹⁹ In response to the claims of the Book of Mormon, that Jesus Christ visited the Americas after his resurrection, Reverend Tiffy stated 'there is a very different view of the Mormon Church on Jesus and who he was, where he went, and what he told people.' Daniel Nour agreed,

⁹⁹ 'Seer Stones', *The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* website, <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/history/topics/seer-stones?lang=eng>

stating 'I think Mormons have a rather innovative take on historical Christianity.' Hannah further claimed that 'nothing in the Book of Mormon contradicts the Bible, it just clarifies it', which the majority of the housemates took issue with. Fundamentalist Pentecostal preacher Marty, bluntly stated 'my issue is that this book needs to clarify *the book*.' He further suggested that Latter-day Saints 'don't hold to the same creed as many in this house, so many people would say that she is not Christian.' Assumpta agreed, asking 'why isn't the Bible enough?'

One of Hannah's main defenders, ironically, was Chris, who argued that 'if you love Jesus then that's a Christian.' To the producers, Hannah complained after the intense discussion that, 'it does sound hypocritical for someone to say "oh, you're not a Christian" ... what kind of Christian believes that?' She further stated that 'I know my Church does a lot of good in the world, but I do think that it could do a lot more if they were able to band together with other Churches.' In the second episode, even the narrator noted that by 'the end of the week... Hannah has spent most of her time trying to convince others that she is a Christian.' Hannah finished off the experiment with a comment to the producers:

There have been beautiful Christians here that have accepted me, but there have been people here who still do not accept the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in the Christian community, but that's them. I don't live for their acceptance, I live for Jesus Christ's acceptance.

It is important to note here, however, that by the end of the experiment, Reverend Tiffy changed her mind towards Hannah and her belief, stating 'I think it was wrong of us to

say that you are not a Christian... you say you are, and you act like one, and you are, and I just want to apologise.'¹⁰⁰

The *Christians Like Us* series is an important cultural text for a number of reasons, and there are numerous themes that can be gleaned from documentary that speak to this overarching theme of increased visibility yet simultaneous marginalisation. First, it reveals the way in which Mormonism is perceived within contemporary Australia, particularly by other Christians. There was extreme reluctance from both mainstream and other marginal Christian groups to allow Hannah, and indeed the members of the religion itself, to self-identify as Christian. This was expressed by Anglicans, Catholics, but also the Pentecostals. This reticence to accept Mormonism represents a fundamental argument in this dissertation: Latter-day Saints in Australia are still considered by many as members of an 'outsider' religious minority. This sense of 'otherness', imposed by mainstream Christianity, is significant as it is connected to, yet distinct from, the broader cultural marginalisation that Latter-day Saints experience within Australia. Modern religious exclusion of the Latter-day Saints from Christianity has been predominantly maintained by other religious leaders. Even as Mormonism and the Latter-day Saints have become more entrenched in the popular culture and broader society of Australia and New Zealand, and even as media and political coverage has moved on from overt hostility, there are still undercurrents of systemic and deliberate marginalisation by 'mainstream' Christian individuals and institutions. This is the complicated and uncomfortable position that the Latter-day Saints have consistently had within Australia since Mormonism arrived with William Bartlett in 1840. *Christians Like Us* captures this

¹⁰⁰ 'Christians Like Us, Episode 3', SBS, 03 April 2019

religiously motivated ambivalence, scepticism, and even hostility towards Latter-day Saints and their beliefs, whilst at the same time further enmeshing the religion with the national and regional psyche. Thus, the visibility of Mormonism through documentaries produced in the late 2010s by *SBS* indicates the way in which the Church has become more visible and syncretised within Australia, yet has remained marginal and othered.

***Building For Eternity* (The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints)**

Related to these themes, in April 2022, the Church published a documentary, *Building for Eternity*, that discussed the history of the Church in New Zealand, focused on the construction of the Hamilton Temple and Church College.¹⁰¹ The documentary details the early prophecies of Māori tohunga, also spoken about in this dissertation, that have been interpreted to be in reference to the Church, early proselytising efforts, and the growth of the Māori identity of the Church in New Zealand. More specifically, the documentary delves into the construction of the Māori Agricultural College, the Church College and Hamilton Temple. *Building for Eternity* emphasises the labour missionaries' role in all of this, and their sacrifices to build the Temple. It was evidently made for Latter-day Saints, in particular those who may have felt disappointed by the Church's decision to close and demolish Church College. Importantly, *Building for Eternity* includes oral history interviews from former labour missionaries who discuss various faith-affirming experiences, and their trust in God, the prophet, and the Church. These oral histories are

¹⁰¹ 'Building For Eternity', *The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, 8 April 2022, viewed 15/10/2023 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7wuDKVfVAsI>

invaluable, and help to provide a first-hand account of the construction of the Temple and Church College.

However, arguably, the way these oral histories are framed diminishes the dissidence of people such as Ra Puriri and others, discussed in Chapter 3, who have fought the Church's decision to demolish the Church College and surrounding houses on heritage and spiritual grounds. Rather than a simple documentary, this source appears as a purposeful response to the disquiet over the Temple View demolition, particularly the negative publicity garnered by the decision. It is also telling of the way in which the Church has responded to the age of mass-media: rather than challenge much more effective and prominent representation in popular culture, such as through *The Book of Mormon Musical*, the Church has dedicated resources to the creation of media for its own adherents. Arguably, the Church also did not want to complicate the opportunities for proselytisation, visibility, and outreach that the *Book of Mormon Musical* provided by engaging with direct popular culture portrayals. The documentary ends with the following quote:

The motto of the Church College of New Zealand was *build now for eternity*. But perhaps no one understood that better than the labour missionaries themselves... In 2009, after almost fifty years of operation, the Church College of New Zealand closed its doors. And like the Māori Agricultural College before it, took its place in history as another great chapter in the quest of the [Church] to bless the lives of its members, neighbours, and friends. Though the school may be gone, what the labour missionaries built still lives on. It lives on in the hearts and minds of those educated in the school they built. It lives on in the blessings of the ordinances in the temple they built. And it lives on in their example...

This short excerpt from the documentary is from the last two minutes, and is the only reference to the discontinuation and demolition of the Church College. Arguably, the Church has framed the experiences of the labour missionaries in such a way as to minimise and evade criticism for demolishing the Church College.

The way in which the documentary was produced, which included not only oral histories, but also scores of photographs, readings of diaries and journals, and an attempted link between the Church's doctrines and Māori culture and history is important in this analysis. The utilisation of reminiscences and oral histories of labour missionaries and other prominent Latter-day Saints, or of their descendants, seeks to add a legitimacy to the destruction and renovation of Temple View. The majority of the labour missionaries interviewed were Māori or Pasifika people. Arguably, this could be read as an effort on the Church's part to first, indicate its status amongst the Indigenous peoples of Oceania and New Zealand and second, to show its localised, multicultural nature within New Zealand. This strategy is amplified with the Church's employment of the narrators, who are New Zealanders (presumably Māori); this helps to ground the themes and idea of localisation of this documentary. As stated, given the more targeted nature of the documentary, i.e. it was not produced by the Church for consumption by a wide audience, but rather for its own adherents, speaks to the struggles the Church has at times encountered with more contemporary popular culture and media representations. The *Building for Eternity* documentary could also be read as a way to silence dissidence within its own ranks due to the destruction of Church College and the renovation of Temple View, as well as an effort to create an 'official' history of this controversial event.

This documentary has been placed in this chapter, rather than in Chapter 3, as it has been made in an era of mass-media consumption and created as a counter-representation by the institutional authorities. As has been seen, within both New Zealand and Australia, in the last decade, there has been a range of ways in which the Church has been discussed and represented by various media and popular culture texts external to it. However, this is a documentary made by the Church, with a very particular purpose and voice, that seeks to position itself within the broader history of New Zealand. It amplifies the spirituality and dedication of labour missionaries, and seeks to minimise the voices of their descendants, or even other labour missionaries, who spoke against the demolition. For this reason, *Building for Eternity* is an important cultural text, that has been developed by the Church in order to tell a sanitised and polemical story, one that it did not trust journalists or 'outsiders' to convey. This artefact, then, needs to be considered within the more recent representations of Mormonism within both Australia and New Zealand. *Building for Eternity* is important to examine within the broader themes of this chapter, with questions surrounding representation and perception from broader society. More importantly, the way in which the Church has positioned its history and current endeavours as a direct response in the form of self-representation, is important within these themes of mass-media and public consumption of Latter-day Saint representation and identity.

Conclusion

In the age of mass consumption of popular culture, the Church has been represented in crucially important ways throughout Australia and New Zealand. These representations

are situated within a renewed and expansive concern and public discourse surrounding religious discrimination and tolerance. These debates, as discussed in the literature review and earlier in this chapter, have been perpetuated and ignited by policies enacted by governments in efforts to protect 'religious freedom' in an era of increased secularisation and religious plurality. It is within this context, in Australia, the perception of Latter-day Saints as a 'foreign,' fringe religion has resulted in an 'othering' of Mormons in broader media. This has particularly been reinforced due to the popularity of the *Book of Mormon Musical*. The sheer reaction towards the musical illustrates the broader theme of this dissertation, that Mormonism has become enmeshed and integrated within the popular consciousness of both Australia and New Zealand, while remaining a marginalised spirituality. The *Book of Mormon Musical* revigorated the way in which Australians recognised Mormonism, though the actual religion and its local adherents remain on the peripheries of broader society, public consciousness and visibility, around the religion increased dramatically. Here, the Church's strategy to mitigate potential hostility, through creative proselytising methods, reveals a unique pivot. Rather than attempt to censor the Musical, as occurred with *The Mormon Maid*, the Church capitalised on the discussion surrounding the religion to attempt to control the narrative, as far as would be allowed. In this regard, the way in which state-broadcaster *ABC* framed the way 'real Australian Mormons' felt about the musical is particularly important. That the national broadcaster was interested in acknowledging the experiences of Latter-day Saints in Australia is telling of this complex representation of Mormonism.

Contrastingly, the media attention surrounding individual Latter-day Saints, such as OneFour, has not directly made the link between Mormonism and 'drill' music and the

connections with organised violence. Though these musicians themselves have been open about both current or previous connections to the Church, this has largely been excluded from narratives and news about these artists. Moreover, as a unique example in which the religion has become more ingrained within Australian popular culture and mass media, Mormonism and its attributes have become utilised as a lyrical device by numerous musicians, whether Latter-day Saint or not, often as a euphemism for criminal activity. This chapter has argued that this has represented a shift in which Mormonism, although still marginal as a religion, has become much more recognisable within Australian public consciousness. Parallel, and as a result of this, however, there has been media attention surrounding violence occurring around Mormon chapels, and including Latter-day Saints. This intersection of class, religion, race, diaspora, and criminality, and the surrounding media attention, augments the complexity of Latter-day Saint identity within Australia in an era of mass media consumption.

Alongside this theme of Australian and New Zealand Mormon identity construction within the twenty-first century, the production of documentaries, either including or by the Latter-day Saints, are cultural artefacts that illuminate the arguments of this chapter. Both *Shaun Micallef's Stairway to Heaven* and *Christians Like Us*, produced by public broadcaster SBS, include representation of Latter-day Saints and their beliefs specifically created for Australian public consumption. As such, these documentaries assume a fascination with Mormonism, due to its marginal and 'otherness', foreign yet also localised, existence in the nation. Both documentaries successfully illustrate different threads of this localisation. *Stairway to Heaven* sees famous Australian comedian Shaun Micallef travel to Utah, and understand the global reach of the religion from its

headquarters. Barely mentioning Mormonism in Australia, Micallef instead seeks to understand the international appeal of the Church. Micallef's humorous and somewhat sardonic narration of Church history and doctrines is balanced with an acknowledgement of the sincerity of Latter-day Saint beliefs. Conversely, *Christians Like Us*, seeks to place the Mormons within broader Christian traditions in Australia, yet Brisbane-based Latter-day Saint Hannah is perpetually questioned and denigrated by most of the other participants. *Christians Like Us* indicates that the Church is well-known enough within the public consciousness in the age of mass media to have a Latter-day Saint participant on the documentary. Yet, despite this, there are lingering hostilities portrayed that indicate the marginalisation Latter-day Saints are subject to from other Christian denominations. This friction between self-identity, representation, and 'othering' is a complex way in which Mormonism has been depicted within Australia. This is particularly pertinent in an era of renewed public discourse and legislative efforts to ensure and sustain secularisation and religious plurality in a multicultural Australia.

Finally, the documentary *Building for Eternity*, created by the Church itself, is an example in which the religion has sought to define and tell its own narratives. Though the documentary covers a brief history of the Church in New Zealand, particularly the construction of the Church College and Temple, it has been argued that this documentary was created in response to the negative publicity garnered by the demolition of the College. Even the title of the documentary alludes to the tensions that exist due to the Church's decision. Whilst *Building for Eternity* does provide important, albeit polemical, historical value, it has been argued in this chapter that the documentary serves as a way to quiet discontent within the New Zealand Church, and to reclaim the narrative from

broader media scrutiny. This has been done through the utilisation of oral history interviews with labour missionaries, whose experiences have been edited within a faith-promoting framework. *Building for Eternity* has been analysed within this chapter as it is an example of the Church seeking to create a cultural text in response to critiques propagated by not only disaffected Latter-day Saints, but broader New Zealand society, and within the context of increased popular culture representations. Thus, within the last decade, numerous examples indicate an increased awareness of the Latter-day Saints through popular culture. Though still a marginal religion in population and influence, public consciousness surrounding Mormonism, through various forms of popular culture representation, has undoubtedly increased in the twenty-first century. The examples examined of its more complex integration into popular culture are an important lens through which this localisation and syncretism become evident.

Conclusion

Several key arguments have been developed throughout this dissertation. Perhaps most prominent is the unique development of the Mormon Church in the settler-colonial nations of Australia and New Zealand. Though the trajectories of the religion took significantly distinct paths in each country, there are commonalities in the reception and representation of Mormonism. Moreover, decisions and developments made at the Latter-day Saint metropole, Salt Lake City, have had both direct and indirect consequences for Latter-day Saints in the Antipodes. This thesis has also charted the gradual entanglement of Mormonism with both Australian and New Zealand politics and culture. Although the most evident examples of this are after the turn of the twenty-first century, the active marginalisation of the religion and its adherents within the nineteenth and twentieth century also indicated an early form of entanglement.

When first introduced into the Antipodean British colonies, the representation of Mormonism was largely hostile. The foreignness of the religion, its ostensibly heretical doctrines, and unorthodox practices were ill-received by broader Australian and New Zealand society, their governments, and broader Christian denominations. For the small number of Latter-day Saints in these colonies during this period, there was an exponential increase in hostility due to the emigration of Latter-day Saints, which was seen as antithetical to the imperial projects of Britain in Australia and New Zealand. Coupled with the sensationalist rumours surrounding polygamy, the Latter-day Saint missionaries and their new converts were portrayed as either fools or licentious. During the colonial period, as Church membership was already small, and would decrease with the migration

of faithful Mormons, there was little opportunity for self-representation or defence against these hostilities. Moreover, the experiences of the Latter-day Saints in the metropole were often lampooned within the Australian and New Zealand press. The reverberations of various Mormon doctrines, actions, and tension with the United States, was felt by Latter-day Saints in these antipodean British colonies and were often the source of open hostility in the media.

When the Church disavowed both polygamy and the Gathering, the Mormon communities in Australia and New Zealand began to grow, in spite of the spectre of these now-outdated doctrines remaining. In New Zealand, the success of the Church amongst the Indigenous Māori became a sore point for both the press and government, especially with their adaptive cosmology that linked these people to the Biblical House of Israel. Within the context of violent colonisation, it is clear how this was a source of empowerment for Māori on the one hand, and a cause of concern for the imperial government on the other. It was the success amongst the Māori that cemented the Church within New Zealand public consciousness, to the extent that by the early twentieth century, Mormonism became perceived as a 'Māori Church.' This dictated much of the Church's interactions with broader New Zealand society for the next half-century, until the decision was made to purposefully pivot away from this image, and renewed proselytisation amongst the *Pakeha* population began. In Australia, the comparatively stagnant growth of the Church meant that it was still perceived as practicing polygamy for almost the entire twentieth century. Representation of the Mormons was unfavourable, or at best apathetic, until the end of World War Two when a veritable boom of membership, buildings, and creative

proselyting, for example, the Mormon Yankees, created a more tolerant representation in broader Australian society.

The building of Temples and Church College symbolised a more ingrained localisation of the religion within both of these nations, yet brought about renewed hostility, albeit less acutely in New Zealand. Arguably, as the Church became more visible and cemented within the religious landscapes of these nations, pushback from broader society occurred. This is an interesting phenomenon, especially when it was reversed once plans to demolish the Church College were resisted on heritage grounds. Nevertheless, the building of Temples, which rooted the local Latter-day Saint communities within these countries also brought renewed suspicion, especially considering the secretive nature of these structures.

In turn, the localisation of Mormonism within these nations, through the construction of Temples and other Church buildings, has resulted in a more politically and financially active Church within both Australia and New Zealand. Arguably, the solidification of the religion, with its increased membership and visibility, led to an increased confidence on the part of the institutional Church to become more involved within these realms. This has come at a cost to the Church's public image, and representation of the Church has become more hostile. However, rather than due to a foreignness or perceived 'otherness', it is because of the political actions of the institution, whilst hypocritically claiming political neutrality. Whilst there are definite mirrors to earlier hostilities, and negative representation in both Australian and New Zealand media against the Church, there are significant distinctions. Thus, as has been argued throughout this dissertation, the

reception and representation of Mormonism has evolved with the development of the unique strains of the religion within these countries. This has been illustrated by the localisation of Mormonism, the distinct identity of its adherents within Australia and New Zealand, as well the experiences and expectations of the religious metropole, and the reverberations felt in the lives of Antipodean Latter-day Saints. Despite a further integration and localisation, the Church remains peripheral and marginal within the secularised nations of Australia and New Zealand, and its influence is limited, though not unfelt.

Although I have sought to provide an argument about the relational processes of Latter-day Saint identity formation within Australia and New Zealand, in the main (though not exclusively), this has been limited to looking at external representations. I do wonder what narrative would emerge if I was able to, for example, discuss with faithful Latter-day Saints their experiences in these nations, an opportunity that was denied to me – now an outsider – by an official Church spokesperson? How would the issues of class, gender, and race be able to be brought increasingly to the fore if the stories of individual Mormons could be told in full? What about Australian and New Zealander Latter-day Saints who made it to Zion in the United States, what were their experiences? What information do the archives of the Church History Department, some restricted, others open but only available in Salt Lake City, contain that could augment this history? These are all sites of further research more accessible to a faithful Mormon. Arguably this insider access would allow for a more complete examination of the representation, reception, and localisation of Mormonism within the Antipodes and beyond, however it would be hampered by other constraints and might speak less directly to other outsider scholars. How could themes of

marginalisation and integration be reinterpreted and presented with access to these additional, as yet unreachable, sources. Thus, this dissertation has sought to insert Mormonism more thoroughly into the mainstream historiography surrounding religion in Australia and New Zealand, whilst simultaneously seeking to honour those who have been written about, and critically engage with the real-life entanglements of the religion with these nations.

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Appendix A

Links to Dedicatory Prayers of New Zealand and Australian Temples

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Dedicatory Prayer of the Hamilton, New Zealand Temple, given by David O. McKay on 20 April 1958.¹

Dedicatory Prayer of the Carlingford, Sydney Temple; given by Gordon B. Hinckley on 20th September 1984.²

Dedicatory Prayer of the Marden, Adelaide Temple; given by Gordon B. Hinckley on the 15th June 2000.³

Dedicatory Prayer of the Watirna, Melbourne Temple; given by Gordon B. Hinckley on the 16th June 2000.⁴

¹ 'Hamilton New Zealand Temple – Dedicatory Prayer', *Temples of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saint* Website, 20 April 1958, viewed 07/08/2021

<https://churchofjesuschristtemples.org/hamilton-new-zealand-temple/dedicatory-prayer/>

² 'Sydney Australia Temple – Dedicatory Prayer', *Temples of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* Website, 20 September 1984, viewed 07/08/2021

<https://churchofjesuschristtemples.org/sydney-australia-temple/dedicatory-prayer/>

³ 'Adelaide Australia Temple – Dedicatory Prayer', *Temples of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* Website, 15 June 2000, viewed 07/08/2021

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⁴ 'Melbourne Australia Temple – Dedicatory Prayer', *Church News* Website, 16 June 2000, viewed 07/08/2021

<https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/temples/details/melbourne-australia-temple/prayer/2000-06-16?lang=eng>

Dedicatory Prayer of the Yokine, Perth Temple; given by Gordon B. Hinckley on the 20th May 2001.⁵

Dedicatory Prayer of the Kangaroo Point, Brisbane Temple; given by Gordon B. Hinckley on the 15th of June 2003.⁶

Rededicatory Prayer of the Hamilton, North Island Temple; given by Dieter F. Uchtdorf on 16th October 2022.⁷

⁵ 'Perth Australia Temple – Dedicatory Prayer', *Church News Website*, 20 May 2001, viewed 07/08/2021 <https://www.thechurchnews.com/archives/2010-03-10/perth-australia-temple-66120>

⁶ 'Brisbane Australia Temple – Dedicatory Prayers', *Church News Website*, 15 June 2003, viewed 07/08/2021 <https://www.thechurchnews.com/archives/2010-02-23/brisbane-australia-temple-66631>

⁷ 'Read Elder Uchtdorf's Blessings Upon Family, Youth, and the Community in Hamilton Temple Dedicatory Prayer', *Church News website*, 20 October 2022 <https://www.thechurchnews.com/temples/2022/10/19/23408794/hamilton-new-zealand-temple-rededicatory-prayer-elder-uchtdorf>

Appendix B

Section of a newspaper lift-out found in family archives, advertising the Open House of the Adelaide, South Australia Temple. No information was recorded as to which newspaper it came from, but my faithful Latter-day Saint grandfather bought at least five different editions of the newspaper to be able to preserve the announcement. Based on context, it would have been published May to early June 2000.

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THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

WHY THESE TEMPLES?

BY PRESIDENT GORDON B. HINCKLEY

FIFTEENTH PRESIDENT OF THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS
(WILL BE IN ADELAIDE FOR THE OPENING)

W as there ever a man or woman who, in a time of quiet introspection, has not pondered the solemn mysteries of life?

H as he or she not asked, "Where did I come from? Why am I here? Where am I going? What is my relationship to my Maker? Will death rob me of the treasured associations of life? What of my family? Will there be another existence after this, and, if so, will we know one another there?"

T he answers to these questions are not found in the wisdom of the world. They are found only in the revealed word of God. Temples of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints are sacred structures in which these and other eternal questions are answered. Each is dedicated as a house of the Lord, a place of holiness and peace shut apart from the world. There truths are taught and ordinances are performed that bring knowledge of things eternal and motivate the participants to live with an understanding of our divine inheritance as children of God and an awareness of our potential as eternal beings.

T hese buildings, different from the thousands of regular Church houses of worship scattered over the earth, are unique in purpose and function from all other religious edifices. It is not the size of these buildings or their architectural beauty that makes them so. It is the work that goes on within their walls.

T he designation of certain buildings for special ordinances, as distinguished from regular places of worship, is not new. This was the practice in ancient Israel, where the people



worshipped regularly in the synagogues. Their more sacred place was, first, the tabernacle in the wilderness with its Holy of Holies, and then a succession of temples, where special ordinances were performed and where only those who met the required qualifications could participate in these ordinances.

S o it is today. Prior to the dedication of a temple, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints invites the public to go through the building and inspect its various facilities.

But when it is dedicated it becomes the house of the Lord, vested with a character so sacred that only members of the Church in good standing are permitted to enter. It is not a matter of secrecy. It is a matter of sanctity.

T he work that goes on in these buildings sets forth God's eternal purposes with reference to man—God's child and creation. For the most part, temple work is concerned with the family, with each of us as members of God's eternal family and with each of us as members of earthly families. It is concerned with the sanctity and eternal nature of the marriage covenant and family relationships.

I t affirms that each man and woman born into the world is a child of God, endowed with something of His divine nature. The repetition of these basic and fundamental teachings has a salutary effect upon those who receive them, for as the doctrine is enunciated in language both beautiful and impressive, the participant comes to realize that since every man and woman is a child of Heavenly Father, then each is a member of a divine family; hence, every person is his brother or sister.

W hen asked by the scribe, "Which is the first commandment of all?" the Saviour replied, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment.

A nd the second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" (Mark 12:28, 30-31).

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