

# **Towards an educational analysis of Māori and Pacific Island student achievement at the Church College of New Zealand.**

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**Abstract:** The Church College of New Zealand is a private co-educational secondary school sponsored by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. According to the school's ERO Report for 2006, 74% of the student population was Māori and 9% Pacific Island. The underachievement of Māori and Pacific Island in education has been a critical issue in New Zealand for decades. In comparison to their non-Polynesian counterparts, nationally these two groups are still underachieving. However, at the Church College of New Zealand, where the majority of the school roll (a total of 83%), is Polynesian, these two groups experience academic success.

This paper is a literature review and presents a historical picture of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in New Zealand and events leading up to the building of the Church College. For the purposes of this paper, the Church of Jesus Christ will be referred to as 'the Church' or 'the Mormon Church' (as it is more commonly known), and people of the Church will be referred to as Latter-day Saints or Mormon.

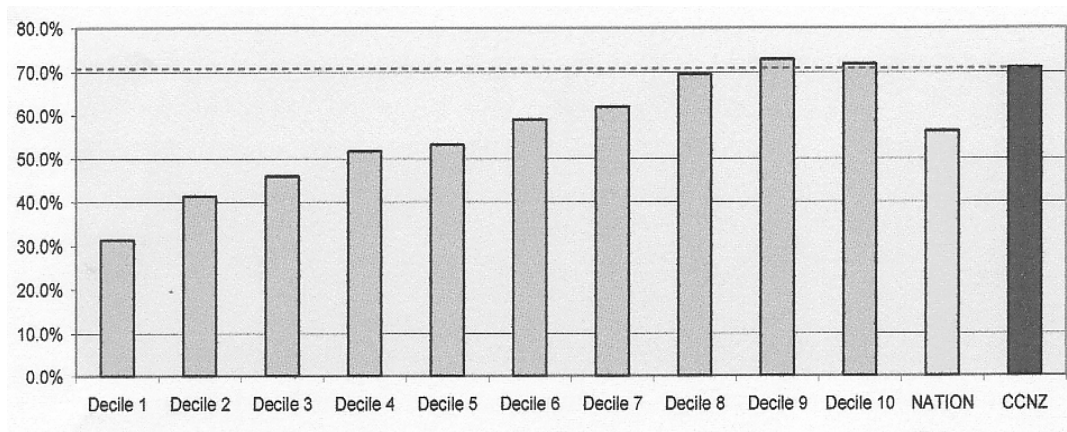
**Keywords:** Church College of New Zealand, Māori Education, Pacific Island

## **Introduction**

A major stimulus for this topic was material found in the 2005 Annual Schools Report by the Ministry of Education. It reported that only 34% of Year 11 Pasifika and 40% of Year 11 Māori candidates achieved NCEA Level 1, in comparison to 65% Year 11 Asian and 72% Year 11 Pākehā. It also reported that 58% of Māori in Year 11 met the literacy and numeracy requirements. Some did not meet both the literacy and numeracy requirements but gained one or the other. Of these candidates 32% did not meet the literacy requirements while 25% did not meet the numeracy requirements (Ministry of Education, 2005).

In a Church College Self-Study Report for 2006, statistics showed that Year 11 students achieved well above the national average in NCEA Level 1 (Figure 1). At this time, the College had a decile rating of three, yet performed at a decile 10 rating.

The Church College report includes similar data showing similar trends for literacy and numeracy and that such trends were also present for year 12 pupils. In some contrast however, the Year 13 group performed on a par with schools of similar decile rating.



**Figure 1: Percent of Year 11 Students Gaining Level 1 Certificate.**

The ERO Report for 2006 confirms the academic success experienced by students at Church College with specific reference to NCEA results for 2005. It states:

Students at Church College enjoy outstanding academic success. Of particular note is the high percentage of Year 9 students who go on to gain NCEA Level 1, 2 and 3. In 2005, 88% of the 2003 Year 9 intake went on to gain Level 1 as compared to the national average of 45% for schools of similar decile. Similarly the percentage of Year 9 students who went on to gain Level 2 and 3 was 86% and 50% respectively compared to 41% and 22% for schools of same decile.

NCEA Level 1, 2 and 3 results for 2005 also indicates that students are achieving at levels well above those for students of similar decile, and comparable with decile 9 and 10 schools. Achievement levels of Māori and Pacific students in NCEA at Church College are significantly higher than for Māori and Pacific students in other schools. NCEA results for 2005 show that students are achieving at levels comparable to their non-Māori and Pacific peers at NCEA Level 1, 2 and 3, and significantly above the achievement of Māori and Pacific students nationally. (ERO, 2006, p. 4)

On 29 June 2006, an announcement was made to the faculty, staff, parents and students of Church College by Church representatives that the college would be closing at the end of the school year in 2009. This was a decision made by leaders of the Church in America.

Regarding the decision, representatives stated that it was the policy and practice of the Church to discontinue operation of Church schools when local systems are able to provide quality education. A major factor in the decision to close the school was the strength of New Zealand's educational programs and that educational standards in New Zealand are the highest in the Pacific region and among the highest in the world (Walton, 2006). The decision to close the school was not made without receiving assurances that the New Zealand Ministry of Education would be able to provide adequate educational opportunities for Church College students (Condie, 2006). Aging facilities was also a contributing factor (Walton, 2006).

The announcement of the school's closure provided further motivation to pursue this research by beginning with a historical review which forms the major part of this paper.

## **Background**

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was established on 6 April 1830 in Fayette, New York in the United States of America (CES, 2000). Formal education has been an important part of the Church from almost the time it was established (Burnett, 1971). Many of the early Mormon pioneers came from a New England Puritan background and therefore brought with them a reverence for knowledge and learning (Gardner & Holland, 1981). The first Church school was established in Kirtland, Ohio in 1833 just three years after the Church was organised (CES, 2000).

One of the goals of the Church is to improve the overall educational opportunities for Latter-day Saints throughout the world (Jacob & Lesuma, 2005). It has a commitment to religious (Clark, 1938) and secular education (Gardner, 1981). Religious education has high priority (Johnson, 1975). It takes the form of seminaries, which is religious instruction for elementary [or primary] and secondary school students, and institutes, which is religious instruction for tertiary students. This is provided by the Church in every location where the Church is established (Gardner, 1981).

There are three major concerns that the Church has for its members in regards to education. They are a desire for an adequate public school education for every child in the Church; post-high-school training of Latter-day Saint youth and formal religious education.

...where there are concentrations of Latter-day Saints in areas with inadequate public schools or where special circumstances may work against some youngster's getting proper training, the Church is prepared to consider providing elementary schools and in some instances secondary schools. (Burnett, 1971, p. 2)

The Church encourages all Latter-day Saints to be self-reliant and education is a big part of this philosophy. Young people throughout the Church in every country are encouraged to get an education (Packer, 1992). Latter-day Saints throughout the world are encouraged to take full advantage of public education opportunities but in those areas where there is a high concentration of members and few public education opportunities, the Church has established facilities to provide these opportunities (Berrett, 1992). As public schools become more available, most Church schools are closed (Packer, 1992). Education provided by the Church is also seen as one of the significant tools in the development of local Church leaders throughout the world (Jacob & Lesuma, 2005).

## **Missionary Work in the Pacific**

One of the fundamental characteristics of the Church that is responsible for its growth throughout the world is a missionary programme that is aimed at preaching a Christian gospel message to people in all countries. The programme has existed for as long as the Church has existed. Early missionaries from the Church left America to travel to countries all over the world to preach.

The Mormon missionary system differs in many ways from the missionary systems of other Christian denominations. LDS [Latter-day Saint] missionaries have always been self-supporting or supported by family or friends, unschooled in the ministry as the world knows it, untrained in languages. Mormon missions are short-term experiences, usually lasting two years but seldom more than three or four. (Britsch, 1986, p. xiii)

In 1843 Latter-day Saint missionaries, Addison Pratt, Benjamin F. Grouard, Knowlton F. Hanks and Noah Rogers were sent to the islands in the Pacific to preach (Ellsworth, 1959; Hunt, 1973).

Their original appointment was to work in the Sandwich Islands but after a lengthy voyage and arriving in Tubuai (400 miles south of Tahiti) before the Sandwich Islands, it was decided that the mission would be established in French Polynesia first (Perrin, 2005). After some time, missionaries were sent throughout the Pacific to Hawaii, Australia and eventually New Zealand in 1854. Branches of the Church were set up in these areas over time. It is important to note, that at the time these missionaries were working in the Pacific, there were also other missionaries working in other parts of the world at the same time.

After the Church was established in New Zealand, missionaries were then sent to Samoa and Tonga. The establishment of the Church in the Cook Islands did not come until later in the 1900s. Missionaries attempted to establish the Church in the Cook Islands in 1899 and again in 1901, but they were unsuccessful (Jonassen, 2005). The primary reason for this was that the dominant church, the London Mission Society was already very well established amongst the Cook Island Māori and a large population of the people were very loyal to the Church which made missionary work difficult for the Mormon missionaries (Britsch, 1986; Jonassen, 2005).

It was not until 1954 that missionary work began in the Melanesian Islands, specifically in Fiji (Britsch, 1986). However, the first known Mormon to live in Fiji was Mary Ashley, who had moved to Fiji with her family from Tonga to Suva in 1924 (Jacob & Lesuma, 2005). At the time the Mormon Church arrived, a large majority of ethnic Fijians were Christian, with a large number of them associated to the Methodist Church and the remainder affiliated to the Roman Catholics. Of the Fijian Indians, 4 % had converted to Christianity (Jacob & Lesuma, 2005).

When the Mormon missionaries arrived on the different islands in the Pacific, the people were already associated with Christianity and affiliated to a denomination (Elsmore, 2000). In all of the islands, the majority of people often associated themselves with one Christian denomination and other denominations had smaller followings. In the Cook Islands (Jonassen, 2005), Samoa (Britsch, 1986) and French Polynesia (Perrin, 2005) at the time of the arrival of the Mormon missionaries, the London Mission Society was already very well established amongst the people.

In Tonga, the people were predominantly Methodist. Although the London Missionary Society had arrived on the island earlier than the Methodists, they were unsuccessful in converting the people (Britsch, 1986).

Missionaries from other denominations were responsible for introducing Christianity to the people of the Pacific. They translated the Bible into the languages of the people, built schools and introduced literacy to them (Hunt, 1973; Jacob, 2005; Jacob & Lesuma, 2005; Perrin, 2005).

The work of establishing the Church in the Pacific has been abetted by some significant advantages and hindered by some serious obstacles. Among the advantages are the Christian foundation laid by missionaries of other denominations who converted the people from non-Christian religions, translated the Bible, educated many of the people, established religious freedom, and introduced some of the amenities of modern life. (Britsch, 1986, p. xiv)

However, these early missionaries also did all that they could to quash traditional culture (Jonassen, 2005), viewing these traditions as mere practices of heathenism and superstition. Unfortunately this attitude was indicative of early missionaries throughout the Pacific as they sought to use Christianity as a means of civilising indigenous peoples. This attitude is even more evident in dealings with Māori which will be discussed further on in this paper.

As the missionary work by the Mormon missionaries spread throughout the Pacific, they encountered much success amongst the Pacific peoples. Despite opposition from other denominations and sometimes challenges posed by the political climate in places such as Fiji, Samoa and French Polynesia, missionaries were still able to establish many branches of the Church in the Pacific (Ellsworth, 2000).

They also established schools on many of the islands. By 1970, the Church was operating 58 primary schools and seven secondary schools in Mexico, Chile, Tonga, Tahiti, Western Samoa, Fiji, American Samoa and New Zealand (Britsch, 1976). Church schools have been a means of facilitating growth and stabilising the Church in the Pacific Islands (Jacob & Lesuma, 2005).

One of the reasons given for the success of Mormon missionaries in establishing the Church in the Pacific was outlined by Britsch (1986):

Most LDS [Latter-day Saint] missionaries in the Pacific have lived with the people, eaten their food, slept on their floors, and bathed in their streams and pools. They have almost always avoided political involvements, except when friction between governments and the Church has drawn missionaries into relations with political leaders. (Britsch, 1986, p. xiv)

Amongst all of the people in the Pacific where branches of the Church were established, missionaries had the most success amongst Māori in New Zealand (Britsch, 1976).

### **Early Māori, Christianity and Education**

Christianity first arrived in New Zealand in 1814 in the form of English missionaries from the Church Mission Society in London (Davidson & Lineham, 1989). As a result of an acquaintance between Samuel Marsden and Ruatara, a Māori chief from the Bay of Islands, missionaries were invited to settle in Rangihoua (Jenkins, 2000).

The missionaries attempts to preach and convert Māori to Christianity at first, met with little success (Simon, 1991), as Christianity imposed upon Māori a foreign way of life and thought. Māori already had their own traditional religious knowledge and practices and these were an integral part of Māori life (Davidson & Lineham, 1989). However, the early missionaries showed little or no understanding of the tikanga and wairuatanga of Māori. Barrington & Beaglehole, (1974) further explained that while the missionaries sought to convert Māori people to Christianity, and along with this they also tried to initiate them in the customs and manners of “civilised” (i.e. British) life.

In particular reference to attitudes of early missionaries towards Māori in New Zealand, Elsmore (1999) stated:

Early missionaries, basing their judgement on their own developed system of religious belief and life, observed the customs of the Māori and seeing no rites they regarded as set apart as sacred observances, concluded the New Zealanders had no religion. To the contrary, Māori religious life was well developed; the problem was merely one of a difference in what made up religion in each of the cultures, with the missionaries seeing the other only from their view point.

Consequently, the message was implied, or even given directly to the Māori that their beliefs were more superstitions, their opinions absurd, their doctrines heathenish, and their natures depraved. (Elsmore, 1999, p. 3)

There were also other contributing factors to the initial lack of success of the missionaries, including the inter-tribal wars (Davidson & Lineham, 1989; Jenkins, 2000) and the mere lack of interest by many Māori in the Christian message (Simon, 1991). However, despite the failure of these early attempts, the efforts of the early missionaries increased as missionaries from other denominations arrived in New Zealand and the CMS remained persistent in their efforts, setting up mission stations and schools amongst other Māori communities (Jenkins, 2000). In 1822, missionaries from the Wesleyan Church arrived and Bishop Pompalier introduced Catholicism in 1838 (Hunt, 1973).

Christianity was seen by the missionaries as a way of civilising Māori and education became an integral component of this mission (Tuhiwai-Smith, 1991). The first mission school was set up by the CMS in 1816 in Rangihoua. According to Jenkins (2000) this came about as an obvious occurrence through the initial relationship of Ruatara and Marsden. Before setting up the school, Jenkins (2000) informs us that the beginnings of schooling for Māori began with Ruatara and other Māori, including sons of other Chiefs, who were taught English by Marsden. In return, Marsden learnt Māori from them. These are considered the first classes of Māori pupils and setting up a school in Rangihoua was obviously the next step. Unfortunately, the school failed to generate much interest amongst Māori and therefore closed two years later.

However, Māori interest in schooling developed over time. Simon (1991) and Tuhiwai-Smith (1990) both indicate that Māori had a genuine interest in the new technology of the Pākehā and became active in accessing this new knowledge. In 1827 the Gospels had been translated into Māori and by 1830 the missionaries had their own printing press which provided an opportunity to produce greater quantities of printed materials (Sinclair, 1991).

The missionaries set up village schools amongst Māori communities (Paterson, 2006) and a growing enthusiasm for reading and writing became apparent. Literacy became widespread amongst Māori, even so that by the middle of the nineteenth century a higher proportion of Māori were literate than that of the settlers (Biggs, 1968). Paterson (2006) further explains that in the 1850s half to three-quarters of adult Māori could read in their own language, and one to two-thirds could both read and write it.

Initially the teaching of reading and writing was undertaken by Pākehā missionaries in Northland, but literacy, like Christianity, was subsequently spread by Māori themselves. Many Māori learnt to read informally, taught by others whose only qualification was their own literacy, using religious texts printed in Māori by the missionaries. At times Māori started their own informal schools, such as that of the ex-slave Ripahau at Ōtaki. (Paterson, 2006, p. 39)

The village schools set up by the early missionaries were unfunded by any governing body and were independent in their operation (Paterson, 2006). The school curriculum was very basic and focused on the skills related to reading, writing and living by the Bible (Tuhiwai-Smith, 1990). The medium of instruction was Māori. As literacy spread, so too did conversion to Christianity (Simon, 1991).

This progress was hindered by some fundamental changes that affected Māori politically and economically (Tuhiwai-Smith, 1990). A steady migration of British settlers seeking land had begun and Hobson arrived in the country causing confusion and controversy through the Treaty of Waitangi (Owens, 1992). New Zealand was annexed by the British, a settler government was

put in place (Owens, 1992; Tuhiwai-Smith, 1990) and policies for Māori were centred around assimilation (Paterson, 2006).

In 1847, the Education Ordinance was introduced by Governor Grey (Department of Education, 1979). This was the first legislative action taken in education. It provided churches with some government funding but was solely to be spent on boarding schools (Paterson, 2006; Simon, 1991). The concept believed by many settlers at this time was that unless Māori children were taken out of the villages and away from the kāinga, little could be done to “civilise” them. Therefore, the role of the boarding schools was rapid assimilation (Barrington & Beaglehole, 1974).

Since the establishment of mission schools, the medium of instruction was Māori. Under the ordinance, the medium of instruction was to be English only (Jenkins, 2000). This funding was continued under the Native Schools Act of 1858 but the government soon assumed total responsibility for Māori education with the passing of the Native Schools Act of 1867 (Paterson, 2006).

From 1852 New Zealand was divided into provinces and the various provincial governments were responsible for their own education systems. Some provinces attempted to set up their own public school system while others were content to assist existing mission schools (Department of Education, 1979; McLaren, 1987). This system was abolished in 1876 (Cumming & Cumming, 1978) and in 1877 the first national Education Act was passed (Department of Education, 1979). The main features of the Act were that education (primary) should be national, free, secular and compulsory for both Pākehā and Māori (Department of Education, 1979).

Māori participation in literacy and education throughout this period waned for various reasons. Paterson (2006) argues that Māori attitudes towards missionary activity and Christianity shifted and some established their own schools to be ‘freed from European influence’. Jenkins (2000) adds to the discussion by stating that under the establishment of the settler government, missionaries assumed a different relationship with Māori. They assumed a role of dominance, viewing Māori as ‘inferior needing civilising as a worker’. Paterson (2006) further explained that an agricultural boom in the mid 1850s caused some Māori to doubt the value of schooling and kept many young people home to tend to the families’ fields. The 1860s also saw the Land Wars between Māori and British, and various diseases introduced by the settlers caused devastating epidemics amongst Māori (Tuhiwai-Smith, 1990).

Amongst all of this, education policy was aimed at assimilation (Paterson, 2006; Simon, 1991; Tuhiwai-Smith, 1990). Assimilation required the complete destruction of Māori culture and in its earliest phase there was little regard held for any aspect of Māori beliefs, values, or practices (Underwood, 2000).

Education was regarded as the most effective way of breaking down what was regarded as the demoralising or uncivilised beliefs and practices of the Māori. Schools were expected to assimilate Māori children into Pākehā culture by actively discouraging Māori beliefs and practices and by replacing them with the Pākehā belief systems and ‘manners’.  
(Tuhiwai-Smith, 1990, p. 137)

In regards to secondary school education, McLaren (1987) states that during the years 1840-1877, there was little demand for secondary school due to settlers being more concerned about survival than education. Only a minority of settlers could afford to pay for any schooling past the age of fourteen and the traditional English grammar school did not appeal to many settlers at first.

However, the new Education Act of 1877 empowered education boards to establish district high schools and institute scholarships to enable selected pupils to attend (Department of Education, 1977). Secondary schooling was not compulsory and these schools struggled. The schooling of girls was also an issue as they were not offered the same sort of schooling as their brothers (Cumming & Cumming, 1978). Native Schools rather than Native Colleges were the priority for the government and until the country was covered by numerous and efficient Native Schools, Native Colleges were considered an impossibility (Barrington & Beaglehole, 1974).

### **The Mormon Church and Māori**

On 20 October 1854, Augustus Farnham, William Cooke and Thomas Holder arrived in Auckland on board the steamer 'William Denny' (Hunt, 1977; Midgley, 1999). They were the first Mormon missionaries to New Zealand. For the first few years, the missionaries had little success. Their earlier efforts were aimed at the settlers but interest was low (Elsemore, 1999). There were only a few missionaries in New Zealand at the time and most LDS missionary work was conducted in the South Island (Britsch, 1986). Attempts to preach the Mormon religion to Māori were made in the 1870s (Hunt, 1973) but these attempts were unsuccessful. It was not until the 1880s that a concentrated effort, under the direction of Church leaders in America, was made by the missionaries to go amongst Māori (Britsch, 1986; Hunt, 1977).

Britsch (1986) outlines two major reasons for the delay in preaching to Māori. The first was due to the ongoing tension between Māori and Pākehā which escalated into the Land Wars between 1860 and 1872. The second reason was the Church recognised in the 1850s that many Māori were already very faithful and committed to the orthodox faiths. However, by the 1880s this had changed.

During the period of the Land Wars, many Māori had defected from their orthodox faiths (Underwood, 2000). While some reverted back to former traditions, many associated themselves with religious movements that had evolved from amongst Māori themselves. These movements contained fundamental Christian beliefs but were integrated with parts of Māori tikanga (Elsemore, 2000), therefore having more relevance to Māori in their situation at the time. Movements such as the Ringatu, Rātana, Pai Marire and Te Kīngitanga are amongst those named by Elsemore (1999).

The result of the land troubles between Māori and Pākehā resulted in a deep distrust and even hatred of Pākehā. The missionaries were also included in this. Missionaries had been instrumental in the drafting of the Treaty of Waitangi and some even carried the Treaty from tribe to tribe to have it signed. Because of this hatred, many Māori withdrew support for the missionaries, their churches and even their education (Barrington & Beaglehole, 1974; Elsemore, 1999; Patterson 2006). Despite this withdrawal of support, Elsemore (1999) argues that Māori did not turn away from the Christian beliefs and principles they had been taught.

While they had turned away from the messengers, however, they had not rejected the message, and right when the Māori were looking for a way to reconcile the two, a solution arrived. (Elsemore, 1999, p. 151)

The coming of the Mormon missionaries amongst Māori was at a crucial period (Elsemore, 1999) and despite opposition, the missionaries achieved considerable success. This began with the conversion of the Teimana family in Cambridge, who were baptised in the Waikato River on Christmas Day in 1882. Consequently the Waikato region went on to become an area in which the Church grew rapidly. As a matter of interest, Waikato were heavily engaged in the Land Wars of



the sixties (Sorenson, 1992) and the growth of the Church in Waikato, perhaps suggests a need for spiritual healing amongst Māori in the Waikato.

By 1884 nearly all of the missionary work was concentrated among Māori in the Wairarapa, Hawkes Bay, Waikato and Gisborne areas (Hunt, 1977). The growth of the Church amongst Māori, especially in these areas was rapid and significant numbers of Ngāti Kahungunu entered the Church (Britsch, 1986). The other area in New Zealand with a concentrated effort of missionary work was amongst Ngā Puhī in Māori villages around the Bay of Islands, and in particular in Maromaku, Kawakawa, Waihou, Otatau, Awarua, Te Horo, Kaikou and Pakotai (Magleby, 1907; Britsch, 1981). In fact, the first Branch of the Church was set up in Te Horo (Magleby, 1907).

There are several reasons for this success. Barker (1967), outlines that two of the reasons for the success of the Mormon missionaries were they generally showed a lack of racial prejudice and gave Māori the opportunity to actively participate in the running of local branches of the Church. Elsemore, (2000) also indicates that in most instances the early missionaries detached themselves from Māori by living apart from them in an English-style house, surrounded by a fence.

On their trips through their area they would pitch a tent and sleep apart from their Māori companions. In this way they no doubt hoped to provide an example of ideal, even 'right' society. European settlers and the occasional missionary who lived in the villages with the local people were criticised by missionaries for their lapse in social and moral standards. (Elsemore, 2000, p. 21)

In comparison, the Mormon missionaries who worked among Māori lived with them. They learned to speak Māori, ate their food and even slept in their houses. In many instances the Mormon missionaries slept on the floors of the people they were working among (Hunt, 1973). The missionaries also did not have the task of converting Māori from "pure heathenism" to Mormonism (Barker, 1967), as they had already been taught the Christian message (Elsemore, 2000). Their role was to preach to Māori a Christian message that would have relevance in their lives without alienating their cultural identity.

One of the principles taught by the Mormon missionaries that reinforced this role was the confirmation of the common belief amongst many Māori that they were descendents of the House of Israel (Binney, 1995; Britsch, 1986; Elsemore, 2000;). The early missionaries had taught Māori that they were of the House of Israel and many Māori identified with this belief. However, the missionaries from other denominations who had introduced Māori to the doctrine that they were of the House of Israel, later denied this notion of Māori origin. When the Mormon missionaries came amongst Māori, they confirmed this connection (Elsemore, 1999).

The Māori-Israelite connection was greatly reinforced by Mormon theology. Latter-day Saints held a rather exalted view of the identity of indigenous peoples in the Western Hemisphere and the Pacific. They believed that the Māori among others were a literal "remnant" of Israel, rather than just another people with situational similarities. (Underwood, 2000, p. 6)

More importantly, the literature suggests that Māori were prepared for the Mormon Church more than other Pacific people not only for the reasons already given but because of prophecies made by some of their own Māori prophets (Britsch, 1981). Two of the more common prophecies were made by Paora Potangaroa, a Wairarapa chief of Te Oreore (Cowley, 1954) and Ārama Toiroa, a patriarch in Māhia (Britsch, 1981; Underwood, 2000).

In March 1881 a conference was held in the whare 'Ngā Tau E Waru' at Te Oreore. The purpose of the conference was for chiefs of Ngāti Kahungunu to discuss political, social and religious problems. The orthodox churches were well represented at the hui and the chiefs present shared a feeling of discontent about the lack of unity among them. One of the questions raised at the hui was which of the many Christian churches was the church for Māori? After much debate and discussion this question was directed to Paora Potangaroa (Cowley, 1954). He was considered the wisest and the most respected of all the chiefs present (Britsch, 1986). After some time he addressed them (Cowley, 1954). The contents of that address became known as the Covenant of Paora Potangaroa (Elsemore, 1999). The following is an account of the translation of some of his address:

My friends, the church for the Māori people has now yet come among us. You will recognise it when it comes. Its missionaries will travel in pairs. They will come from the rising sun. They will visit with us in our homes. They will learn our language and teach us the gospel in our own tongue. When they pray they will raise their right hands. (Cowley, 1954, p. 69)

Shortly after this, many Māori of Ngāti Kahungunu believed this prediction came true when the Mormon missionaries arrived in the area and they joined the Church in large numbers (Britsch, 1986). However, Elsemore (1999) adds that many also left within a short time. Furthermore, Rātana claimed that Potangaroa's prophecy was fulfilled by the Rātana movement (Cowley, 1954; Elsemore, 1999) and many Māori also joined the Rātana church.

In 1830 Ārama Toiroa, a chief from Māhia gathered his whānau together and made the following prophecy to them:

There will come to you a true form of worship; it will be brought from the east, even from beyond the heavens. It will be brought across the great ocean and you will hear of it coming to Pōneke and afterwards its representatives will come to Mahia. They will then go northward to Waiapu but will return to Māhia. When this form of worship is introduced amongst you, you will know it, for one shall stand and raise both hands to heaven. When you see this sign enter into that church. (Britsch, 1986, p. 272)

In 1884, missionaries arrived in Korongata where many of Ārama Toiroa's descendents were situated. As a result of this prophecy, every person in Korongata (Bridge Pa in Hastings) joined the Church. The missionaries then travelled to Māhia and baptised many of Toiroa's descendents there (Britsch, 1981). Te Kooti claimed that the prophecy refers to him and that he was the one of whom Toiroa said would pray standing with both hands raised to heaven. He is the founder of the Ringatu Church and still has a large following (Binney, 1999). However, despite his claims many Māori still joined the Church.

By the turn of the twentieth century, nearly a tenth of Māori in New Zealand had joined the Church. Underwood (2000) attributes this success to the notion that in becoming a Mormon, one was not abandoning Māori culture to become a 'brown Pākehā'. Midgeley (1999) discussed this further by explaining that the missionaries depended on their Māori hosts, loved the Māori and found, sometimes for the first time, Pākehā with whom they could enjoy a satisfactory, loving relationship.

## **Church Education for Māori**

The twenty years or so between the establishment of New Zealand as a British colony and the outbreak of war had seen little achievement in Māori education. By 1865, the mission schools

were empty, the Māori schools had disappeared and the mission boarding schools which catered for approximately 800 Māori children had decreased dramatically to 22. The war closed the schools and ended the missionary period in New Zealand. By 1870, there was a renewed desire amongst Māori for schooling. In 1875 village day schools were established under the Native Schools Act. Private day schools and boarding schools were once again set up under provincial acts. The underlying policy of education, however, was still aimed at assimilation. By 1879 there were 57 Native Primary schools (Barrington & Beaglehole, 1974).

Despite the schooling system and facilities provided by the government, there were still many rural areas with smaller numbers of Māori children that did not have schooling facilities. Most Latter-day Saint Māori resided in small villages where schooling facilities were not usually available. The missionaries felt that the children in these villages needed some form of education. They took it upon themselves to provide this. The Latter-day Saint Māori were also very anxious for their children to learn as much as they could. On 11 January 1886, the first school was established in Nūhaka (Hunt, 1977).

...the school house was a frame building, roofed and sided with sheet iron and measured thirty feet long, seventeen feet wide, and seventeen feet high...the students had only a book, slate and pencil, and no seats or desks. (Parker, 2005)

By the end of 1888, schools were set up in Waiapu, Māhia, Waikato and the Hauraki (Britsch, 1986). By the early 1900s additional small schools were set up in Awarua, Kohonui, Kopuawhara, Korongata, Opoutama, Porirua, Moawhanga, Hastings, Tauranganui, Waiwhara and Wairau. All of the teachers were missionaries and the basic subjects were reading, writing and arithmetic. In some areas vegetable gardens were grown and the vegetables were given to the children to eat and also sold to Pākehā. The money was used to buy supplies to operate the schools. The classes were held in school buildings built by the Mormon families themselves and doubled as Church meeting houses (Hunt, 1977).

The church schools achieved marginal success for various reasons. They were below the standards of the government schools and therefore received no recognition from the Department of Education. The missionaries themselves were not professionally trained teachers, were educated in American schools and their time in New Zealand was short, therefore creating instability in the schools. The schools were also poorly financed and supplied. Some schools were still operating as late as 1917 but were gradually phased out as government education was provided in these rural areas (Britsch, 1986).

Throughout this period there was a growing concern amongst Latter-day Saint Māori to open a Church high school for their children to progress on to (Millennial Star Network, 2001). This also became the view of the leaders of the Church in New Zealand at the time. In the late 1800s and early 1900s, secondary education was not compulsory and the governments schooling policy as already mentioned, in regards to Māori was aimed at providing primary education and not secondary education. Secondary schooling was also elitist, selective, academic in its nature and very expensive. Admission to secondary schools was based on merit. Placements in schools were based on the passing of the Proficiency Exam that was given at the end of standard six (Barrington & Beaglehole, 1974).

The support for providing a secondary schooling facility for Latter-day Saint Māori came out of concern from Church leaders for the lack of secondary schooling provided to Māori (Hunt, 1977), as well as an awareness of Latter-day Saint youth moving away from Church beliefs while they attended boarding schools of other denominations (Britsch, 1989). This concern was accompanied

by numerous requests from Latter-day Saint Māori to have a college run under the direction of the Church (Parker, 2005).

In 1913, in Korongata (Bridge Pa), Hastings, the Church opened the Māori Agricultural College (MAC). It was established to provide modern educational facilities for Māori boys. Although the school was to provide secular learning, there was also instruction in the fundamental principles of the Church was to be taught. The overall objective of the school was the all-round development of the boys who attended it (Hunt, 1977).

The MAC campus consisted of five buildings. These were comprised of an assembly hall, a dormitory, a manual training building, a duplex for faculty families and a laundry building. The assembly hall was also used as a chapel and contained four classrooms; and the dormitory had 27 bedrooms with two or three beds per room, a large kitchen, dining room and six bathrooms (Church College of New Zealand, 1983; Britsch, 1986).

The curriculum consisted of the following subjects: Agronomy, Animal Husbandry, Bookkeeping, Botany, Chemistry, Choral Work, Manual Training (including carpentry), Civics, Dramatic Arts, English, Field Crops, Geography, History, Mathematics, Mechanical Drawing, Music, Outdoor Framework, Penmanship, Physiology and Hygiene, Piano and Organ, Public Speaking, Reading, Soil Management, Sports, Theology and Typewriting. These subjects were taught throughout the years and were thought to provide a well-rounded education for the boys (Parker, 2005).

During the years of the MAC, the relationship between the Church and the government was strained. The government refused to officially offer the school status of a registered high school. They doubted the effectiveness of the education it offered to the boys who attended it. However, in March 1930 the school finally received approval to be a registered high school. Unfortunately by then, the leaders of the Church in America had their own concerns about the school, partly due to a decrease in the number of enrolments and the cost per capita in operating a school with a small number of enrolments. It was also based partly on Church policy to withdraw from education in areas where a good state education system was in place. At the time, Church leaders seemed confident that New Zealand's education system could cater for Latter-day Saint Māori. In October 1930, it was decided by Church leaders that the school would probably discontinue (Hunt, 1977).

Before it could be closed, disaster hit the school on 3 February 1931, in the form of the Napier Earthquake. Fortunately there was no one on campus as it was still school holidays and therefore there were no casualties. However, the buildings received considerable amounts of damage and could not be repaired. They were declared unsafe and that was the end of the school (Millennial Star Network, 2001).

During its 18 years existence, the MAC gave many Māori and Pacific Island boys opportunities that they perhaps would not have received in other schools. Although the school was set up primarily for Māori, there were several Island boys who were sent from the Pacific Islands to attend the school (Parker, 2005). At the time of the earthquake, the school was only just starting to reach a high academic plateau. However, in the years that followed after the MAC was destroyed, the boys who attended the school remained close friends and organised the MAC Old Boys Association. The majority of these boys as grown men, went on to be actively involved in the running of the Church in New Zealand. They also contributed greatly to the building of the next boarding school to be established under the direction of the Church (Hunt, 1977).

## **The Labour Missionary Programme**

In the years that followed the destruction of the MAC, the boys who attended the school went on to serve missions for the Church and upon returning became active participants in its local leadership in New Zealand. Matthew Cowley, an American who at this time had been called to oversee the affairs of the Church in New Zealand was given the task of investigating the need for another Church school in New Zealand (Britsch, 1986). In order to do this, he looked at the overall needs of the youth in the Church in New Zealand.

During the Second World War, Matthew Cowley noticed that the majority of those who attended the MAC were still very active participants in the Church in comparison to those Latterday-Saint Māori who had attended other denominational boarding schools. In many instances these youth had left the Church and were strong in their commitment to the churches of the schools they had attended. He met with members of the MAC Old Boys Association and other Church leaders in Hastings, at the home of Rākaipāka Pūriri. From this meeting came a letter to the leaders of the Church in America requesting that another Church school be established in New Zealand (Hunt, 1977).

Matthew Cowley himself returned to America to consult with leaders over there. When he returned to New Zealand in September of 1948, he informed members of the Church that they had received permission to build another Church school. The proposed school was to be fully accredited, co-educational, centrally located and available to all Latterday-Saint youth in New Zealand (Parker, 2005).

Through negotiations with the government and private land owners, 215 acres of land in Hamilton was purchased and construction on the school began in 1951 (Millennial Star Network, 2001). The responsibility of finding land to build the school on fell under Gordon C. Young, President of the New Zealand mission at the time. Land had been offered by Princess Te Puea for this purpose but Young considered it to be too far away from good sources of equipment and materials (Hunt, 1977). The literature does not outline the reasons for purchasing land in Hamilton or indicate the location of the land offered by Te Puea.

To assist in the construction of the school a mill was bought by the Church in Otatau to provide timber for the project. A brick plant was built onsite along with a joinery. A rock quarry was purchased in Whatawhata and 3,800 acre forest was purchased at Kaikohe to provide for increasing need for lumber (Hunt, 1977).

A project committee was put together by leaders in America and sent over to New Zealand. Part of this committee was the construction supervisor George Biesenger. He had already been in the country building chapels and was later given the construction of the school as his new assignment. Although construction began in 1951, a shortage of skilled labourers in New Zealand hindered its progress. In 1952 New Zealand Latter-day Saints wanting the school to be built according to schedule, volunteered and dedicated themselves to the construction of the school. This was a volunteer labour programme and became known as the Labour Missionary Programme. Those Latterday-Saints who weren't able to labour themselves, supported the workers with donations of food and money (Britsch, 1986).

Seven skilled builders were sent from America to assist in the construction of the school. These men became supervisors of crews of the labour missionaries. They trained the volunteers to be carpenters, brick masons, cabinet makers, electricians, concrete workers and so on. The volunteers themselves were Māori, Pacific Island and Pākehā. Some young men were not even

members of the Church but had come to participate in the programme as koha from their whānau. The construction of the school covered a period of eight years and George Biesenger supervised all construction for that entire time. Over that time, 382 people worked as labour missionaries.

One hundred and twenty-three labour missionaries served a full year. One hundred and twenty-six served for two years. Seventy-three served three years, and thirty were there for four years. It is interesting to note that twenty-two were on the job for five years and that six stayed six full years. Another brother worked seven years, another eight full years. (Church College of New Zealand, 1983, p. 3)

The labour missionaries lived on site. All single men lived in tents in a designated area, while those who were married with children lived in little cottages nearby. A kai hall was built for a place to eat. There was a butcher and a shop onsite to cater for the needs of the missionaries (Church College of New Zealand, 1983). The labour missionary programme was further extended when David O McKay, prophet of the Mormon Church visited in 1955 and announced the building of a temple on land near the school. The school, the homes and the temple became a village known as Temple View (Britsch, 1986).

Many of the labour missionaries learned trades and gained skills that allowed them to further provide for themselves, and for many, their families after the building of the school and the temple. Three adults passed away during the project. The MAC Old Boys Association supported and encouraged the project. Many of them also were labour missionaries. According to the literature, no one who ever contributed to the project in any way regretted their efforts and those days are remembered amongst Latter-day Saints in New Zealand as great days (Church College of New Zealand, 1983).

The school and the temple were completed in 1958. The school doors were opened in February 1958. But both the temple and the school were dedicated by David O McKay in April 1958. The school was named the Church College of New Zealand.

No Church activity has ever more completely won the devotion of those engaged in it, nor greater love in their hearts than the building program of the Pacific. (Church College of New Zealand, 1983, p. 2)

When the Church College opened in February 1958, there were almost 400 students enrolled in the school. The specific aims of the school as outlined by the first principal Clifton D. Boyack, were as follows:

1. To provide an inspiring programme of study of the religious history, principles, scripture and doctrine of the Church.
2. To help students toward full realisation of individual capacities.
3. To have effective citizenship.
4. To obtain the achievement of increasingly effective human relationships.
5. To attain economic efficiency. (Boyack, 1958, p. 53)

## **Conclusion**

This paper has reviewed the rich history behind the building of the Church College of New Zealand and the connection that Polynesians, Māori in particular, have with the school. It provides a context that contributes to the academic successes experienced by students at the

school and also allows further research on the experiences and perspectives of Church College students.

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