

# Chapter 23

## Latter-day Saints in the Pacific: A Bibliographic Essay

Grant Underwood

If there is one must-read book on the history of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in the Pacific, it is R. Lanier Britsch's *Unto the Islands of the Sea: A History of Latter-day Saints in the Pacific* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1986). Originally, it was envisioned as part of a multivolume history of the Church commissioned for the Church's sesquicentennial celebration in 1980. For a variety of reasons the series never materialized, but Britsch persisted and eventually published *Unto the Islands of the Sea*. Given its vast, Pacific-wide scope and its thoroughly researched character, the book has become the standard work in the field, and Britsch, now retired from Brigham Young University, has long been the leading academic historian of the Latter-day Saint experience in the Pacific Islands.

For those seeking additional information and insight into Pacific Latter-day Saint history, two bibliographic works provide a convenient starting place: Russell T. Clement, *Mormons in the Pacific: A Bibliography* (Lā'ie, HI: Institute for Polynesian Studies, 1981); and James B. Allen,

Ronald W. Walker, and David J. Whittaker, *Studies in Mormon History, 1830–1897: An Indexed Bibliography* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2000). While Clement's volume also catalogs published materials, the vast majority of its 2,877 entries pertaining to Pacific Latter-day Saint history list unpublished primary sources, such as diaries, letters, mission histories, and manuals. *Studies in Mormon History* is a massive, general bibliography that covers all periods and places pertaining to Latter-day Saint history. Of particular value are its citations from articles in early Church magazines whose authors were often themselves pioneering missionaries in the places discussed. Crucial details on the early history of the Church among the New Zealand Maori, for instance, come from a series by Alma Greenwood published in the *Juvenile Instructor* in 1885 and 1886, and similarly invaluable information on the early Samoan Mission can be found in an 1893 *Juvenile Instructor* series by Edward J. Wood.

Another general source for a variety of article-length studies of Latter-day Saints in the

Pacific is the series of annual conference *Proceedings* produced by the Mormon Pacific Historical Society (MPHS). The MPHS was founded in 1980 on the Brigham Young University–Hawai‘i campus. From the beginning, its annual conferences have provided a venue where both academic and islander genres of telling history are welcome. Wise local elders, seasoned family historians, and students apprenticing in various academic disciplines participate side-by-side with professional historians and university professors. Over the years, some two hundred presentations, most pertaining to Latter-day Saint history in Hawai‘i, have been given at MPHS annual meetings. *Proceedings* through 1995 have been digitized and electronically archived as part of the online collections offered by the Scholarly Periodicals Center at BYU’s Harold B. Lee Library. Highlights from the first twenty years’ *Proceedings* have been published as the MPHS commemorative volume *Voyages of Faith: Explorations in Mormon Pacific History*, ed. Grant Underwood (Provo, UT: Brigham Young University Press, 2000).

What follows now is a region-by-region review of select, significant publications that pertain to the history of the Church in the Pacific.

## French Polynesia

The restored gospel of Jesus Christ was first preached in the Pacific on a series of islands now known as French Polynesia. S. George and Maria Ellsworth and Yves and Kathleen Perrin have devoted much of their adult lives to researching and writing its fascinating history. The late S. George Ellsworth was one of the most respected Church historians of the second half of the twentieth century. Though perhaps best known as the author of what for many years was a widely used textbook on Utah’s history, in 1951 Ellsworth completed his University of California–Berkeley dissertation on early Latter-day Saint missionary work and thereafter maintained an ongoing interest in the subject. In the 1950s Ellsworth acquired possession of the diaries of Addison Pratt, one of the original four Latter-day Saint mission-

aries to the Pacific, and these diaries became the basis for his 1959 Utah State University Faculty Honor Lecture published as *Zion in Paradise: Early Mormons in the South Seas* (Logan, UT: Utah State University Faculty Association, 1959). This was a milestone publication—the first academic treatment of Pacific Latter-day Saint history anywhere in print.

The Ellsworths’ love for Addison Pratt and his wife, Louisa, who joined him in French Polynesia during his second mission there, eventually led to the publication of S. George Ellsworth, ed., *The Journals of Addison Pratt* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1990); and S. George Ellsworth, ed., *The History of Louisa Barnes Pratt: Being the Autobiography of a Mormon Missionary Widow and Pioneer* (Logan, UT: Utah State University Press, 1998). Most of *The Journals of Addison Pratt* chronicles Pratt’s experience in French Polynesia from 1843 to 1852. For the latter part of that period, while Louisa was living with Addison in French Polynesia, *The History of Louisa Barnes Pratt* offers a woman’s and a wife’s perspective on mission life. In terms of published accounts, these two volumes provide an unparalleled firsthand glimpse of the beginnings of the Church in French Polynesia and greatly amplify the one previously published missionary memoir covering some of the same ground—James S. Brown, *Life of a Pioneer: Being the Autobiography of James S. Brown* (Salt Lake City: George Q. Cannon & Sons, 1900).

Some of the information in Ellsworth’s earlier articles about the Church in French Polynesia ended up in the rich editorial essays accompanying his two documentary volumes. Most of it, though, was expanded into a fully developed narrative that, along with the excellent coverage of the post–World War II years by coauthor Kathleen Perrin, became *Seasons of Faith and Courage: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints in French Polynesia, A Sesquicentennial History, 1843–1993* (Sandy, UT: Yves R. Perrin, 1994). A decade earlier, former Tahiti Papeete Mission president Yves R. Perrin, Kathleen’s husband, had written a similar mission history covering the

same period—*L’Histoire De L’Eglise Mormone En Polynesie Francaise De 1844 a 1982* (Paapeete, Tahiti: Imprimerie Church Educational System–STP, 1982). A distillation of this material can be found in chapter 17 herein.

Overlapping with work already mentioned but offering a convenient sample of George Ellsworth’s historical craftsmanship is “New Wine and Old Bottles: Latter-day Saint Missionary Work in French Polynesia, 1844–1852,” in *Voyages of Faith*, 13–32. Maria Ellsworth made a noteworthy contribution to French Polynesian Latter-day Saint historiography with “The First Mormon Missionary Women in the Pacific, 1850–1852,” in *Voyages of Faith*, 33–48. This may profitably be read in conjunction with the more broadly based and richly contextualized Carol Cornwall Madsen, “Mormon Missionary Wives in Nineteenth Century Polynesia,” *Journal of Mormon History* 13 (1986–87): 61–85. Thanks to the Ellsworths’ concern for future study, four decades worth of their extensive and meticulous research is now preserved in the S. George and Maria S. Ellsworth Collections at the Utah State University Library in Logan. For Latter-day Saint history in French Polynesia, only the LDS Church Archives offers a richer resource of primary sources.

When pressure from the French led to the expulsion of the American missionaries in the 1850s, islander Latter-day Saints were left without direction from Church headquarters. Not for another forty years would Latter-day Saint missionaries be sent to French Polynesia. In the interim, RLDS (formerly the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, now Community of Christ) missionaries visited the islands and converted many former Latter-day Saints to the Reorganized Church. When the Latter-day Saints returned in the 1890s, they found that the RLDS Church was one of the largest in the country. The RLDS story is told in F. Edward Butterworth, *Roots of the Reorganization: French Polynesia* (Independence, MO: Herald Publishing House, 1977); and *The Adventures of John Hawkins* (Independence, MO: Herald Publishing House, 1963).

## Hawai‘i

In 1850, the same year that Addison Pratt returned to Tahiti to continue the missionary work he began six years earlier, another group of men, including George Q. Cannon, sailed from San Francisco to open the work in Hawai‘i. Though some of the men grew discouraged with their lack of success among the small white population in the Sandwich Islands, Cannon felt impressed that their primary mission was among the native Hawaiians. Persistence paid off, and within a very few years thousands had been baptized, and the Book of Mormon had been translated into Hawaiian. The ensuing history of the Church in Hawai‘i is an engaging one that includes the intriguing tale of that sometime Church member and “rascal in paradise,” Walter Murray Gibson; the story of the subsequent establishment and flourishing of a Latter-day Saint gathering place in Lā‘ie, O‘ahu; and accounts of periodically close relations with Hawaiian royalty, including the eventual baptism of Queen Liliuokalani. Twentieth century milestones include the construction of the first Latter-day Saint temple outside North America, the building of the first Latter-day Saint postsecondary school in the Pacific, and the establishment of the Polynesian Cultural Center. The story of the Church in Hawai‘i, as chapter 18 herein makes clear, is also the story of how the gospel was taken to hundreds of Hawai‘i’s citizens of Japanese ancestry, who by the twentieth century outnumbered the native Hawaiians.

The Church’s history in Hawai‘i has been far more extensively studied than that of any other part of the Pacific. While Hawai‘i was not the first group of islands to receive the restored gospel, for a variety of reasons Hawai‘i became the Church’s most important center in the Pacific. The most comprehensive history of the Church in Hawai‘i is R. Lanier Britsch, *Moramona: The Mormons in Hawai‘i* (Lā‘ie, HI: Institute for Polynesian Studies, BYU–Hawai‘i, 1989), which is a stand-alone monograph that expands Britsch’s Hawai‘i chapters in *Unto the Islands of the Sea*.

George Q. Cannon, Joseph F. Smith, and even Samuel E. Woolley may be well known to many Church members today, but who outside of Hawai'i has heard of Kaleohano, Kahumoku, and Keanu? Few Hawaiian Saints, as with Pacific Islanders generally, kept diaries, and virtually none of these records have survived. However, the late Joseph Spurrier, longtime faculty member at BYU–Hawai'i, spent many years culling from dozens of missionary diaries and letters any reference to nineteenth-century Hawaiian Saints. From such material, he wrote *Sandwich Island Saints: Early Mormon Converts in the Hawaiian Islands* (O'ahu, HI: J. H. Spurrier, 1989). Critics have noted its lack of scholarly footnotes (though Spurrier did provide a bibliography), but *Sandwich Island Saints* is the volume to consult for an impressive and inspirational reconstruction of the lives of Hawaiian Saints in the 1800s. Readers interested in a detailed recounting of the activities of Latter-day Saint missionaries and mission presidents from the mainland United States should consult Britsch's *Moramona*.

Another major figure, now deceased, in the historiography of the Latter-day Saint experience in Hawai'i is Lance D. Chase. Like Spurrier, Chase served for many years on the BYU–Hawai'i faculty. Throughout his career he produced a number of significant article-length studies on a variety of topics pertaining to Latter-day Saint history in Hawai'i. Most were delivered at the annual meetings of the Mormon Pacific Historical Society, of which Chase was cofounder in 1980. A baker's dozen were collected for a posthumously published volume titled *Temple, Town, Tradition: The Collected Historical Essays of Lance D. Chase* (Lā'ie, HI: Institute for Polynesian Studies, 2000).

Aside from these three key figures in the historiography of Latter-day Saints in Hawai'i, several graduate studies may also be profitably consulted: Margaret C. Bock, "The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints in the Hawaiian Islands" (master's thesis, University of Hawai'i,

1941); Richard C. Harvey, "The Development of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Hawai'i" (master's thesis, Brigham Young University, 1974); and the more specialized Raymond Clyde Beck, "Palawai Basin: Hawai'i's Mormon Zion" (master's thesis, University of Hawai'i, 1972). Britsch's *Moramona* utilizes but generally supersedes these pioneering studies.

For certain periods of the Church's history in Hawai'i, the major studies mentioned above have been supplemented by more recent works. This is particularly true for the early years where authors have mined an unusual number of detailed missionary diaries (see lists in the bibliographies of *Moramona* and *Sandwich Island Saints*). Several of these journals can be readily accessed through the biographies that rely on them to reconstruct their subject's experience in Hawai'i. Chief among these is Davis Bitton, *George Q. Cannon: A Biography* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1999), which draws heavily on Cannon's journal as well as on *My First Mission* (Salt Lake City: *Juvenile Instructor*, 1879), an inspirational summary that Cannon himself prepared and published in the 1880s (see Bitton's discussion of Cannon in chapter 15 herein). The LDS Family and Church History Department has plans to publish Cannon's diaries, and this project, it will represent a significant milestone in the historiography of the Church in Hawai'i.

Other biographies that likewise rely on missionary diaries for their accounts of early Hawaiian Latter-day Saint history include M. Guy Bishop, *Henry William Bigler: Soldier, Gold Miner, Missionary, Chronicler, 1815–1900* (Logan, UT: Utah State University Press, 1998); and E. Dale LeBaron, *Benjamin F. Johnson: Friend to the Prophet* (Provo, UT: Grandin Press, 1997). Shorter specialized studies of significance include Donald R. Shaffer, "Hiram Clark and the First LDS Hawaiian Mission: A Reappraisal," *Journal of Mormon History* 17 (1991): 94–109; Scott G. Kenney, "Mormons and the Smallpox Epidemic of 1853," *Hawaiian Journal of History* 31 (1997): 1–26; Jeffrey S. Stover, "Wars and

Rumors of Wars': The Perceived Threat of the 'Mormon Invasion' of Hawai'i"; and Lance D. Chase, "The Hawaiian Mission Crisis of 1874: The Awa Rebellion Story," in *Voyages of Faith*, 49–57, 59–70.

Walter Murray Gibson, that colorful, occasional confidant of both Brigham Young and Hawaiian royalty, has fascinated authors for decades. Popular writers of historical fiction from James A. Michener to Paul Bailey and Samuel Taylor have taken a turn at telling Gibson's story. An important historical study is Jacob Adler and Robert M. Kamins, *The Fantastic Life of Walter Murray Gibson: Hawai'i's Minister of Everything* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1986), which focuses on his later political life after he was excommunicated from the Church. For the period during which he was a member of the Church, varying assessments of his character and contribution can be sampled in two articles: Gwynn Barrett, "Walter Murray Gibson: The Shepherd Saint of Lanai Revisited," *Utah Historical Quarterly* 40 (1972): 142–62; and R. Lanier Britsch, "Another Visit with Walter Murray Gibson," *Utah Historical Quarterly* 46 (1978): 65–78.

The Church's Polynesian Cultural Center (PCC), created in the 1960s, is another subject that has drawn considerable attention in print. In addition to chapter 10 herein, brief treatments worth consulting are Vernice Wineera and Rubina Rivers Forester, "The Polynesian Cultural Center: Reflections and Recollections," in *Voyages of Faith*, 209–38; and James Whitehurst, "Mormons and the Hula: The Polynesian Cultural Center in Hawai'i," *Journal of American Culture* 12 (1989): 1–5. Full-length studies include the "official" twenty-year history by Robert O'Brian, *Hands Across the Water: The Story of the Polynesian Cultural Center* (Lā'ie, HI: Polynesian Culture Center, 1983). Several graduate theses are Craig Ferre, "A History of the Polynesian Cultural Center's 'Night Show,' 1963–1983" (PhD diss., Brigham Young University, 1988); Douglas Terry Webb, "Mormonism and Tourist Art in Hawai'i" (PhD diss., Arizona State University, 1990); Ann

Marie Robinson, "The Polynesian Cultural Center: A Study of Authenticity" (master's thesis, California State University–Chico, 1991); and Vernice Wineera, "Selves and Others: A Study of Reflexivity and the Representation of Culture in Touristic Display at the Polynesian Cultural Center, Lā'ie, Hawai'i" (PhD diss., University of Hawai'i, 2000). Wineera, who heads the Pacific Institute in Lā'ie, Hawai'i, and has been intimately associated with the Polynesian Cultural Center for many years, has written an especially fine study, well-deserving of careful attention.

The very existence of the Polynesian Cultural Center testifies to the close association that many Pacific Islanders feel between cultural performing arts and the gospel. Hawaiians, like other islanders, tell their history more through songs, chants, and dances than written texts. Hawaiian hula, for instance, is far more meaningful than the form of entertainment that people from beyond the Pacific typically assume it to be. Hawaiian Latter-day Saints have been significant actors in preserving and perpetuating this important aspect of their culture. In the twentieth century, a disproportionate number of leading Hawaiian-culture performers have been Latter-day Saints (see Ishmael W. Stagner, Victoria Kekuakalani, and Midge Lanihuliokauahaa Oler, "The Gospel and the Hawaiian Performing Arts," in *Voyages of Faith*, 239–54).

In addition to the PCC, twentieth-century Latter-day Saint history in Hawai'i was profoundly influenced by the Church's three other "entities" (as they are called locally) in Lā'ie—the temple, Church College of Hawai'i (now BYU–Hawai'i), and Zions Securities (now Hawai'i Reserves, Inc.). Treatment of the entities in *Moramona* may be profitably supplemented with Paul L. Anderson, "A Jewel in the Pacific: The Art and Architecture of the Hawai'i Temple," in *Voyages in Faith*, 147–64; and Richard O. Cowan, "Temples in the Pacific: A Reflection of Twentieth-Century Mormon History," in *Voyages of Faith*, 129–33. For the Church College of Hawai'i and BYU–Hawai'i, see the account of inaugural president Reuben D.

Law, *The Founding and Early Development of the Church College of Hawai'i* (St. George, UT: Dixie College, 1972); and the account of subsequent president Alton Wade, "BYU-Hawai'i: A Promise in the Pacific," *Brigham Young Magazine* 48 (1994): 34-39. Ken Baldrige offers a fascinating, behind-the-scenes glimpse at the deliberations that went into deciding what kind of Church school should be built in Hawai'i and where it should be located in "Search for a Site: Selection of the Church College of Hawai'i Campus," in *Voyages of Faith*, 191-208. Over the years, Lance Chase boldly essayed several studies of the somewhat checkered career of principal Lā'ie landowner Zions Securities (see Chase's *Temple, Town, and Tradition*).

Hawai'i is often called a "melting pot" or "salad bowl" where a variety of ethnic groups have dwelt in reasonably peaceful coexistence for years. Two fine studies that probe the ethnic dimension of Latter-day Saint history in Hawai'i are Max E. Stanton, "Samoan Saints: Samoans in the Mormon Village of Lā'ie, Hawai'i" (PhD diss., University of Oregon, 1973); and Russell T. Clement and Sheng-Luen Tsai, "East Wind to Hawai'i: History and Contributions of Chinese and Japanese Latter-day Saints in Hawai'i," in *Voyages of Faith*, 89-106. The most detailed study of the earliest Japanese converts is Shinji Takagi, "Tomizo and Tokujiro: The First Japanese Mormons," *BYU Studies* 39 (2000): 73-106.

Throughout the world, Latter-day Saints engage in sharing faith-promoting stories. This activity may be even more common among Latter-day Saints in traditionally oral societies. Academic historians tend to want to "get to the bottom of" the stories they encounter, and several pertaining to the Church in Hawai'i have been thoroughly investigated: Harold S. Davis, "The Iosepa Origin of Joseph F. Smith's 'Lā'ie Prophecy,'" *BYU Studies* 33 (1993): 81-108; Lavina Fielding Anderson, "Prayer Under a Pepper Tree: Sixteen Accounts of a Spiritual Manifestation," *BYU Studies* 33 (1993): 55-78; and Kenneth W. Baldrige and Lance D. Chase, "The

Purported December 7, 1941, Attack on the Hawai'i Temple," in *Voyages of Faith*, 165-90.

A final subject of importance to Latter-day Saint Hawaiian history actually did not take place in Hawai'i at all. It occurred in Utah, where a mainland gathering place for Polynesians was designated in the late 1800s. The story of the settlement known as *Iosepa* (the Hawaiian word for "Joseph") is one of the most fascinating chapters in Mormon history. Iosepa was founded in 1889 in Skull Valley, Utah, seventy-five miles west of Salt Lake City. When the settlement was disbanded in 1917, virtually all of its several hundred inhabitants returned to Hawai'i to assist with the building of the recently announced temple in Lā'ie. Dennis Atkin has studied Iosepa over a longer period of time and has written more on it than anyone else. His "A History of Iosepa, the Utah Polynesian Colony" (master's thesis, Brigham Young University, 1958) is still the baseline study. For an accessible summary of his research, see Atkin, "Iosepa: A Utah Home for Polynesians," in *Voyages of Faith*, 71-88. For a different perspective, see Tracey E. Panek, "Life at Iosepa, Utah's Polynesian Colony," *Utah Historical Quarterly* 60 (1992): 64-77.

## New Zealand

The first Latter-day Saint baptisms in New Zealand occurred in the 1850s among European, primarily British, settlers (called *pakeha* by the Maori). For the next quarter century, a handful of *pakeha* Latter-day Saints kept the Church alive in the Wellington and Christchurch areas, but their numbers never amounted to more than a few dozen. In the 1880s a concerted effort was made to take the restored gospel to the Maori. Within a few short years thousands of New Zealand Maori were baptized. By the turn of the century, the Church counted nearly a tenth of the total Maori population as members, with a significantly higher percentage in certain *pa* (settlements) along the east coast of the North Island from the southern Wairarapa to Poverty Bay and

beyond. From the 1880s to the 1950s, the Church in New Zealand was overwhelmingly Maori in its makeup. After midcentury, however, the number of *pakeha* members increased significantly as the Church more aggressively sought them out and chose to emphasize the universal character of Mormonism rather than its compatibility with Maori culture. Today Church membership percentages more closely match the ethnic distribution of the national population. The majority of New Zealand Latter-day Saints is now *pakeha*, but a sizeable minority is Maori. Moreover, a residual respect for the Maori-Mormon connection remains.

The story of Latter-day Saint beginnings in New Zealand can be found in several general histories: Brian W. Hunt, *Zion in New Zealand: A History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in New Zealand, 1854–1977* (Temple View, New Zealand: Church College of New Zealand, 1977); and Britsch, *Unto the Islands of the Sea*, 253–345. A revisionist view is presented in Marjorie Newton, “Mormonism in New Zealand: A Historical Appraisal” (PhD diss., University of Sydney, 1998). Still helpful in some aspects is Ian R. Barker, “The Connexion: The Mormon Church and the Maori People” (master’s thesis, Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand, 1967). A shorter, specialized study valuable for its focus on the beginnings of the Church among the Maori is Peter Lineham, “The Mormon Message in the Context of Maori Culture,” *Journal of Mormon History* 17 (1991): 62–93. Offering new details on the early history is Grant Underwood, “Mormonism and the Shaping of Maori Religious Identity,” in *Voyages of Faith*, 107–26. A more theoretically oriented exploration of the Maori embrace of Mormonism is Underwood, “Mormonism, the Maori and Cultural Authenticity,” *The Journal of Pacific History* 35 (September 2000): 133–46.

Carrying the story of Mormon-Maori cultural interaction into the twentieth century is Ian Barber, “Between Biculturalism and Assimilation: The Changing Place of Maori Culture in the

Twentieth-Century New Zealand Mormon Church,” *The New Zealand Journal of History*, 29 (October 1995): 142–69. A fine specialized study is Eric G. Schwimmer, “Mormonism in a Maori Village: A Study in Social Change” (master’s thesis, University of British Columbia, 1965). A brief, personal memoir is Harold T. Christensen, “The New Zealand Mission During the Great Depression: Reflections of a Former Acting President,” *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 24 (Fall 1991): 69–76. Given his outsized importance in the Pacific, particularly in New Zealand where he served as a missionary and mission president for more than a decade, two volumes pertaining to Matthew Cowley that may be profitably consulted (in addition to chapter 2 herein) are Henry A. Smith, *Matthew Cowley, Man of Faith* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1954); and [Glen L. Rudd], ed., *Matthew Cowley Speaks* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1954). Historically Pacific Islanders were voyaging peoples, and intra-Pacific migration was a common phenomenon in Oceania. In the past half century, however, Auckland, New Zealand, one of the largest metropolises and port cities in the South Pacific, has experienced a particularly large influx of diverse peoples from all over the South Pacific. How this has imparted a multi-ethnic character to the Church is studied in Ruby Welch, “Ethnicity Amongst Auckland Mormons” (master’s thesis, University of Auckland, 1989).

## Sāmoa

One of the ironies of Pacific Mormon history is that the wayward Walter Murray Gibson was responsible for seeing that the restored gospel was carried to Sāmoa. In the early 1860s he sent two Hawaiian elders, Samuela Manoa and Kimo Pelio, to Sāmoa to spread the good news. A quarter century later, when American missionary Joseph Harry Dean and his wife arrived, they found Manoa and a small group of converts still faithful to the gospel after years of isolation from headquarters. So began the fascinating story of the Church in Sāmoa. Later that history includes

accounts of the conversion of entire villages; the establishment of special island gathering places such as Sauniatu, which President David O. McKay called the most beautiful spot on earth; and the construction of schools, chapels, and eventually a temple. To local Samoans, being a Latter-day Saint is often the story of missionary service in a distant village, participation in the mid-twentieth-century labor mission, or personal acts of faith like that of Maliatoa Fitisemanu who turned down a prominent position, to which he was entitled by his chiefly lineage, with the famous remark, "I would rather be a deacon in the Mormon Church than the king of Sāmoa." Such faith, as well as the sheer numbers of Samoan Latter-day Saints—some 70,000 out of a population of just over 160,000—make the Church in Sāmoa a force to be reckoned with.

The only book-length history of the Church in Sāmoa is the privately produced *Sāmoa Apia Mission History, 1888–1983* (Pesega, Upolu, Western Sāmoa: Sāmoa Apia Mission, 1983) compiled under the direction of BYU professor (then Samoan Mission president) R. Carl Harris. More inclusive of nonecclesiastical matters, and the only formally published account that attempts comprehensive coverage, is Britsch, *Unto the Islands of the Sea*, 347–428. This incorporates most of the material found in Britsch's earlier "The Founding of the Samoan Mission," *BYU Studies* 18 (1977): 12–26.

As is typical of many church histories, in Samoan Latter-day Saint historiography, the earliest period receives the greatest attention. Several privately produced compilations that offer excellent detail are Jennie M. Hart, John W. Hart, and R. Carl Harris, *The Expanded Samoan Mission History, 1888–1900, Vol. 1*. (n.p.: 1988); and Bill Hart, *LDS Voices from the Past: A Collection of Newspaper & Magazine Articles about Sāmoa, 1889–1917* (Downey, ID: Ati's Samoan Print Shop, n.d.). A number of other unpublished studies focus on individual missionaries: Melvin S. Tagg, "The Life of Edward James Wood, Church Patriot" (master's thesis, Brigham Young Univer-

sity, 1959), which deals with one of the first American missionaries in Sāmoa; Ruth R. Yeaman, "Women From Zion in the Samoan Mission: 1888–1900," in *1990 MPHS Annual Conference Proceedings* (Lā'ie, HI: Mormon Pacific Historical Society, 1990), 54–80; and R. Wayne Shute, "The Life and Times of Early Latter-day Saint Missionaries in Polynesia: Sāmoa," in *World Conference on Records: Preserving Our Heritage, August 12–15, 1980* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1980), 16, which provides a brief overview.

An important 1890s convert who donated the land in Pesega where the Church's mission home, school, and temple stand today is discussed in Rubina Rivers (Ahmu) Forester, "Ahmu: An Early Samoan Latter-day Saint," *1984 MPHS Annual Conference Proceedings* (Lā'ie, HI: Mormon Pacific Historical Society, 1984), 27–30. The impressive life of renowned first-generation convert Opapo Fonoimoana is highlighted in Carl Fonoimoana, "Opapo: The Power of his Faith," in *Voyages of Faith*, 305–10. In 1904 Opapo helped found Sauniatu, the famed Samoan Latter-day Saint gathering place. The history of that famous spot is detailed in Kenneth W. Baldrige, "Sauniatu, Western Sāmoa: A Special Purpose Village, 1904–1934," *Journal of the Polynesian Society* 87 (1978): 165–92.

Two missionary accounts cover the years just before World War I: William A. Moody, *Years in the Sheaf: The Autobiography of William Alfred Moody* (Salt Lake City: Granite Publishing, 1959); and Dean B. Farnsworth, "Missionary Service in Sāmoa: 1910–1912," in *1984 MPHS Annual Conference Proceedings* (Lā'ie, HI: Mormon Pacific Historical Society, 1984), 21–26. Missionary work and Church life in Sāmoa following the war is detailed in W. Karl Brewer, *Armed With the Spirit: Missionary Experiences in Sāmoa* (Provo, UT: Brigham Young University Press, 1975).

The above publications pertain to the first quarter century of Latter-day Saint history in Sāmoa. For the years following that period, students will need to rely on *Sāmoa Apia Mission*

*History* or Britsch, *Unto the Islands of the Sea*. One important exception is Jennie Hart, ed., *Autobiography of Percy John Rivers* (Downey, ID: Ati's Samoan Print Shop, 1996), which is the story of Ah Mu's grandson, Percy Rivers, who was the first Samoan stake president and the first regional representative (forerunner to Area Seventy). One other study of the Church in Sāmoa worth noting, which offers a non-Latter-day Saint Samoan, perspective, is Tafailematagi Muasau, "The Appeal of the Mormons in Sāmoa," *Pacific Journal of Theology* 2 (1991): 35–41.

## Tonga

The first Latter-day Saint missionaries were sent to Tonga in 1891 by the president of the recently founded Samoan mission. They arrived just after a religious controversy had taken place over whether all Tongans should be compelled to belong to the Methodist-based Tongan Free Church. Though religious freedom was legally mandated, the perception persisted that loyalty to the king and loyalty to the Tongan Free Church were one and the same. This led to the demise of the Latter-day Saint mission before the end of the decade. In 1907 missionaries were once again sent to the Tongan Islands. This time the mission remained. Though growth was slow, by 1916 it was decided that Tonga should no longer be a part of the Samoan Mission, and the Tongan Mission was founded. Again in the 1920s, the Church in Tonga faced dissolution when the government passed a "passport act" preventing the entry of Latter-day Saint missionaries. Once the act was repealed, the Church grew slowly but steadily. The visit of Elder George Albert Smith in the late 1930s, the translation and publication of the Book of Mormon in Tongan in the 1940s, and the construction of Liahona College (equivalent to an American high school) in the 1950s all had a strengthening impact on the Church. As in Sāmoa and elsewhere in the world, beginning in the late 1950s, the rate of growth began to increase dramatically. Stakes

were organized and by the 1980s a temple, the leading symbol of Church maturation, had been constructed. Today some 40 percent of the Tongan population is Latter-day Saint.

For the full sweep of Tongan Latter-day Saint history, Britsch's *Unto the Islands of the Seas* shares the spotlight with two other valuable histories. Former Tongan missionary and founding principal of Liahona College, Ermel J. Morton, who translated the triple combination of the scriptures into Tongan, prepared a *Brief History of the Tongan Mission of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Suva, Fiji: Fiji Times Print, 1968) for the mission's jubilee anniversary. The other important work is the culturally sensitive history by Eric B. Shumway, *Tongan Saints: Legacy of Faith* (Lā'ie, HI: Institute for Polynesian Studies, 1991). Shumway, who was both a missionary and mission president in Tonga, is a linguist and Tongan-language expert. *Tongan Saints* reflects his sophisticated analysis of both Tongan oral tradition and missionary diaries articulated earlier in "Problems in Oral History in Tonga," *1980 MPHS Annual Conference Proceedings* (Lā'ie, HI: Mormon Pacific Historical Society, 1980), 20–26; and "A Tongan Missionary Journal: History As Anecdote," *1982 MPHS Annual Conference Proceedings* (Lā'ie, HI: Mormon Pacific Historical Society, 1982), 3–11.

Specialized studies of particular aspects of Tongan Latter-day Saint history are few. Britsch contributed "Mormon Intruders in Tonga: The Passport Act of 1922," in *Mormons, Scripture, and the Ancient World*, ed. Davis Bitton (Provo, UT: Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies, 1998), 121–48. Veteran administrator of Church schools Harvey L. Taylor produced a two-volume unpublished study that is vital for understanding not only the history of Liahona College but all other Church schools in the Pacific as well (see Taylor, "The Story of LDS Church Schools," 2 vols. [Provo, UT: Prepared for the Church Commissioner of Education, 1971]). On Liahona specifically, see Delworth Keith Young, "Liahona High School, Its Prologue

and Development to 1965” (master’s thesis, Utah State University, 1967).

In the aftermath of the full-length movie “The Other Side of Heaven,” arguably no aspect of Tongan LDS history is better known than the mission experiences of John H. Groberg, member of the First Quorum of the Seventy. Groberg’s mission memoirs—*In the Eye of the Storm* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1993), on which the movie was based, and *The Fire of Faith* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1996)—provide an unforgettable portrait of the intersection of Tongan culture and Latter-day Saint missionary and Church life in the late 1950s. A more contemporary Tongan memoir is Fa’aki Kihelotu ‘Alatini Richter, *From Tonga to Zion: The Story of Fa’aki Kihelotu ‘Alatini Richter or Faith and Prayer*, ed. Ella Mae Judd (Phoenix, AZ: Polynesian Publications, 1991).

Mormonism in Tonga has also been the subject of two valuable graduate theses. Tamar Gordon’s “Inventing Mormon Identity in Tonga” (PhD diss., University of California–Berkeley, 1988) received mixed reviews among the Tongan Latter-day Saint community but offers the insights of a cultural anthropologist. One can sample her interpretations in “Inventing the Mormon Tongan Family,” in *Christianity in Oceania: Ethnographic Perspectives*, ed. John Barker (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1990), 197–217. A master’s thesis that examines the Church’s impact as the largest external contributor to the Tongan economy is Sosaia H. Naulu, “Incidental Effects of Church Activity on Development, Landscapes and Culture: An Example from Tonga” (master’s thesis, Brigham Young University, 1990).

## Melanesia

Melanesia (literally, black islands, in reference to the inhabitants’ skin color) designates that group of islands that lie to the north and northeast of Australia—Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, New Caledonia, Vanuatu, and Fiji. At a time when the Church restricted blacks

from holding the priesthood, the similarity in physical appearance between Melanesians and Africans contributed to the fact that the Church was not established in these islands as early as in Polynesia. In 1955, during a stopover in Suva, Fiji, President David O. McKay encountered a small but flourishing branch and decided both that Melanesians were not under the priesthood ban and that Church work should go forward in Fiji (see chapter 20 herein). In an inspired move similar in intent to the popular punch-line of the movie *Field of Dreams*, “If you build it, they will come,” President McKay commissioned the building of a full-sized chapel complex in Suva, Fiji. In time, the people did come, and today there are nearly fourteen thousand Latter-day Saints, four stakes, and a temple in Fiji. As discussed in chapter 20 herein, approximately 50 percent of Fiji’s current population is Indian, descendants of the indentured servants brought from the subcontinent in the nineteenth century to work the fields. Not surprisingly, a significant number of Latter-day Saints in Fiji today are Indian.

In addition to the Jacob and Lesuma chapter and Britsch’s brief update in this volume (chapter 14), the only other published histories, aside from the coverage in *Unto the Islands of the Sea*, are a handful of brief pieces that have appeared in Church periodicals during the past twenty years. Of these, Shirleen Meek, “Fiji: Islands of Faith,” *Ensign*, December 1990, 32–37, is the most informative and accessible, though English-speaking readers should not overlook *Tambuli*, now called the *Liahona*, the Church’s periodical for portions of the South Pacific. Not all the articles appearing there also appear in the *Ensign*.

Coverage of the Church in the rest of Melanesia is even sparser. *Unto the Islands of the Sea* offers only pages, instead of chapters, since the Church was either very new or not yet established in these areas when Britsch’s book was published. Though several Tongan Latter-day Saint families had lived in the capital, Port Vila, since the 1950s, mission work commenced in earnest in Vanuatu (New Hebrides) in the early

1970s when two Tongan missionaries were sent there to further the work. Growth has been slow in the country, whose Latter-day Saint population numbered less than three thousand in 2005, but the Saints received a significant boost when President Gordon B. Hinckley visited them in June 2003. On the other hand, in Papua New Guinea, where the first branch was organized in 1979, the Church counts almost fourteen thousand members, nearly as many as in Fiji and more than half the membership in French Polynesia, where the Church has been since 1844. Tahitian migrant workers took the gospel to New Caledonia in the 1950s. In the 1960s the first branch was formed in the capital Noumea, and the country was officially dedicated for preaching the gospel (see chapter 21 herein). As in Vanuatu, the Church in New Caledonia is still too small to have a stake, numbering just over sixteen hundred. The most recent Melanesian country to receive the gospel is the Solomon Islands. Though earlier attempts had been made to establish the Church there, missionary work only became a permanent fixture in the Solomon Islands in the 1990s. Missionaries have served continuously in the capital, Honiara, on the island of Guadalcanal, since 1994. Most of the several hundred Solomon Islands Saints belong to the Honiara Branch.

Aside from the brief account in *Unto the Islands of the Sea*, published historical pieces include Connie and Ralph Andersen, "Vanuatu: Gospel Growth in the Islands of the Sea," *Ensign*, October 2001, 73; R. Val Johnson, "Islands of Light," *Ensign*, March 2000, 31–35, for New Caledonia; and Michael Morris, "'One Talk' in Papua New Guinea," *Ensign*, February 1995, 22–29. Nothing has yet appeared on the history of the faithful few hundred Saints in the Solomon Islands. A significant, albeit unpublished, resource deserving special notice is the Pioneers in the Pacific Sesquicentennial Celebration Archives located at BYU–Hawai'i. During a weeklong celebration in October 1997, dozens of sessions (nearly all of which were successfully recorded)

featured personal accounts from Church pioneers in Melanesia. These included Vaiba Rome, president of the first stake in Papua New Guinea; Benson and Ethel Ariembo from Papua New Guinea; Teahumanu Manoi from New Caledonia (discussed in chapter 21 herein); Edwin Basil from Vanuatu; and Joseph Sokia and Jesse Maiwiriwiri from Fiji (discussed in chapter 20 herein). In addition, in preparation for the Pioneers in the Pacific celebration, BYU–Hawai'i sent Grant Underwood to Melanesia to videotape oral interviews of Church pioneers. Some sixty hours of such interviews as well as footage of Church sites of historical importance throughout Melanesia were recorded and are now preserved in the BYU–Hawai'i Archives.

## Micronesia

Micronesia (literally, small islands) refers to islands in the northwestern quadrant of the Pacific Ocean, roughly situated between the Philippines and Hawai'i. This includes Kiribati (Gilbert Islands), the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of Belau, Guam, the Republic of the Northern Mariana Islands, and the Republic of the Marshall Islands. With the exception of limited contact with Latter-day Saint GIs during World War II, and with the exception of Guam, these are countries that have only known the gospel since the 1970s. With just over eleven thousand members representing more than 10 percent of the country's population, the Church in Kiribati is numerically larger than in all the rest of Micronesia put together. Its impressive story was told initially in *Unto the Islands of the Sea* but in greater detail in chapter 14 herein. Briefer treatments appear in R. Val Johnson, "The Seabirds of Kiribati," *Ensign*, December 2000, 40–44; and Johnson, "Charting a New Course in Micronesia," *Ensign*, July 1996, 38–42. A substantive study pertaining primarily to the Federated States of Micronesia and Guam is the privately produced William W. Cannon, *Beachheads in Micronesia* (Salt Lake City: W. W. Cannon, 1997).

Cannon was an early Micronesia-Guam mission president. Also helpful for Guam is David M. Walden's discussion of the Mormons in "An Exploration of Recent Religious Conversion on Guam" (master's thesis, University of Guam, 1978). The 1997 *Pioneers in the Pacific* Conference contributed significantly to the emerging historiography of Micronesia and the perspectives of a number of the pioneer presenters are incorporated in various chapters in this book.

## General

A few significant studies worth consulting do not comfortably fit the regional organization of this chapter. Thumbnail sketches of the Church's history in most of the areas just discussed can be found in the *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, ed. Daniel Ludlow (New York: Macmillan, 1992). An engaging, interpretively rich essay originally given as the annual Mormon History Association's "Tanner Lecture" is Laurie F. Maffly-Kipp, "Looking West: Mormonism and the Pacific World," *Journal of Mormon History* 26 (Spring 2000): 40–63. A valuable pan-Pacific study written by a non-Church member that includes comments on the Latter-day Saints is Manfred Ernst, *Winds of Change: Rapidly Growing Religious Groups in the Pacific Islands* (Suva, Fiji: Pacific Conference of Churches, 1994). An overview of Church education in the Pacific can be found in R. Lanier Britsch, "Latter-day Saint Education in the Pacific Islands," in Davis Bitton and Maureen U. Beecher, eds., *New Views of Mormon History* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1987), 197–211.

An aspect of the Latter-day Saint experience in the Pacific that for a variety of reasons looms large in the minds of many Pacific Islanders is the labor mission program. During the 1950s and 1960s, from New Zealand to Hawai'i, young Polynesian men were called to donate time and muscle to carrying out an ambitious Church building program. They learned skills and developed friendships that have persisted over the decades. Presently the only lengthy study of the labor mis-

sions is the very outdated David W. Cummings, *Mighty Missionary of the Pacific: The Building Program of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Its History, Scope, and Significance* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1961), which now functions more as a primary than a secondary source. Chapter 4 herein offers a woman's perspective on the labor mission experience.

Interisland migration is a prominent part of life in the Pacific. For how this has impacted the Church, see Max E. Stanton, "A Gathering of Saints: The Role of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Pacific Islander Migration," in *A World Perspective on Pacific Islander Migration*, ed. G. McCall and J. Connell (The University of New South Wales, 1993), 23–37.

Finally, two video documentaries merit special mention—the BYU-produced "Islands of Love, People of Faith" (1993) and the KSL-produced presentation "The Polynesian Cultural Center" (2003).

## Conclusion

As is apparent above, many important and fascinating studies in Pacific Latter-day Saint history have been produced in the past. Still, there is ample room for more. Certain topics cry out for further investigation or fresh interpretation. A comparative history could profitably be written of missionary techniques used throughout the Pacific as they developed both in response to directions from Salt Lake City as well as to local need. Many more biographies of local islander Saints who played prominent roles in the history of the Church in their own locales would be welcome. A better job could be done of situating Pacific Latter-day Saint history in the context of studies exploring the impact of European contact and religious syncretism. Full and nuanced histories of the interaction between indigenous culture and Mormonism would help locate Latter-day Saint studies at the heart of contemporary Pacific studies. Institutionally, a better understanding of the chronology and dynamics of the localization of Church leadership throughout the Pacific would be valuable. So,

too, should a detailed and comprehensive study of the labor missions be produced along the lines of the spate of recent books that present oral histories and personal narratives of World War II veterans. In sum, because the twenty-first century

will undoubtedly prove to be the “century of the international Church,” it is imperative that historical studies match that reality and continue to broaden their focus beyond the plains of North America to the palms of the Pacific.