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The Gospel in the South Seas

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Abstract: The author argues that the Hawaiians, Samoans, Maoris, and other south sea peoples originated on the American Continent. The three native foods of Polynesia—the coconut, sweet potato, and taro root—are of American origin. The genealogical name lines of such widely separated peoples as New Zealand Maoris and Hawaiians unite 65 generations back to Hema who led a migration to New Zealand. Prior to Hema, the names in both Hawaiian and Maori legends are similar.

THE GOSPEL IN THE SOUTH SEAS

By Richard Hyland

NO one warns you. You come around a bend in the road, with the gently swelling Pacific at your right stretching northward to Alaska after breaking over a coral reef, and there it is.

It is so unlike anything you expect, you momentarily feel it is not real, that it does not belong there; but already you have seen enough of the island of Oahu to disown all preconceptions, disregard mental processes and simply accept any experience your eyes encounter.

So you stare silently at a dazzling white edifice that appears

From Hawaii

For almost a century, Latter-day Saint missionaries have been preaching the restored Gospel of Jesus Christ among the inhabitants of the South Seas, notably those in Hawaii, Tonga, Samoa and New Zealand. According to Mormon belief, these people are of the same origin as the Nephites and Lamanites whose history is related in the pages of the Book of Mormon. According to this latter-day scripture, there were three migrations of people from the eastern to the western hemisphere, the first of which occurred at the Confusion of Tongues at the Tower of Babel.

That the natives of the South Seas should have legends and beliefs so closely paralleling the Old Testament offers further testimony to their Hebrew origin as contended by Book of Mormon believers.

to have been severed by a sweep of a gigantic scythe from New York's Rockefeller Centre and carried in the night across a continent and half an ocean to be hidden where no one would look for it—between a blue, tropical sea and a towering purple-red volcanic sierra in a field of green sugar cane whose banner-like tassels nod rhythmically in the breeze as though to say, softly and wisely, "I know what you don't know."

You are beholding Laie Temple.

When you first see the ultra modern, steel and cement, beautifully architected, immaculate Temple in its contrasting setting of nature's

most bountiful tropical vegetation, away go all resolution to speak only when spoken to.

"What, in heaven's name, is that?"

"The Laie Mormon Temple."

"That chip off Rockefeller Centre is a Mormon Temple?"

"Nothing else but. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints."

It is difficult to grasp.

"There are enough Mormons in Hawaii to build a temple like that? It must have cost . . ."

"About £50,000 as it stands. And there are about 14,000 Saints in Hawaii. The Mormons have made a great effort to proselyte Polynesians."

According to the teachings of the Church of Jesus Christ of

Latter-day Saints, Polynesians are from one of the tribes of Israel—descendants of that Joseph who was sold into Egypt—migrated to America from Palestine about 600 B.C. and American Indians are their descendants.

Further Brigham Young wrote to King Kamehameha V, in 1865, "We believe your Majesty and the people of your Majesty's nation . . . are a branch of this same great family . . . you are of the House of Israel, and heirs of all the promises of the chosen seed . . ."

While some anthropologists suspect Polynesians migrated from west to east, from Asia to the islands of the Pacific, Mormon students believe Hawaiians, Samoans, Maoris and other south sea peoples originated on the American continent. In evidence, they present the fact that the three great native foods of Polynesia, the coconut, sweet potato and taro root are American; and add it is illogical to suppose that man migrated in one direction while his food came from another.

Mormon students of Polynesian genealogy contend that all south sea island natives spring from the same source because they have found the name lines of such widely separated peoples as New Zealand Maoris and Hawaiians unite 65 generations back to the person of Hema, who, by Maori legend, led a migration to New Zealand. Prior to Hema, they state, the names in both Hawaiian and Maori legends are identical.

Perhaps the most startling of these island tales is that of the formation of man. With a change of names it could be put back into the Old Testament without jarring a syllable, including the murder of Abel by Cain.

In the beginning, runs the ancient chant, was the Kukauakahi, or trinity of Kane, Ku, and Lono. The former was the chief god, Ku was all the destructive forces of nature, and Lono was a white god. It was the latter, incidentally, the Hawaiians thought, had come to them when Captain Cook discovered the islands in 1778.

Kane, all powerful, created three heavens, a host of spirits, the earth, moon, stars and sun.

And Kane created Kumuhonua—man. Using his own spittle he fashioned a body of red clay and a head of white clay, breathed into it, made it live, took a bone from it and created Kealokuhonua, the first woman. It is worthy of note that "Edum," the Hebraic word for Adam, means "red," in the light of the Hawaiian's red clay first man.

Kumuhonua and Kealokuhonua lived in the happy land of Kaluna-i-wai-hau-ola, or land of divine water. In this land were two forbidden fruit trees. One, the bread fruit, was called Ula-kapu-a-Kane.

While man and woman lived happily in their divine water land, some of the spirits, led by Kanaloa, rebelled against Kane because they were forbidden to partake of awa, a narcotic drink much like the present Samoan "kava." Kane fought, defeated and drove out the rebelling spirits; where he drove them is not told.

Kanaloa then desired to set up a world of his own and tried to create a man in imitation of Kane's. But no matter how hard he tried he could not give the clay body he fashioned the

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life it needed. Jealous and full of rage, he then set out to destroy the image Kane had made.

Whispering lies to Kealokuhonua, he so deceived her that she encouraged Kumuhonua to eat with her the sacred and forbidden apple of the breadfruit tree and Kane drove them out of the happy land for disobeying him.

Later they had two sons, Laka and Ahu—and Laka killed Ahu.

So goes the ancient Hawaiian tale detailing the beginnings of man. You can make from it what you will.

Additional evidence, aside from the similarity between their legends and biblical stories, that Polynesians are of Hebrew ancestry, is to be found in many of their customs, according to Mormon authorities. Hawaiians practiced circumcision, knew sack cloth and ashes for sorrow, purified their temples with salt and sprinkled the homes of the dead with salt water, had cities of refuge which could not be violated and, even as is noted in the Old Testament (Leviticus 15) they isolated women at certain regular periods.

Desiring to participate fully in their religion, a colony of 200 Mormon Samoans have moved to Hawaii to be near the temple. Certain of the important Mormon religious rites and ceremonies may be performed nowhere except in a consecrated temple (there are now seven in Utah, Hawaii, Arizona and Canada) and this explains the Samoan settlement.

But though the Samoans figuratively uprooted their grass huts and migrated to Oahu, they did not break the ties that bind them to their customs and legends of the past. While the Hawaiians, since the island republic became a territory of the United States in 1898, have for the most part become entirely Americanized in their daily lives and customs, the Samoans cling closer to the habits of their fathers.

Polynesians are not only an instinctively clean people, but they are almost amphibious; they live in and on the warm waters that lap their islands. It is a lazy life.

In this last respect the Samoans at Laie Temple to-day differ; Mormonism, which believes the temporal life is important and that a man is happier when at work, has converted not only their religious beliefs but their labour habits as well.

NEWS OF THE CHURCH IN THE WORLD

SISTER Lucy Emily Woodruff Smith, wife of Elder George Albert Smith, of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, passed away at her home in Salt Lake City on Friday, November 6th. Sister Smith will be remembered by many members and friends in Britain and European missions, as she was in charge of women's auxiliary work during 1919-21 while Elder Smith was presiding as British and European

mission president.

TRIBUTE was paid to the Book of Mormon recently by one of the people whose history is contained within the pages of that modern day scripture. Chief Kiutus Tecumseh, noted Christian Red Indian poet, singer and lecturer, stated during a recent visit to Utah, "The Book of Mormon gives the clearest conception of the original American Indian of all historical records."