

R. Lanier Britsch, *Moramona: The Mormons in Hawaii*. Laie, Hawaii: Institute for Polynesian Studies, 1989. Pp. xii, 200, illus., appendixes, notes, bibliography, index. US\$9.95 paper.

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Dr. R. Lanier Britsch of Brigham Young University-Hawaii has written a solid survey of Mormonism in the Hawaiian Islands. *Moramona* takes the reader on a journey through the 140-year history of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Hawaii. The first Mormon missionaries landed at Honolulu in December 1850. What a challenge they faced--a foreign environment, the opposition of the firmly entrenched Protestant mission, and a lack of interest among the *haoles* (whites) whom they had initially hoped to convert. Demonstrating a pragmatic bent that ultimately served the Mormon mission well, these early missionaries quickly turned their attention to the native population with good results.

The first fifty years of Latter-day Saint efforts in Hawaii produced many heroes, although Britsch has chosen to highlight only two: George Q. Cannon and Joseph F. Smith, one-time missionaries to Hawaii who later rose to prominence within the church's hierarchy. Although they are likely the best known Mormons to have served in the islands during the first half-century of the Latter-day Saint presence, others who acted in an equally valiant manner are all but ignored by the author.

For example, Henry W. Bigler--who twice served a Hawaiian mission during the 1850s, the second time as mission president--seems far overshadowed by Cannon in *Moramona*. Yet, in truth, Cannon was probably no better known or more successful than Bigler, William Farrer, or James Keeler in the Mormon Hawaii of the early 1850s. In fact, much more about the Latter-day Saint experience might have been told had Britsch consulted Bigler's multivolume journal in the holdings of the Henry E. Huntington Library at San Marino, California. Or, closer to home for Britsch, the Station Reports of the Protestant clergy located at Honolulu's Hawaiian Mission Children's Society Library would offer balance to the Mormon story by injecting the view of their opponents. Instead *Moramona* seems to be an institutional history drawn largely from the Latter-day Saint archives at Salt Lake City, Utah. This is not to imply that it is an inaccurate accounting, yet is it the full history?

Britsch offers fascinating coverage of the development of Laie, the

Mormon gathering place in Hawaii that now serves as the location of the Brigham Young University-Hawaii campus, the Latter-day Saint Hawaii Temple, and the Polynesian Cultural Center. From a small, marginally successful sugarcane plantation Laie emerged as a vibrant, productive economic community and the focal point of Mormonism in the Pacific. The era in which Matthew Noall and Samuel E. Woolley led Mormon efforts in Hawaii (1892-1921) was a dynamic period in the history of Mormonism in the islands and Britsch treats it exceedingly well. In fact, this may well be the strongest section of the book.

During the Noall-Woolley years certain changes in emphasis and policy emerged that set these three decades apart from the 1850s through the 1880s. First, institutional Mormonism began to realize its potential as a worldwide church, shaking off the earlier emphasis of urging all converts to "gather to Zion" (church headquarters or a designated locale such as Laie) in favor of strengthening local congregations. The policy change allowed Hawaiian Mormonism to flourish as never before. Second, the practice of plural marriage (polygamy) was abandoned, thus improving Mormonism's image in Hawaii and elsewhere.

In the later twentieth century Hawaii has emerged as a crossroads of Mormonism in Asia and the Pacific. Brigham Young University-Hawaii with its Polynesian Cultural Center and the Institute for Polynesian Studies has become the flagship for Mormonism in Polynesia. It has moved to the forefront of efforts to preserve the native heritage. Whereas the first Mormon missionaries often took their lead from the successes of the Protestant mission in Hawaii, the Latter-day Saints now seem to be on the cutting edge. With 45,000 members in Hawaii, a temple, and a university, Hawaiian Mormonism appears ready to assume a leading role in Pacific history during upcoming decades.

R. Lanier Britsch has given students of Pacific and Mormon history a valuable book. *Moramona* should stand as the best guide to Mormonism in Hawaii for years to come. Future studies of the subject will have to begin here. And, hopefully, there will be many more books on Mormonism in the Pacific. While scholars have spent much effort in revising and revitalizing Mormon history of the mainland United States and the British Isles during the past twenty years, Hawaii and the Pacific may now offer a new frontier to be conquered.