



Tūrake Manuirangi, and below at right with whānau members (from left): Tongawhitiwaro (Bob) Manuirangi, Shirley (Solomon) Manuirangi and Doris (Tenwolde) Manuirangi, with two unidentified men.



He Manu-Iri-i-te-Rangi – Bird of the Heavens
 TŪRAKE MANUIRIRANGI 1896–1969

Hōri Manuirirangi Jnr

Rā te tai uru, ka koto ki Waimate
 Ko Te Rere o Kapuni e heke nei i te maunga
 e tārai nei i te whenua, i ngā pārae o te iwi
 I chuchungia koe ki ōna wai tapu
 whāngaia ana ki te Rongopai
 Ko ōna tikanga he mea tuari e koe
 Te manu-iri-i-te-rangi

Westerly tides murmur near Waimate
 Te Rere o Kapuni descends the mountain
 forming its path through the land, across the tribal plains
 You were blessed in its sacred waters
 nourished with the Gospel
 Its values you imparted
 Bird of the heavens ¹

TŪRAKE MANUIRIRANGI WAS AN INFLUENTIAL TUPUNA of the Manuirirangi whānau. He was a devoted member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and was instrumental in its establishment in the South Taranaki region. This chapter looks at his beliefs and leadership qualities within the Church, and within his hapū of Ngāti Tū, of Ngā Ruahine Iwi. The main focus here is to report on information collated from interviews, church records and Mormon missionary diaries.

Taranaki

On the southern slopes of Mount Taranaki, between the Ōtakeho and Kāpuni streams, lie the contiguous ancestral lands of Ngāti Tū. The full name of the hapū comes from the ancestor Tūhaereao, father of Tūmahuki Rongonui.² Ngāti Tū is one of many subtribes in the collective that form the principal tribe

of Ngā Ruahine Iwi. Within these tribal boundaries is the township of Manaia, named in honour of the prominent Ngāti Tū chief Manaia Hukanui.

The Taranaki response to European colonisation of New Zealand reflected the broader Māori society. Taranaki produced an inordinate amount of leaders, from prophets of war and disciples of peace to parliamentary and professional leaders making significant contributions to New Zealand society as well. Tūrake was born in the aftermath of the Land Wars. In the early 1860s, Te Ua Haumēne, founder of the Pai Mārire religion provided a religious aspect in the search for Māori independence. The emergence of the religio-political leaders, Tohu and Te Whiti of Parihaka, was a feature of the late 19th century, which coincided with and influenced Tūrake's upbringing.

Throughout the late 1800s the majority of Māori in the area lived on the outskirts of the Manaia township, occupying Waiōkura Pā on Winks Road. However, by the turn of the century this began to change. The township was becoming more and more an integrated society of Māori and Pākehā as many Ngāti Tū tūpuna began to leave the communal lifestyle of the pā, choosing instead to live in their own homes in urban areas. For some, there was a reluctance to abandon their traditional way of life as it meant straying from the teachings of the revered Ngā Ruahine prophet Tohu Kākahi. Tohu, along with fellow prophet Te Whiti-o-Rongomai led the passive resistance movement of Parihaka against government acquisition of Māori land.

Tohu taught and continually encouraged his people to hold firm to their Māoritanga, as it was during this period that Māori throughout the entire province of Taranaki were rebuilding their communities following mass confiscations of their land in the 1860s–80s.³ Because there was hostility toward Pākehā and a staunch belief in the prophet Tohu, Māori denied themselves “many of the great advantages of Pākehā civilisation, would not send their children [such as Tūrake] to school because schooling was not a part of the prophetic utterances of the ‘great Tohu.’”⁴

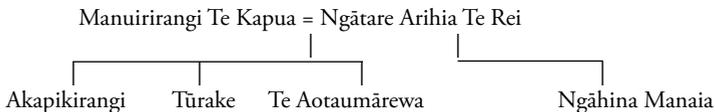
During the early 1900s, amidst a time of progress and development, Tūrake Manuirirangi's whānau and hapū farmed ancestral land near Waiōkura, on the Waimate plains. In doing so they maintained the legacy of the name given to the tūpuna whare (house) of Waiōkura Pā, Paraukau. The name Paraukau embodies the teachings of Tohu and Te Whiti that had been adhered to by generations of Taranaki Māori. ‘Paraukau’ translated means to *simply plough*. Paraukau was derived from the tribal saying parau-kau-tū-kau, which refers to the courageous actions of Taranaki tūpuna known as the ‘Ploughmen’.⁵ Despite creeping confiscations in the late 1800s, tūpuna persisted in ploughing their ancestral land, if one was arrested another would come and take their place to

continue the ploughing. As a result of the determined stance of the Ploughmen, Taranaki tūpuna were able to exercise their mana-whenua (territorial rights).

Te Rongopai (The Gospel)

On 4 December 1896 Tūrake Manuirirangi was born. The son of Manuirirangi Te Kapua and Ngātare Ngākuru Arihia Te Rei, he was born at Waiōkura Pā and grew up there during his younger years. His father died when he was around five or six, and from then he was raised by his aunty Te Hinganga (sister of Manuirirangi Te Kapua) and Īhaka Te Rei (brother of Ngātare).

Here is Tūrake's line of descent:



Tūrake was the teina (younger sibling) of Akapikirangi who was ten years his senior. They had two tuāhine (sisters), Te Aotaumārewa and Ngāhina Manaia, who was from Ngātare's marriage to her second husband Manaia Ngātairākaunui, also from Ngā Ruahine Iwi.

The first encounter the whānau of Tūrake had with Mormon missionaries was told by Ngātare Te Rei to her children. Her daughter Te Aotaumārewa recounted this story to members of Tūrake's family:

... two missionaries first called at the farm on Upper Glenn Road of Manuirirangi Te Kapua and Ngātare while family members were working in their potato patch. The missionaries started picking up some small potatoes and eating them, obviously they were very hungry. Ngātare said to them "Kei te mate kai koe, haere mai ki te kai." She took them inside their home and gave them something to eat.⁶

In the words of her grandchildren, Ngātare was a strong matriarch for the Manuirirangi whānau. She was a tall, stately woman who loved her family dearly. She cooked Sunday meals on a coal range, always ensuring the children were well fed and cared for. Having received a warm welcome from Ngātare, the missionaries proceeded to teach the Gospel to the family. On 9 January 1911 Tūrake and six other family members were baptised in the Kaupokonui River on Glenn Road and confirmed later that evening as converts to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints:⁷ Īhaka Te Rei, aged about 43 (married to Te Hinganga); Tūrake Manuirirangi, aged 14; Te Ao (Te Urutahi Aotaumārewa) Manuirirangi, aged about 11; Tonga Tātaiaroa, aged about 14; Te Hinganga Īhaka, aged about 45 (married to Īhaka); Rangī Ira Kātene, aged about 16; and Te Akapikirangi Manuirirangi, aged about 24 (married to Kaaro Kātene).

After Tūrake's baptism he remained a dedicated and active member of the Mormon Church throughout his life. In the early years worship was held at Waiōkura Pā. During a period in which the pā was being refurbished, the church was moved and convened at Ngātare's home, at the inland end of Winks Road near the family urupā Motuawa. Directly across the road stood the homes of her brothers Īhaka and Rangi Takaroro, who all resided on Te Kauae Land Block, Waiōkura. Although Ngātare was the first person to give the initial welcome to the Mormon missionaries, she herself was not baptised into the church until 28 April 1912.

Tana ohinga — upbringing

Over time, Ngāti Tū tūpuna began to follow the urban migration trend, seeking employment and education opportunities for their families. Tūrake described this time of transition: "They began then to leave their ancestral pā and dispersed to different parts of the district to settle and build homes on lands that were theirs by inherited legacy."⁸ These lands had been taken from them through unjust confiscations, and although Te Kauae had been returned to Manaia Hukanui in an inalienable land title, the Crown would not give back control and management rights to the families concerned. Instead management rights were vested with Crown Agents, who in turn leased out Māori lands to Pākehā lessees on peppercorn rentals.

Tūrake spent his whole life in and around the Manaia district. In his youth he did not attend school, which he himself believed was due to the influence of Tohu Kākahi in those days. Nonetheless, coming from a family of ardent followers of Tohu, he did learn farming and horticulture from a young age.

From Waiōkura the whānau later spent a period farming Manuirirangi family land on Upper Glenn Road. Following the passing of Ngātare's first husband Manuirirangi Te Kapua, she married her second husband, Manaia Ngātairākaunui. For a time the whānau moved to farm land in the Tariki district, North Taranaki, only to return to Waiōkura following the flu epidemic immediately after World War 1. When the epidemic passed they relocated to Manuirirangi land to continue farming on the Upper Glenn Road.

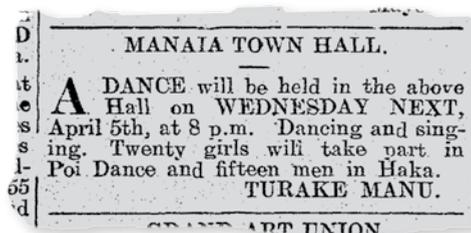
During this time Tūrake and his siblings continued to be cared for by his aunty Te Hinganga and uncle Īhaka Te Rei. In his youth, Tūrake was greatly influenced by his aunty and uncle. Te Hinganga was said to be a loving and tender person, so when Koro Manuirirangi Te Kapua died, she was there to help Ngātare care for Tūrake and his siblings.

In contrast, her husband Īhaka was described as an immensely powerful, disciplined man. Accounts of his strength have been passed through many

generations of the whānau, with elders claiming that he could open a can of corned beef by merely squeezing it with his bare hands until the meat popped out. As an active member of the Church, Īhaka would wake everyone each morning for karakia, ensuring they learned and recited the scriptures in Māori and sang (waiata) before they carried out their daily work. He was also a skilled fisherman and a knowledgeable farmer who provided well for his whānau. It was these skills that he passed on to Tūrake, skills that would later serve him well as he too became known for his farming and horticultural prowess. As a native speaker of te reo, Tūrake was raised in an environment surrounded by his elders, during which time he would have had the guidance of Koro Īhaka's siblings, Te Ahuōrākeiora, Rangi Takaroro and Wharehuia. This upbringing shaped Tūrake in his formative years, teaching him essential skills to survive while developing his tireless work ethic.

Tūrake and Tuhitia

In 1917, aged 20, Tūrake served his first mission in the Hauraki District, having as his companion Elder M Moody. In 1918, following his mission, he married Tuhitia Hikaka of Ngāti Tamaahuroa-Tītahi hapū in Ōeo, a subtribe of Ngā Ruahine Iwi. Tuhitia was a granddaughter of the renowned chief Hōne Pihama, “a man of peaceable characteristics and one who swore alliance and continual loyalty to the Crown.”⁹ From their marriage, Tuhitia had ten children that survived to adulthood. For a lengthy time they farmed her inherited land on the Paihini Road in Ōeo, during the early part of the century in which Māori land development schemes began being advanced across the nation by Āpirana Ngata. In the same way that Īhaka had raised Tūrake, he too adopted the ritual of karakia with his own children and grandchildren. Tūrake's grandson, Hōritama-ki-te-rangi recalls their routine well, as he himself was raised from infancy by his grandparents Tuhitia and Tūrake until the age of eight, as a result of the death of his mother Willis Hinekura Kātene. Tūrake would wake their household early each morning for karakia, and again closing with karakia in the evening. This was standard practice and compulsory for all. Even though his whānau experienced many struggles and hardships in life, through hard work



Hawera & Normanby Star,
4 April 1916



Tūrake Manuirirangi, standing at right.

and an unwavering faith in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints they were able to overcome all challenges together.

Despite having no formal education himself, Tūrake was an apt businessman in all respects. Aside from farming, he also owned and managed a number of rental properties in Manaia and Hāwera. For his own children he was insistent that they all receive a good education as he wanted them to be prepared to live and learn in the Pākehā world, while remaining proud of their own Māori upbringing and heritage. The famous whakatauaāki of Tā Āpirana Ngata applies to Tūrake's philosophy in raising all of his children and grandchildren.¹⁰

E tipu, e rea, mō ngā rā o tōu ao,
ko tō ringa ki ngā rākau a te Pākehā hei ora mō te tinana
ko tō ngākau ki ngā taonga a ō tīpuna Māori hei tikitiki mō tō māhuna
a ko tō wairua ki tō Atua, nāna nei ngā mea katoa.

Grow and branch forth for the days of your world
your hand to the tools of the Pākehā for the welfare of your body
your heart to the treasures of your Māori ancestors as adornments for your head
your spirit to God, who made all things.

Under his supervision, Tūrake would get his children to calculate the monthly farm statements, having them add the pounds, shillings and pence until they got it right. At times he would ask his daughters to collect rent from tenants and get them to tally the amounts owing. Through such lessons he taught them mathematics and practical business skills. Education in his mind was of high priority, and he was determined that his children and grandchildren would not be denied this privilege.

Acquiring his business acumen through hard work and experience, he became a respected and trusted member of the community. On one occasion a tenant had overpaid his rent, and when Tūrake discovered this he promptly sent his daughter to return the extra money. Strong in his faith, Tūrake strictly complied with the tenets of the Mormon Church and abstained from alcohol, tobacco and caffeine.

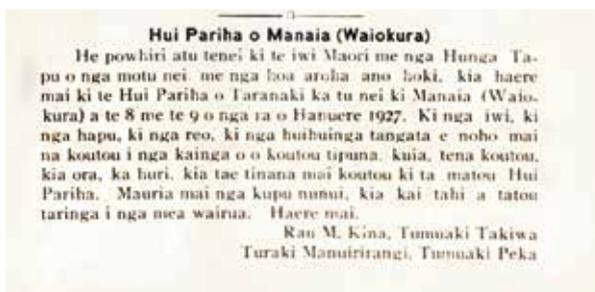
Because of his honesty in dealings with people he gained the respect of his community. As a result of his work over the years he purchased a number of fine vehicles, even including a cherished Indian motorcycle. His most prized vehicle, though, was a classic Chrysler DeSoto. One day while travelling out of town with his children, his car got a flat tyre. A large chauffeur-driven vehicle owned by an astute local businessman, Bill Ellingham, manager of Farmers' Co-operative pulled alongside to assist. As Tūrake was preparing to address the problem, the gentleman in the other vehicle stopped him and had his driver change the flat tyre. No doubt his reputation as a farmer was being

acknowledged by the man in charge, given that Tūrake had supplied a lifetime of milk products and business through the Farmers' Cooperative.

Tūrake had a lean physique. For recreation he enjoyed golf, which at that time was mainly a sport for Pākehā. By participating in activities such as golf he also strengthened his association with his peers. As a successful businessman, his opinion carried weight with the Manaia Council and wider South Taranaki region. This influence was also a result of strong affiliations developed with well known people in the Mormon Church, the business world, politicians and kaumātua of Taranaki. For a term he served on the executive of the Egmont National Party as a Māori representative. Advocating for the interests of his people, he was an advisor on tribal sites of historic significance, and was appointed president of the Rāhui-Moana Committee which he served for several years. Yet for all his political, business and social activities, he remained focused with his commitments to the Church.

In 1921, the Manaia branch was reorganised and Tūrake was ordained an elder and set apart as president of the branch by Elder George Shepherd Taylor.¹¹ With his increased involvement in the Mormon Church, he later became a counsellor in the Taranaki district presidency during the 1930–40s. Despite his various roles and responsibilities, this did not detract from his tribal commitments to Ngāti Tū. When attending hui at Waiōkura Pā he would take charge of proceedings, with the support of his tuakana (older sibling), as he was considered an expert of tikanga and kawa (tradition and protocol).

Over the years the numbers within the Manaia Mormon congregation grew. Baptisms were performed in Te Rere o Kapuni stream, with services and gatherings held at Waiōkura Pā. In the years that followed, church meetings and activities were moved to the Odd Fellows Hall in the Manaia township. As a bastion of the Mormon Church, Tūrake regularly held meetings at his home on Karaka Street in Manaia. He was a generous man, often opening his house to feed and provide accommodation for visiting missionaries and fellow church patrons. On some occasions, President Matthew Cowley, the Church's New Zealand mission president would visit and stay with the Manuirirangi family.



Of similar age to Tūrake, President Cowley was known affectionately as the ‘Polynesian Apostle’.¹² He had an intimate knowledge and appreciation of Polynesian cultures and was notably recognised for his competency with te reo and for his dedication to the Māori people. This would have no doubt pleased Tūrake and other Māori-speaking church members. Within the Manaia branch, under the guidance of Tūrake, sacrament and church lessons were conducted in te reo. He had an uncompromising manner in which he blessed newborn babies, as he was known to refuse or be unwilling to perform blessings unless the baby had been given an appropriate Māori name, often of his own choosing to reflect the family whakapapa lineage.

Being a kaumātua steeped in tikanga with strong convictions in the church, he was able to maintain balance in his life. He took his duties as branch president seriously, and attended all hui tau he was able to. In 1949, with the blessing of his wife Tuhitia, he left Taranaki to attend the hui tau at Korongata, Hastings. It was, however, during this trip that his beloved wife passed away. Having received the news and returning home, his tira (travelling party), was called on to Ōeo Pā where the funeral was being held. There stood two long rows of elderly women bearing kawakawa leaves, beckoning them on. As Tūrake and his entourage proceeded, the women wailed and expressed their disapproval of his absence when Tuhitia died. Despite his own grief and that of his whānau, he bowed his head and accepted this treatment, knowing that his wife’s people were grieving too. For Tūrake’s children, the memories of this traumatic experience remain with them — it was a painful time for all.

With the passing of Tuhitia, Tūrake was left a widower to raise his family with the support of his eldest daughters. His commitment to the church continued to strengthen, and in 1950 he travelled to the Mormon temple in Hawai‘i, on a trip originally intended for himself and his wife. In the years that followed, membership of the Manaia branch grew steadily. Until the 1950s the Manaia branch was considered the foundation branch of the Mormon Church in the Taranaki area. Thereafter branches were established in New Plymouth, Waitara and Hāwera.

On 1 October 1966, thanks to the efforts of church members and labour missionaries, the newly built Manaia Chapel was opened. Erected on land donated by Tūrake and his family,¹³ the immaculate chapel stands to this day.

Even as an aged kaumātua, Tūrake was humble and diligent in everything that he did. His grandchildren recall that he would plod through all of his work until eventually it was done. After karakia each morning, and before breakfast, he would spend hours tending the crops in his gardens, as this was the way he had been raised; a way in which he nourished his children with love, instilling

them with core family values and pride; a way in which he fulfilled his duties to the church, providing guidance for its members. On 6 June 1969 at the age 73, Tūrake died peacefully in Hāwera at the home of his eldest daughter Alice Hinemataura Robinson.

Throughout his life he always encouraged his whānau to remain active members of the church, leading by example. Although some of his children followed their own paths, they still loved and respected their father dearly.

Tūrake's whānau contributed a lot to the growth of the Church at branch and district level but also served in national positions. For example, daughter Doris was called as the New Zealand Mission MIA (Young Women's) leader. In that role she would remind her fellow leaders throughout the mission of their "delicate responsibility in helping to mould the lives of the girls aging from 14 to 15 years, in teaching and training them and showing to them by precept and example the path they should follow to gain true happiness."¹⁴ Doris and her sister Shirley served proselytising missions in New Zealand, and their brother Kapua Manuirirangi was called on a labour mission in the 1950s. The youngest sibling, Warwick Tongawhiti Manuirirangi followed in his father's footsteps as a successful farmer. He was also a member of the Taranaki Education Board, the New Zealand Education Boards Association, the Aotea Land Advisory Committee and the Taranaki Māori Land Advisory Committee, a Church branch and district leader and a member of the New Zealand South Mission presidency.

It stands as testament to Tūrake's strong conviction in the Mormon Church that the majority of his children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren are still active members today.

Tūrake made a vital contribution to the establishment of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in the Taranaki province during the early 20th century. Its strength nowadays can be attributed to the efforts of diligent founding family members and their resolute faith — a faith portrayed in the hīkoi (walk) through life of our great-grandfather, grandfather, and father, Tūrake Manuirirangi. He truly was the embodiment of *a bird of the heavens — he manu-iri-i-te-rangi*.

Moe mai rā, e Koro, koutou ko ō kāhui kua rarau atu i te Hono-i-wairua. Kia upa rā i te aroha o te Atua. E okioki, kētua, e whiti anō.

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NOTES

1. This kōrero whakataki is my own composition
2. AT Whakaneke (14 December 1996), personal communication
3. Scott
4. Dick, p 30
5. Sole, p 371
6. D Manuirirangi (1984), family reunion booklet, p 46; Retrieved from www.te-rongopai-ki-manaia.com (private): www.te-rongopai-ki-manaia.com
7. Henroid
8. Dick, p 31
9. *ibid*
10. Ngata, p 9; there are several variants of this quotation and its translation
11. Taylor
12. Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (1973), p 4
13. EG Harvey (December 2013), personal communication
14. Manu, p 199