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THE RELIGIOUS BELIEFS, RITUALS, AND VALUES OF THE RINGATU CHURCH

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment
of the requirements for the degree of
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ABSTRACT

This thesis sets out to understand and to interpret the faith aspects of the Ringatu Church, which is comprised of the followers of Te Kooti, and because both he and his followers have been, and still are much misunderstood, to examine the Ringatu claim to be seen as a part of the Christian Church.

The Introduction surveys how some writers have applied various anthropological theories in their respective studies of the Maori prophetic movements, and by either comparison or agreement, the present writer indicates his own theoretical approach. This approach emphasizes that these Maori movements are primarily a response to revelation, and that they are concerned with expressing meaning, asserting identity, and seeking some measure of control over their environment.

Chapter one provides an outline of traditional or pre-European Maori religion, in order that such elements may be identified in the Ringatu faith.

Chapter two sketches the life of Te Kooti, the background of his times, the events in which he was involved, and the beginning and the development of the Ringatu Church.

Chapter three, describes the Church in its present organization, and the variety and content of its services of worship.

Chapter four attempts to identify traditional, Old Testament and New Testament components in the Church's liturgy and practice, and to assess the Church's claim to be truly Christian.

Chapter five poses some questions and expresses some hopes about the future of the people called Ringatu, in the light of problems faced by them at present.

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