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TE WAIRUA KŌMINGOMINGO O
TE MĀORI

THE SPIRITUAL WHIRLWIND OF
THE MĀORI

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Abstract

This thesis examines Māori spirituality reflected in the customary words Te Wairua Kōmingomingo o te Maori. Within these words Te Wairua Kōmingomingo o te Māori; the past and present creates the dialogue sources of Māori understandings of its spirituality formed as it were to the intellect of Māori land, language, and the universe. This is especially exemplified within the confinements of the marae, a place to create new ongoing spiritual synergies and evolving dialogues for Māori. The marae is the basis for meaningful cultural epistemological tikanga Māori customs and traditions which is revered. Marae throughout Aotearoa is of course the preservation of the cultural and intellectual rights of what Māori hold as mana (prestige), tapu (sacred), ihi (essence) and wehi (respect) – their tino rangatiratanga (sovereignty).

This thesis therefore argues that while Christianity has taken a strong hold on Māori spirituality in the circumstances we find ourselves, never-the-less, the customary, and traditional sources of the marae continue to breath life into Māori.

This thesis also points to the arrival of the Church Missionary Society which impacted greatly on Māori society and accelerated the advancement of colonisation. The Gospel and the arrival of its new frontiers of spirituality were forceful and complex. Te Wairua Kōmingomingo for Māori therefore changed direction and adapted to the Gospel message.

Within this message the Anglican Church in Aotearoa to its credit attempted to align its direction with Māori. In this regard the 1992 Constitution of the Anglican Church in Aotearoa New Zealand and Polynesia was created which contained provisions for the recognition of three separate huarahi (pathways) - Māori, Pākehā and Polynesian. The provision of these three pathways to carry out its spiritual mission inculcated in their own distinctive cultural practices. With this aligned direction the constitution prevails itself to meet the cultural prescient of the meaning of Te Wairua Kōmingomingo o te Māori linked as it were to the principals of the Treaty of Waitangi.

Following through from the process of colonisation the turbulent years of the 19th century Māori communities had lost vast amounts of land through deliberate government legislation supported by land wars. The Māori population was decimated. This thesis therefore begins by looking at the culture and the theology of this predominately Māori-speaking community of Ruātoki taking into account the dreams and visions of a farmer George Melbourne alongside the Tūhoe prophet Rua Kēnana

who together with their understanding of Te Wairua Kōmingomingo o te Māori developed the City of God in Maungapōhatu in the early 1900s to reinforce the position for Tūhoe and Māori. In 1916 a police expedition arrested Rua Kēnana on trumped up charges and this exact scene was again repeated in October 2007 in Ruātoki. This thesis therefore examines these two very specific invasions and throughout the thesis states a case for Te Wairua Kōmingomingo o te Māori as a platform to be supported and continued.

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