

Contents

EDITORIAL

MYTHOS AND LOGOS IN ABORIGINAL CHRISTIAN ENCOUNTER

Noel McMaster CSSR 3

PASTORAL WORKSHOP:

INITIATION: ABORIGINAL AND CHRISTIAN

M.J. Wilson 22

COMMENT

M.J. Wilson/D. O'Donovan 34

REVIEW: *THE AFFINAL RELATIONSHIP SYSTEM:*

*A New Approach to Kinship and Marriage among the
Australian Aborigines at Port Keats* (A. and J. Falkenberg)

C.S. Street 36

CUMULATIVE INDEX (from Pilot Edition 1978 to No. 14 1982) 38

Editorial

THE MAIN THEME in the present issue is initiation, Aboriginal and Christian. The topic was discussed for several days in October by a mixed group of Anglicans and Catholics involved in pastoral ministry to Aboriginal communities in the Northern Territory. They used Noel McMaster's timely paper as a starting-point. While the discussion scarcely did more than open up the topic, one of the main benefits achieved was that the theme of Aboriginal religion vis-a-vis Christianity was illumined by present-day actualities in Aboriginal belief and practice as reported by men engaged in the field situation. So much academic statement on Aboriginal religion is unreal. It is about a pre-Christian tradition that looks real only due to the deceptive functioning of the anthropologists' 'ethnographic present'. In Aboriginal communities where the traditional culture is a living fact, Aboriginal men and women are endeavouring to rethink tradition so that it can endure as a vital factor in a context of immense social and cultural change. The approach is different in different places, but one thing that is clear is that Aboriginal Christians are exercising an active, discriminating judgement about their cultural heritage. Their mentality is not that of museum curators: they are prepared to discard authentic elements if they judge them to be obstructive of a value they have come to prize.

I thank the secretary, Keren Calvert, for her work on the Cumulative Index.

M. J. Wilson

MYTHOS AND LOGOS IN ABORIGINAL/CHRISTIAN ENCOUNTER

NOEL McMASTER CSsR

Thesis: Aboriginal religion and Christianity, conveniently located within Robert Bellah's description of primitive and historical religion respectively, are unique expressions of human religiosity.¹ This uniqueness, seen in their traditional sacramental initiations and life commitments, presents a definite limitation to their cross-cultural encounter. However, since sacramentality (as world view) and life commitment (as ethos) at the heart of these religious systems are not synonymous with petrified symbolic systems, encounter and exchange are not excluded or inhibited unconditionally.

Note: The use of the word 'sacrament' will be refined later, especially in the Aboriginal context. At the beginning, however, it may be necessary to give some justification for its use cross-culturally. This is to be found in a bridge provided by Clifford Geertz^{1a} who speaks of religion as a symbolic system providing 'models of' and 'models for' reality. What anthropologist Stanner^{1b} calls 'totemic sacramentalism' and what Christians call 'sacraments' are in their respective effects seen to share a common function, namely the formulation of a distinctive world-view (model of) and the establishment of an equally distinctive ethos by the realization of a 'model for' reality. Sacrament thus belongs to ritual which is described by O'Dea, quoting Langer, as a spontaneous activity, 'a symbolic transformation of experience that no other medium can express'; it is an articulation of feelings, 'not answering a psychological need so much as establishing a permanent attitude'.^{1c} Streng agrees that the significance of sacrament as ritual is not from a 'psychological comfort in the familiarity of a repeated act'; rather the cultic act is 'an image or demonstration of the nature of ultimate reality'.^{1d} Further, ritual (sacrament) in its initiatory function 'is the great reverser of apparent conditions'. An Aborigine through such ritual can 'become fully human because he participates in the hopes, expectations and values of those who know the sacred lore'.^{1e} Likewise a christian in the anamnesis of Eucharist is in touch with the founding events of his faith in the same way that the Aborigine is drawn into the Dream Time by the performance of his ritual. Our understanding of sacrament therefore rests on anthropological data relating to ritual as it exists widely in cross-cultural contexts.

Fr Noel McMaster is studying in the Department of Religious Studies, Queensland University. Before that he was parish priest at Kununurra, WA. He has written in *Nelen Yubu* Nos. 6 and 11.

INTRODUCTION

BELLAH SEEMS TO BE A SUITABLE starting point as his description of primitive religion is based largely on the religion of Australian Aborigines, while his outline of historical religion seems a fair description of the Christianity that thus far has been presented to the Aboriginal people by Christian missionaries, at least in the Roman Catholic context.²

Aboriginal Religion

Aboriginal religion encompasses the mythic world par-excellence and is characterized by a world-closeness and a weakly articulated Self. (The meaning of Self here can be taken from Leinhardt quoted by Bellah. Writing of the Dinka Leinhardt says that the Self is realized when there is a capacity to express symbolically, and thus be freed from, what otherwise must be passively endured; there is a 'separation of a subject and object in experience'.³ Speaking further of the Dinka, Leinhardt says 'they lack anything closely resembling our conception of the "mind" as meditating and, as it were, storing up the experiences of the Self'.⁴ They image among the powers that other cultures would ascribe to the Self, and in this sense the Aboriginal Australian's Self is adjudged as weakly articulated in relation to the powers of their mythic world.)

The symbol system of Aboriginal religion is the Dreaming, a 'time out of time', an 'every-when' which prefigures all human action and explains the natural environment in terms of the deeds of mythical beings.

Aboriginal religion is further characterized by a fluid structure of myth, an east adjustment (dreaming!) to shifting social emphases and crises, and thus is hardly the breeding ground for radical innovators.

In its religious action or ritual Aboriginal religion focuses on identification, without mediators. The 'everywhen' becomes the 'now' and the ritual 'participants become identified with the mythical beings they represent'. Specifically from the point of view of this study the ritual action of initiation is seen as a rite of individual and personal maturation and induction into the 'really real', the mythic world of the Dream Time.

Christianity

For its part, and more briefly, Christianity as an historical religion acknowledges a dualistic world view, a 'this world' over against an 'other' realm described as transcendent. The symbol-system reflects and expresses this dualism in a context of 'man-capable-of-salvation', and of passage from this world to God's realm. The core Self is seen to be well articulated – responsible, redeemable in the world of history.

Christian religious action or ritual is action for salvation through reconciliation. In the Roman Catholic context this action is primarily sacramental through the rites of initiation known as baptism and eucharist. The emphasis is on growth in Christ through the continuing action and mediation of Christ. The Sacrament.

Already from the point of view of an encounter there is suggestion of a movement from what Ricoeur calls a principle of orientation to a principle of limitation. Speaking of the encounter of Judaeo-Christian and far Eastern cultures he says 'there is a moment when the principle of orientation becomes a principle of limitation'.⁵ Orientation grapples with and seeks to uncover the 'sedimentation of our cultural memory'. Christians in various ways can reach

back to their religion's Jewish source and Greek origin and make it their own. But to attempt to reach across to another culture and another religion for encounter and mutual clarification, in this case Aboriginal religion, has in Ricoeur's word been only episodic, and mostly in the mind of the scholar.⁶ It will be the aim of this study to show that unique cultural sedimentation that has shaped Aboriginal and Christian sacraments of initiation and life commitment has traditionally limited encounter; but given a continuing interest in the symbolization of human and religious experience past and present, such encounter is not unconditionally foreclosed.

I. ABORIGINAL SACRAMENTAL INITIATION AND LIFE COMMITMENT IN THE LIGHT OF CLIFFORD GEERTZ'S DEFINITION OF RELIGION

To establish the ground for later discussion of both the religious uniqueness and yet the possibilities of cross-cultural encounter, I will proceed by using Geertz's definition of religion to focus the sacramental initiation and life commitment aspect of each religious tradition, Aboriginal and Christian.

Geertz's definition encompasses the formulation of 'conceptions of a general order of existence', especially as these conceptions are clothed in ritual with that 'aura of factuality' which makes uniquely real the moods and motivations established by the set of symbols which convey the conceptions of the general order of experience.⁷ We will be thus exploring what Geertz calls 'world view' ('the concept of nature, of self, of society' -- the matrix of the sacramental initiation) and what he calls 'ethos' ('the underlying attitude towards themselves and their world that life reflects' -- life commitment).

Totemism

According to Stanner the Murinbata tribe's three-part ceremony of initiation is climaxed with the rite called Punj which warrants being called 'sacramentalist through and through'.⁸ Further, such sacramentalism is described as totemic. Accordingly our starting point would seem to be with totemism as it applies to Aboriginal religious initiation and with this explicated, we can speak of the sacramentality of initiation dealt with in reference to the Punj. Notice will be taken of R.M. Berndt's statement that he and A.P. Elkin have been the only two Australian anthropologists who could draw on knowledge of a fairly broad sample of Aboriginal societies when discussing their religions. These and other authors will be referred to in the discussion of totems and sacramentality.

Totemism, or better, the totem, in the context of Aboriginal religion is 'always a mystical connection' between men and other existents (their totems), the maintenance of which connection, its identities, its associations, is essential for order and continuity in life.⁹ Such order and continuity is related to a founding drama, the Dream Time, with which the people and totems of the present are linked through ritual. Thus Stanner quotes Elkin's reference to a trilogy of rites, historical, initiatory, and increase, which 'recapitulated some feature or aspect of the founding drama'.¹⁰

Totems, then, are 'givens' in the traditional Aboriginal religious life. They have a basic sign-function and a provocative quality which touches Aboriginal religious man historically, mystically, substantially, and essentially. In a particularly evocative passage Stanner takes the reader through a fictional conversation between a father and a son who is being introduced to his 'Dreaming' and the pervasive influence of his totem. A tree, a rocky outcrop, a pool, i.e. a totem, was shown to this father by his father (historical); every year something was done here

with the totem that made for faith and trust in what the totem signified (mystical); the totem belonged equally to a father, father's father, a brother (substantial); and it is the son's totem too! (essential)¹¹

This is the context in which the Aborigine is turned on religiously; some would say he is never turned off or tuned out! In another culture the totem might be analogous to a crucifix, or a passage of the bible, or a remembrance of a saint/martyr. At any rate the totem is the foundation for, and the occasion of, and the invitation to the heightened religious experience of ritual with its symbolic interpretations of the totem-signs linking men with the powers of the founding drama for the continuing flow of life benefits.

At the heart of Aboriginal religious life and ritual, then, is the totemic core which is to be interpreted by a symbolic process. For this there are many vehicles (Stanner uses the word 'symbolisms') such as dance, mime, story, myth, the use of exuviae etc., which in a particular rite are structured and patterned to produce a symbol. The overflow, the overplus of the symbol,¹² points to the symbolized, the powers of the founding drama; their presence and action in the 'then' of the Dreaming is transformed into the 'now' of the ritual; and the 'then' and the 'now' are fused to present the 'really real' to the participants.¹³

Totemic Sacramentalism

At this point our considerations narrow. As mentioned earlier, Stanner writes of the totemic sacramentality of the Murinbata's Punj (initiation) ceremony. This ceremony which in itself is passing has a lasting effect achieved through signs which impress an indelible character on those who, as principals, submit to or are submitted to, its once only sacramental observance. Stanner can refer to the Punj as both totemic and sacramental because it is an interpretation through symbols of the totem that links participants to another worldly power on whom they depend for life benefits. The sign, the symbolic observances, and the effects taken together, interpenetrating and compenetrating, warrant the Murinbata religion being called 'sacramentalist through and through'.¹⁴

Here a refinement of the term sacrament is necessary. Stanner acknowledges he is following Robertson-Smith, Roheim, and Elkin in making use of sacramentalism, but not slavishly. Roheim in *The Eternal Ones of the Dream* writes that 'in Australia the ritual of puberty and the totemic cult are inextricably interwoven'.¹⁵ He then quotes the Berndts' remark about the natives being very interested in the Christian communion rite because it can be compared to blood drinking in initiation rituals of their own. In this connection too Elkin sees a sacramental efficacy in blood, whether it is to be drunk or used to smear a body.¹⁶ We are dealing here it seems with something more specific than a broad sacramentality spoken of by D. Thompson in an account of the Bora initiation ceremonies at Lockhart River Mission in northern Queensland. By sacrament Thompson means an outward representation which conveys an inward effect, and he refers to the sacramentality of the Bora ceremonies as having 'inner effects of strengthening and stabilizing community life in the present'.¹⁷ This seems to be short of the unitive effect envisaged in the individual by Elkin and Stanner, but we will return to this shortly.

A final description of the Punj as initiation-sacrament can now be given, drawing together the elements of totemic sacramentalism in the rite. The totemic sign at the core of the ceremony (apart from a blood-symbolism relating to The Mother) is the bullroarer which in Stanner's categories is an emblematic totem. On this totemic emblem the participants in the ceremony project complex symbolical conceptions of Karwadi, the secret name of The Mother of All whose emblem the bullroarer is. The sound of the bullroarer when swung is a sign of her real presence, and when the protracted ceremony is done, to quote Stanner in full, the initiand,

touched on his blood-caked chest and loins by the bullroarer, is now 'a man of mystical understanding. He is a man transformed, one who knows the truth — or as much of the truth as anyone in the tradition can tell him — about a cardinal mystery of human affairs.'¹⁸

So it is that the initiation is completed. It was entered as a 'virtual necessity' because of an atmosphere of mystical and human threat, and its sacramental accomplishment has effected that the participants' spiritual ease, intellectual satisfaction, and true interest are sealed forever in what Geertz calls a distinctive world view.

Initiation and Aboriginal World View

Just as above 'sacrament' had to be refined, now it is useful to highlight the importance being attached to sacrament as initiation. It is precisely in its relation to world view, for if it is established that this initiatory rite in Aboriginal religion expresses and reinforces a distinctive and even unique world view, then subsequent parallels with Christianity may be similarities and nothing more. This will be relevant in our later discussion of encounter between the two religions, Aboriginal and Christian.

Can, then, Stanner's particular assessment of the transforming sacramental effect be verified generally in traditional Aboriginal initiation? Berndt takes up the general question and speaks of two levels of interpretation of initiation, the first symbolizing ritual death and the second qualifying such ritual death as rather a transformation: ritual death is balanced by a life-giving ritual.¹⁹ But initiation essentially he prefers to describe as induction or first exposure to the world of religion, and on this basis would not agree with Stanner's distinction (for the Murinbata) between the circumcision rite as concerned with the highest secular values, and the Punj ceremony with 'mystical understanding'. For Berndt both these parts of the Murinbata initiation ceremony are religious (and initiatory) and lead to understanding but do not confer it 'per se'.²⁰ Berndt does not elaborate this point so crucial to Stanner's idea of sacramentalism, and it is difficult to determine further the broad picture beyond Elkin's remarks that in general the outline of the rites are the same all over Australia and that through them 'the initiand can pass into the sacred world',²¹ i.e. the world of secret life (and their real interest!) which 'stretches far back into the days of the great heroes, and forward beyond death itself'.²² Moreover, this sacred life is entered symbolically through a blood rite which is almost universal from east to west, and north to south, whether the blood be sprinkled on the initiand or given to him to drink. The blood is sacred and gives 'life, strength and courage, and so fits the candidates for the revelations which are to be made'.²³ While the blood is being drawn the chanting of a song consecrates it and as Elkin says gives it 'sacramental efficacy' to unite them to the elders and the ancestral heroes. Taking this in conjunction with Stanner's earlier remarks, namely the apparently irreversible interest, spiritual ease, and intellectual satisfaction of an individual who has been through the Punj, it seems fair to say that the transforming sacramental effect is common to Aboriginal initiation.

Aboriginal Initiation as 'Mode of' Reality

At this stage it will be useful to introduce Clifford Geertz' concept that culture patterns, i.e. systems or complexes of symbols, in this case religious, are models either 'of' or 'for' reality.²⁴ The complex we have been dealing with in Aboriginal sacramental initiation can be seen to embrace both, and we shall shortly speak of their 'inter-transposability' so characteristic of religious ritual. The 'model of' aspect would seem to be the more creative, an expression of the religious reality, the really real, in symbolic form and tied together in rituals such as the Punj we have discussed, and beyond that, sacramental initiation in general.

The 'model of' the really real into which the Aborigine is initiated is the symbolic expression of what holds the world together, the way it was in the beginning and is ultimately meant to be. Following Geertz it will be a 'model of' a world in which the uncanny, human suffering, and ethical paradox are contained, that is to say kept from tearing Aboriginal life apart or from falling into chaos. This is achieved through faithful preservation of myths and meticulous re-iteration of the secret initiation ceremonies. In this way the 'real' world is an 'articulated, significant, resourceful land, formed, enriched, and consecrated by Supernatural Beings'.²⁵ Without this fidelity to the Dream Time myths and ritual the world will disintegrate.

The tone of this disintegration is captured by the Berndts in *The First Australians*, quoted by Eliade: 'A camp without ceremonies where moonlit evenings are silent, or broken only by the mutterings of the card players or a sudden burst of quarrelling, is a camp where the people's zest for living has been lost . . .'²⁶ Here is lacking a safety from the unknown, likewise a protection from suffering and a dignity in the moral uncertainties of life. On the other hand, again following Berndt, the faithful re-enactment of the symbolic 'model of' life's meaning ensures that they are 'not entirely at the mercy of events'; more goodwill than friction between people yields less suffering; and even in those instances of ritual re-enactment when mythical characters acted in ways not open to mere humans, i.e. not according to the rules, even then the ritual participation can be seen as a cathartic rationalization. In any event, in the Dream Time 'spectacular examples of "wrong" behaviour are few in comparison with those which are taken to represent "right" or "good" behaviour'.²⁸ Thus where there is fidelity in following up the Dreaming (the 'model of'), man's ethical world is sufficiently secure from paradox and all is well.

Aboriginal Initiation as 'Model for' Living

In this ritual rendering of the 'model of' the really real there is generated a religious perspective which is larger than the realities of everyday life. In this wider or deeper or ultimate view of life the key word is commitment rather than detachment, encounter rather than analysis, and thus the 'model of' reality as ultimate is easily transposed to a 'model for' living: the world view ritually enacted generates an ethos with a long-lasting and pervasive set of moods and motivations. We will now examine this further in the context of Aboriginal sacramental initiation.

First, we must be aware of the liminal, especially as it exists in initiatory ritual. Following Turner, to be in a liminal existence is to be on a threshold, or in the gaps, interstices of a structured existence.²⁹ Roles and statuses that are developed in institutions (family, school, peer group, etc.) structure our existence. To be involved in a ritual of initiation is to be caught up in the symbols of the anti-structure which is liminal, the time of betwixt and between. In Eliade's thought this is the 'Great Time', the 'illud tempus' where the individual finds 'the very source of life in myth'.³⁰ The power of the anti-structure is in its symbols which, as Tillich says, point to a reality beyond themselves and are the means of participating in that reality.³¹

For the Aboriginal experiencing initiation the very source of existence is the Dream Time, the 'then' becoming 'now' in the faithful following up of the Dreaming. The symbols of blood, the bullroarer, the nakedness all point to this experience of liminality which will leave the Aborigine with that 'irreversible interest, spiritual ease, and intellectual satisfaction' that are ready to produce the fruits of a 'model for' ritual. These fruits in Geertz' definition have already been referred to as the long lasting and pervasive moods proper to a distinctive world view. They constitute the ethos in which religious man finds his motivations.

In this regard Stanner speaks of the Aboriginal 'assent to life' with its mood of resignation or of sad finality, of 'immemorial misdirection', and of an acceptance of first things which were also a consummation.³² All this is encompassed in Aboriginal faith, and is the 'human, all too

human' tone of life necessarily linked with, though not stifled by, suffering. Stanner goes on to say that religiously they seem to be 'trembling on the edge of tragedy', and yet because of the intrusion of mundane pursuits such as the pursuit of food, lovers, etc. an almost equal case could be made for an imminent collapse into laughter. Indeed, the Punj ceremony is a highly joyful celebration, and in the end he concludes that the assent to life as described above is made without morbidity.³³

Such a mood of living is presented by Geertz as a scalar reality which goes nowhere but is interpreted in terms of its source, in this case the Dream Time. On the other hand Geertz' concept of motivation implies direction like a vector and is interpreted in terms of consummation. What is it that motivates Aboriginal life in the sense of prompting social and ethical action? Here Stanner discounts the presence of any life-compensatory theme: there was 'no challenge that would have forced morals and beliefs to find anatomies'.³⁴ Bitter and violent reaction to injury and loss were common, but easily yielded to a 'forgive and forget' and caring resumption of life once the institutionalized processes for redress of wrongs and for retaliation were accomplished. Beyond this too there were other egotistical and mystical divinations to satisfy hostile purposes against others. With a characteristic acceptance of situational motivation the Aborigine treated his own people with care and concern and when the occasion arose was capable of callous self-serving contempt and uncompromising payback. 'As far as one can tell from outward show the formations of conscience are not strong'.³⁵ Nor is moral freedom a characteristic: life is a once and for all matter, the good with the bad.

Some of these views taken from Stanner are general and some specific from his knowledge of the Murinbata. Again we must try to verify the general picture from other authors. Berndt writes that Aboriginal religion 'was concerned with the meaning of life, with the fundamental patterning of human existence, and with what we can call the moral universe'.³⁶ Such a description easily fits Geertz' 'models of' and 'models for' paradigm. However, Berndt sees the meaning of life as something less 'pre-deterministic' than Stanner's 'immemorial misdirection'. Such misdirection for Berndt may be true of myths concerned with death, but in others it is not so apparent. He would like to see an element of choice (free will) in the action of mythic beings; the fact that they chose in one way rather than another can even result in ritual benefits, a good flowing from the bad. In support Strehlow notes on death among the southern Aranda that his informants did see their bodies as irrevocably mortal, but with a resigned sorrow and regret — a suggestion perhaps that it could have been otherwise.³⁷

In summary Berndt seems to be saying that 'immemorial misdirection' should include a 'possibility of choice' interpretation. There is in nature a unity that admits good times (seasons) and bad, and man shares in this orientation by his own choices which engender good sometimes and on other occasions bad. There is a unity embracing good and bad for Berndt, whereas for Stanner there is a 'spoiling of possible unity' from the beginning. When, however, Berndt goes on to say that wrong-doing brings its own punishment in this life, and that this bad co-existing with the good is part 'of an inevitable and irreversible frame of existence' we may well have a distinction between his views and Stanner's, but without a difference; at least from our concern to describe a life commitment with its prevailing motivation: fidelity to the Dreaming actualized in progressive initiation as the way to reaching the abode of the dead with no moral issues involved.³⁸ In the passage of life this fidelity will sometimes involve what we from our cultural perspective might regard as good moral behaviour, but the moral goodness of such behaviour as such is not their motivation. It occurs with its counterpart, wrong-doing, which as noted above finds its punishment in this life and not in the next.

Such is the world view and ethos opened up by Aboriginal sacramental initiation and life

commitment. For the time being (we will have to return to it later) its uniqueness is indicated by Stanner in these words: 'initiated men learn to live with Europeanism, and even to manipulate it skilfully, but I have met none – except those whose traditional world had utterly collapsed – who were happy with it.'³⁹

II. CHRISTIAN SACRAMENTAL INITIATION AND LIFE COMMITMENT IN THE LIGHT OF CLIFFORD GEERTZ' DEFINITION OF RELIGION

The explication of sacramental initiation in the Christian context need not be so detailed. Baptism and Eucharist are traditionally known as sacraments that initiate an individual to a life of grace in Jesus Christ. For the purpose of this study we can concentrate on a Roman Catholic approach to sacraments of initiation as it was before the Vatican II Council. This is largely the context of any encounter and exchange up to the early 1960s. Subsequent developments in sacramental theology will be taken up in our discussion of possibilities of future religious exchange across Aboriginal and Christian cultural boundaries.

The Roman Catholic 'Sacramental System'

A typical pre-Vatican II presentation of Roman Catholic sacramental theology is that given in *The Teaching of the Catholic Church* edited by Canon George Smith and published in 1948. The distinguished English theologian, C.C. Martindale, is the contributor of *The Sacramental System* in which he notes that sacrament was at first a not very skilful rendering of the Greek work 'musterion'. Its meaning was little more than that 'what it was applied to was more sacred than its mere external nature would lead you to suppose'.⁴⁰ Accordingly the word sacrament was applied to all sorts of religious activities.

There were, however, significant religious transactions which stood out because they were believed to have been instituted by Christ. Gradually these were numbered as seven sacraments and commonly described as material signs which 'somehow cause and confer and contain what they signify'.⁴¹

Traditionally the seven sacraments belonged to the life of grace in Christ which was initially conferred in the 'new birth' of baptism and realized fully in the eucharistic participation or communion. Hence baptism and eucharist are the two sacraments of Christian initiation. (It should be noted that I am excluding confirmation from the discussion, even though it too is regarded as a sacrament of initiation. Apart from limits to the length of the discussion, the inclusion of confirmation would involve an attempt to untangle its history vis-à-vis baptism and nothing would be added to the present study.)

Sacramental Initiation in the Christian Context

Once more sacramentalism takes us into the world of material, visible, tangible signs which when properly confected with appropriate intentions will produce the sacramental effect of grace, i.e. a share in the life of Christ. In baptism, by the simple use of water and the saying of the words 'I baptize you in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit' there is imparted the effect of the sacrament, its grace and its character. This grace is an immersion in the death and resurrection of Jesus so that sin in the recipient is as dead as 'the body of Christ was dead upon the cross', and there is 'a new birth in the spiritual order which begins a new life corresponding to the resurrection of Christ'.⁴² As we shall see shortly this grace brings with it an infusion of the so-called theological and moral virtues. It is a veritable transformation

of a person at the deepest level; it is an incorporation into the Mystical Body of Christ, a signing and sealing with the 'character' of the sacrament once and for all. Baptism can never be repeated and its character is indelible.

When we pass to the Eucharist we are dealing with the material elements of bread and wine which by consecration are believed to be the sacramental and real presence of Jesus in the mystery of his dying and rising to new life. Moreover, by participating in the eucharistic sacrifice Christians show, i.e. proclaim and celebrate, the death of the Lord until he comes.⁴³ When with baptism it was said that individuals die to sin in order that they might live to Christ, the effects of grace and baptismal character were only possible in virtue of Christ the primordial sacrament who achieved the once and for all salvation of man by his own death and resurrection. Baptism's effect, then, is inseparably linked to Christ, and hence, in the Eucharist where Christ is present par-excellence there is that fulfilment of what had its beginning in baptism. Christian sacramental initiation is climaxed when one 'communicates' with the Christ in virtue of whose death and resurrection there was an initial signing over and sealing in the mystery of Christ. Such communion is in charity, and implies a capacity and readiness to refer all actions, like Christ, to God in the 'fervour of charity'. The effect is admirably expressed by St Paul in the words: 'I live, now not I, but Christ lives in me'.⁴⁴ Herein is the end result of Christian sacramental initiation - to put on the mind of Christ in whom one 'lives, moves, and has one's being' (St Paul). Or in Peter's phrase, Christians become sharers in the divine nature. Theology strives to tease out the meaning of these scriptural expressions of Peter and Paul; for our purposes it seems fair to note that they suggest 'the mystical understanding' and the 'transforming sacramental effect' already observed in regard to the sacramental totemism of Aboriginal initiation (pages 6-7 above).

'Models of' and 'Models for' in the Christian Context

If now we turn again to Geertz and his 'model of' and 'model for' reality we can see that Christian sacramentalism in its ritual dimension responds to the same concerns noted of the Aboriginal case: it seeks to cope symbolically with the uncanny, with suffering, and with moral paradox.

Both the sacrament of baptism and the sacrament of eucharist incorporate the believer into Christ. What is acted out ritually and symbolically - whether it be plunging into the death of Christ by immersion in water, or the union of the baptized with Christ-risen in the sharing of the eucharistic bread (Body) and cup (Blood) - both flows from and reinforces a world-view in which Christ is central. The Christian has no fear of the malign or the unexpected. By adhering to Christ he follows a way of life that is secure and beyond deception. He belongs to a Church community with a well articulated belief system; in particular he thanks God in his eucharist for redeeming the world and ordering the same world with divine and loving providence. There is no fear of unknown powers: the light of Easter (whose liturgy is baptismal and eucharistic ritual par-excellence) dispels all darkness.

Suffering in its turn may not be dispelled; nor is it necessarily explained in human terms. But in faith it is explicable and takes its meaning from the suffering of Christ himself who because he endured the cross has been raised up. And finally injustice and any sense of moral paradox is accounted for by Christ who has convicted the world of sin and triumphed over it. In the words of Paul sin has lost its sting and death is swallowed up in the victory of Christ. This same Christ will come again and claim for his own those who have faithfully followed his way after their sacramental initiation in baptism and eucharist.

These symbols of Christian life, baptism and eucharist, are like any symbols of the sacred so

charged with meaning that they continually create moods and motivations for the Christian; in Geertz's definition they act as a 'model for' reality and establish an ethos with a distinctive style of Christian commitment.

Traditionally this commitment is expressed through Christian virtues, especially in the context of this study, the virtues of faith, hope and charity. In the essay in which Geertz refers to moods and motivations as scalar and vector realities respectively,⁴⁵ he in fact uses Christian optimism and Christian charity as examples of what he means. Christian optimism has its source in God who creates optimistically to manifest divine goodness ultimately seen in the redeeming person of Christ. Such an optimistic Christian is one who lives in faith and has hope of the vindication of God's nature as the Source of goodness and the ground of created being. Once initiated and incorporated into Christ and celebrating his paschal mystery in the eucharist the Christian lives and prays within this mystery of goodness. One may say that the Christian assent to life is here: a faith in God who comes in Christ, who encourages to stand firm in hope. Then embracing the future the Christian is motivated to live in charity towards God and fellow men and women. Such motivating love or charity issues in the whole range of Christian moral living – whatever one does or omits to do is either done or not done to Christ. There is no other way to the Father or channel of the Spirit; the Christian ethos has Christ at its centre as the way, the truth and the life.

Just as the previous chapter concluded with Stanner's intimation of the uniqueness of the Aboriginal world-view and ethos as this was highlighted by its contact with Europeanism, so now we can conclude this chapter with the words of St Paul to the Galatians: 'All you who have been baptized in Christ's name have put on the person of Christ; no more Jew or Gentile, no more slave and free man, no more male and female; you are all one person in Jesus Christ' (Gal 3:27-28). Somewhere along the way, it seems, this all-inclusive thrust of Christianity has been particularized so that what in Christ was an opportunity to transcend local and cultural differences has been perceived by the Aborigines as an offering of Europeanism. From a Christian viewpoint, then, an encounter or lack of it must be seen in this light: the uniqueness of the Aboriginal world-view and ethos is being more and more appreciated; but there is work to be done in appreciating the culturally packaged Christianity so far presented to the Aboriginal people.

III. LIMITATIONS TO ENCOUNTER

The uniqueness of the Aboriginal world-view and ethos intimated by Stanner has only in recent times begun to be realized. I would suggest that this realization has come about due to a recovered and heightened awareness of the duality of mythos/logos in religion. As O'Dea says, the rationalization of belief patterns and the rise of alternative modes of explanation are normal enough in the development of religions.⁴⁶ The mythic/symbolic even invites thought or the logos (Ricoeur): its cognitive content can give rise to reflection that results in the use of definite and literal terms purporting to explain the meaning of myths and symbols whether they be images or events. But it must be seen that the rational can only grow out of the experience enshrined in myth and symbol. If, in the flowering of philosophical systems of thought and the pursuit of the perfect proposition, the roots of religion in the total religious experience of man are forgotten or overlooked, then this rationalized language of religion can become very limited and esoteric. It is of little use for communication with people whose beliefs have not been subjected to the development, if indeed it is always such, of rational and philosophical expression, and the practices that flow from it.

MYTHOS AND LOGOS IN ABORIGINAL/CHRISTIAN ENCOUNTER

Herein has been the undoing of much of Western Christianity's missionary endeavour. The characteristically Pauline theology of the Christian world and life as outlined in the previous chapter became in practice largely cacooned in stifling rubrics about matter and form and entwined in moral rules and regulations far removed from the truth that was to set people free. Thus rationalized and reduced to propositions and procedures was the faith-burden of the Church's missionary effort, the occasional and exceptional deference to indigenous ways and customs as in China (cf. the case of Ricci) only serving to prove the rule that it generally overlooked the local culture and its balance of mythos/logos, or even its pre-logos naive (i.e. pre-critical) attitude to its beliefs.

In our subject of sacramental initiation it must be admitted that the Aboriginal ritual was totally within the category of mythos with its thoroughly symbolic content, while the Christian counterpart was heavily clothed in verbal and propositional instruction and physicalist philosophical categories that all but stifled its undoubted symbolic content. Many Aborigines, indeed, were initiated according to Christian rites, but their subsequent and almost universal failure to see the Christian world-view and subscribe to its ethos surely suggest there was little of the 'ex opere operato' effect of the Christian sacrament presumed to be automatically realized by the rites. In the words of Martin Wilson Christians 'tended to stress the reality of the effectiveness and forget that the sacrament is effective precisely as symbol'.⁴⁷ We will return to this in due course.

The non-communication or non-encounter by and large accompanying the contact of Aboriginal and Christian belief-systems seems a clear case of the limitation proposed by Ricoeur as a principle of cross-cultural religious experience. Such limitations have already been widely acknowledged within the one religious tradition viz. Christianity: different ages and differing cultural contexts have generated different paradigms of understanding. We have here a cultural relativism that would, for example, on the one hand see history in a fundamentalist way – Jesus said and did exactly as the text of the gospel puts it; or on the other hand see history according to the canons of scientific-historical research – the gospel Jesus must be measured, even modified, by these critical canons, to be the historical Jesus. These two paradigms of historical understanding labour under what Sarah Coakley would call a relativism in epistemological criteria: what did happen in history? Different paradigms proffer different answers.^{47a}

Even more limiting, then is the difference of paradigm from religion to religion. Eliade reminds us that there is 'no culture without history, without changes and transformations brought on by external influences'.⁴⁸ But this history is not acknowledged as such by the Australian Aboriginal culture, be it history according to the fundamentalist paradigm or the scientific. Any Christ mediated to them by Christian sacraments of initiation would if at all be a modification of their way to be telescoped into a primordial and a-historical time appropriate to their world-view with its exclusively mythic quality. They do not know historical particularity as Christians do. It is therefore not surprising that while accepting baptism and receiving the eucharist they did not cease to live in their own 'real' world (Eliade) with its peculiar ritual security and social rather than moral sanctions of behaviour. As their myths and symbols were largely overlooked or, along with some of their behaviour, condemned by missionaries, any attempt at genuine appreciation of them, together with a development of a sense of chronological history, were consigned to the indefinite future. Jesus as an historical symbol and an exemplar of right behaviour would remain very remote.

The Christian word, moreover, was proclaimed by scholastically minded missionaries conscious of their own need to get the parts of the sacrament (words, water, bread, wine) together so that grace would flow as effect follows cause in physical science. This was not the world of

the Aborigine. Nor could the principle of limitation be removed, at least from the Christian point of view, by involving the false consciousness of Aborigines, i.e. an alienation of consciousness that in Maddock's words 'abstracts imaginatively to powers standing over and against men, instead of accepting themselves individually as the true vehicles of their traditions developed over time and not belonging exclusively to mythic time, the 'Illud Tempus' of Eliade.⁴⁹ This really begs the question and fails to face the fact that the Aboriginal world-view and ethos is of a kind of first naïvete, not yet subjected to rational analysis and only then perhaps able to be resumed with a second enlightened naïvete which would not be beyond encountering by the Christian world-view and ethos.

The Self, too, understood as outlined at the beginning of this paper, is, in the Aboriginal context, still a long way from its Christian counterpart, the conscious and responsible agent motivated to act in faith and hope and charity. In their Christian setting these virtues are all very future orientated, whereas the Aboriginal world-view and ethos see no more than a fusing of the mythic time with the present: the 'then' of the Dreaming becomes the 'now' in their rituals. In the Christian anamnesis first experienced in the sacrament of eucharistic initiation, the memory of the past always yields to the hope of the future. It might be argued, as Strehlow does, that 'an important function of time-bound [Aboriginal] man was to assist in the sustaining processes of a world that had begun in Eternity and that was continuing without any changes into Eternity'.⁵⁰ But this only confirms that the Aboriginal and Christian are worlds apart until the changelessness of the Dreaming can be reconciled with the events of Christian history. Not only does the Aborigine lack a sense of chronological history; the type of Christian we are discussing in relation to encounter has particularized and made static his view of sacramentality according to a physicalist interpretation of the words and actions and effects that would drain the originating events of their pristine symbolic power.

In the light of these remarks any attempt at establishing parallels between Aboriginal and Christian life initiated in their respective sacramental rituals would also seem to be thwarted. To see a Christian baptism as the counterpart of Aboriginal initiation must first cope with the difficulty that baptism is not strictly speaking a rite of passage as is the puberty rite of Aboriginal culture (e.g. the Punj we referred to in detail earlier).⁵¹ The practice of infant baptism notwithstanding, this Christian sacrament of initiation is essentially a uniquely personal moment of grace which may occur before, during, or after puberty and adolescence. The way to religious encounter cannot be located in the life-cycle as such. That it may be located in individuals who successively experience the symbolic power of Christian and Aboriginal initiations will be dealt with in the next chapter.

Stanner himself had earlier warned against using his findings to give 'any weight to general theories of natural religion or to the conceptions of any particular religion'.⁵² He was conscious, no doubt, of the culturally conditioned sacramentalism that had come to characterize Christianity and more specifically Roman Catholic evangelization practices. Theologically the tendency was to narrow the meaning of sacramentalism and any linking of such sacramentalism to Aboriginal life-cycle rituals, or substituting the former for the latter, was doing little to depth the source of such profound and apparently different transformations realized in the one and the other individual, the Aborigine and the Christian. Again, with some irony, Stanner points out that 'many customs, in themselves not only innocent of evil or repugnant elements but, in fact, of a sacramental order, were also suppressed by missionaries'.⁵³ But in adding that 'the suppressors did not suspect that they themselves were trying to impose a symbolism which had only an historical, and not an essential, connection with the deeper metaphysical truths of their faith', Stanner at least gives implicit encouragement for the task of penetrating symbols-as-such as a way to encounter to which the latter part of this paper will be given over.

So far our discussion of limitation to encounter has centred on the Christian failure until recently to appreciate the uniqueness of Aboriginal religion, and the representatives of Christianity's own inhibiting and culturally conditioned approach to such encounter. A further point must be made with reference to the mythic quality of Aboriginal religion. Raimundo Panikkar writes of myth that its role is to allow a 'people to rest somewhere in their quest for the foundations of everything'.⁵⁴ As such it sheds its own light and does not need the invading light of the critical reason or the rational mind. To explain a myth, to speak of a mythology, i.e. the approach of the logos to the myth, is strictly speaking to entertain a contradiction in terms. When a myth is visited by the logos that would question its validity or justification the rationalization of belief (cf. O'Dea earlier) may well have begun, albeit pretentiously, and even at the invitation of the symbolic which gives rise to thought (Ricoeur); but the myth has its own unique insight and for this reason is said to recede to a deeper level of consciousness, presumably to lie dormant until with the misplaced critique of the logos removed it can find expression once again to survive or perish on its own mythic merit. This, I suggest, is what has happened with the contact between Aboriginal and Christian belief systems. The latter, being heavily rational to the detriment of the symbolic, forced the Aboriginal myths to recede. From time to time these myths have resurfaced: they are still there. Like any myth or symbols their light, which gives something akin to participative knowledge rather than an objective knowledge, is according to Avery Dulles meant to illumine the rational and secondary process of formulating propositions about the 'foundations of everything' or the Ultimate.⁵⁵ Unfortunately Christian missionary contact proceeded as though the opposite were true, i.e. that reason was supreme and the arbiter of good and bad myths and symbols. In the event both Christian and Aboriginal symbolism was obscured. But now with a resurgence of the symbolic in Christian sacramental praxis, perhaps we have the climate and the means of a genuine religious encounter. The proper approach could well be in an attempt to depth and relate the symbols of the respective religious traditions of sacramental initiation.

In concluding this chapter and lest an impression be left that missionaries missed their Christian mark altogether, vis-à-vis their mission to the Australian Aboriginal people, I think it only fair to quote in full the following assessment of Kenelm Burridge:

It is necessary to stress the missionary effort. Despite mistakes, the crippling effect of sectarian rivalries, and a variety of peculiar attitudes and activities resulting from the frustrations and irritations of a lonely life in the outback without the active support of one's fellows, it has been the missionaries who have actually applied themselves to the practical problems of embracing the Aborigines as brothers. Poorly financed, having to live with the consequences of their mistakes, these missionaries should not be judged in their failure but in the enormous task they set themselves in devoting their lives to the service of their fellow men. Indeed, it is often convenient to forget that had it not been for the work of Christian missionaries, it is doubtful whether Australian Aborigines would have survived into the present.⁵⁶

IV. LOOKING AHEAD

Some ten to fifteen years ago the process of secularization might well have been seen as the end to all religion. The sacraments of initiation in Aboriginal religion and Christianity would have been laid to rest, strangers to the end, along with all other religious phenomena. But such was not to be. In a perceptive article and writing as a sociologist, Thomas Gannon agrees that

people in their lives today are becoming more secular, i.e. the total social order is regulated increasingly by technology: conscious societal planning by specialists using empirical knowledge and rational skills more and more direct our lives. On the same level of societal living where there is not much place for the unexplained and unpredictable, familiar religious traditions embodied in the myths and symbols of centuries are no longer visible. They have withdrawn to the periphery or been largely privatized. But either way there is strong evidence that a religious spirit is still abroad. Though religion can no longer be identified with or seen as a function of the total society now secularized, it has become increasingly clear that religion is not so much a constituent element of highly bureaucratized society as it is a vital factor at the heart of communities. Such communities (the family, faith-communities, ethnic groups etc.) would seem to have survived precisely because they can still give expression in the affective language of myth and symbol to the interpersonal and the transcendent qualities of life that elude dispassionate and objective terms.⁵⁷

Robert Bellah in *Beyond Belief* pursues the same theme and seeks to isolate the characteristic function of a still vital religious spirit that can protect 'the naked individual . . . [confronting] the impersonal grid of the bureaucratic state' (Gannon). It is, he says, the irrepressible capacity to be a symbolic realist and as such to give expression to a religious experience that is 'inherent in the structure of human existence'.⁵⁸ Religion is therefore a reality 'sui generis' always concerned with the link between subject and object, with the whole that contains them and forms their ground. 'It symbolizes unities in which we participate, which we know in Polanyi's words, not by observing but by dwelling in them'.⁵⁹

At the beginning of this study it was said that neither the sacramentality nor the life commitment of the Aboriginal and Christian religious belief-systems were synonymous with petrified symbolic systems. Each tradition is the product of the symbolic process and each tradition has had its limitations. Aboriginal religion has a naïve and relatively unreflective approach to its myths and symbols, the Self tending to be lost in the symbolized (cf. page 2).⁶⁰ For its part the christian tradition we have dealt with has tended to objectify and over-rationalize its symbols, robbing them of much of their 'overplus of meaning' and failing to appreciate the common ground or religious matrix of the symbolic process which might have enhanced an encounter. But all is not irretrievably lost. Each tradition in recent times has shared in that symbolic realism which would grapple with the interpersonal questions of justice and peace and charity and seek to relate them symbolically 'to the foundations of everything' (Panikkar).

The opening chapter of Kenneth Maddock's book *The Australian Aborigines* has the title 'Remodelling Society'.⁶¹ In this chapter Maddock discusses the significance of an action by some Elcho Island Aborigines who in the fifties made a 'fundamentally rational and logical' move to modify their world-view. In the event the movement was to collapse, but it does stand as an example of Aboriginal willingness to negotiate (not to say compromise) with their own culture (e.g. their departure from the previous exclusion of their women from particular mythic secrets) and also with European culture in that they chose to depart from a pre-European naïvety or uncritical attitude to their cultural heritage in the face of crisis. This engagement in the re-working of their mythic and symbolic world to face life with a second naïvety (i.e. more calculated, or as we would say with an incipient etiological approach to their faith and commitment in symbol) is well in keeping with the symbolic realism sought by Bellah. The Aboriginal experience of Europeanism must now be a part of their total life experience. In issues such as protests for Land Rights there are emerging individual leaders with something of the charisma hitherto unknown in their culture, or at least not remembered. There is here it seems to me a dawning of an Aboriginal historical awareness which is chronological and critical: they will remember particular men and women and their contributions to the Aboriginal struggle for

dignity, justice and equality. Such memories will be committed to books and in time more and more Aboriginal children will be learning of their recent recorded history as well as the mythic history of their ageless songs and chants and dances. The experience recorded by Broome is worth noting as it is being repeated widely. Tribal elders of the Pindab Mob encouraged moves to learn about and to adapt to European ways while insisting that the government funded school at Strelly teach traditional cultural values in their own language through texts prepared by the elders with the help of European teachers.⁶²

Any ritual memory or anamnesis in this context can be full of potential. With due allowance made for the continuum of contemporary ritual possibilities, from comparatively unaltered tribal rites through to those initiation ceremonies which are more akin to the socio-cultural remnant of ritual as seen in the 'got to get it done' (the wetting of the baby's head) in christian contexts, we can entertain the hope of a newly discovered historical particularity in Aboriginal religious initiation. The 'mystical understanding' (Stanner) of the 'Illud Tempus' can embrace the significant and formative events of recent Aboriginal history without projecting them backwards into the Dream Time. A new sense of a more articulated Self as the conscious bearer of Aboriginal tradition is open then to other and earlier events of history beyond their own culture. And herein is the prospect of a meeting with a Christ who is not a figure to be telescoped into the Dream Time but to be welcomed in the procession of significant characters of history and even embraced as the Symbol par-excellence of the 'foundation for everything'.

If this is an encouraging religious scenario of symbolic realism within the Aboriginal community, we must now ask is there anything similar in the Christian context that can come to meet it in genuine encounter as just suggested.

The recovery of symbolic realism in christianity is to be seen in a recent article by Avery Dulles.⁶³ He and others (cf. Polanyi referred to earlier) propose the uniqueness of the role of symbol in religion. It is undeniable that many of the events of the Bible are highly symbolic as also are the themes of both prophetic preaching and apostolic proclamation. Such symbolic reality arises from man's body-person make-up, i.e. we are meant to come into our own by relating to others and to our world. As Dulles says, 'only in a spiritual movement towards finite realities can one actuate the sense of the transcendent as that which goes beyond the world'. If 'coming into our own' is to be more than a day to day experience of the world with its secular categories of the empirically verifiable and societally predictable, if, that is, we are to somehow rest with the 'foundations of everything' there is need of a category of knowledge such as the symbolic. That such a category of knowledge exists universally in religion is beyond dispute. Its value though for religious encounter across time and cultures has been neglected far too long.

This value rests in the symbol's capacity to convey the interiority of a reality which is beyond the observation and abstraction of objective knowledge. The more self-possessed a reality is, then the less helpful are the ways of positive science and measurement, and the ways of philosophies and theologies which relying too heavily on such positive attitudes become too physicalist in their approaches. In the unquenchable religious quest there emerges a more personal category of knowledge which Dulles describes as participatory. By such symbolic knowledge, for example, we know what it is to belong to a family, a culture, a faith-community. It is to attend not so much 'to' a reality as we might in concentrating on the effectiveness of a sacrament to be rightly performed, but rather to attend 'from' the reality that symbolizing opens up to us. A symbol, then, is never a mere object, but in Nathan Mitchell's words it is an open-ended action that deals with a new discovery which involves us: 'symbols are places to live, breathing spaces that help us discover the possibilities that life offers'.⁶⁴

When we apply this reality of symbol to our christian sacraments of initiation the 'place to live' and the 'environment to be inhabited' by attending from the symbol embraced in faith is the very reality and life of God revealed in Christ. Beyond the symbols of bread and wine and cleansing water is the master-symbol of Christ himself. To live with and in these symbols is to 'attend from' Christ: we are reconciled and born to new life in Christ, adopted members of God's family and household.

Of particular importance here is a distinction between a representative symbol (or fictional) and a presentative symbol as in the case of Jesus in history. The latter means that the symbolized (God, life of God) is in the symbol (the human life and death and resurrection of Jesus). To attend from this Symbol especially in the anamnesis of christian eucharist is not to say that the christian Self is weakly articulated. We are dealing with an historical presentative symbol (Rahner's realsymbol) which is to say that the individual caught up in the ritual knows something participatively of what God has done with historical particularity in Jesus. Such an individual really comes into his own and knows his Self as autonomous and free yet related to God in Christ, and through Christ to the whole of creation.

The contemporary shape of the symbol of Christ can be seen in the eucharist. (Langdon Gilkey uses this idea of the 'symbolic shape' of the service of Jesus which is to be filled out with the human experience of different times and cultures.⁶⁵ Our time, as already noted with reference to Aboriginal culture, is characterized by change and uncertainty. The enduring shape of Jesus Christ's self-giving meets the experience of contemporary man in the eucharistic symbols of 'crusty bread' and 'rough red' which show him that Jesus is with him as he struggles in the world for that wholeness and maturity that are already Christ's.⁶⁶

In both religious traditions therefore it can be seen that through anamnesis moulded by symbolic realism there is a celebration of history with its significant characters. In Aboriginal religion this is a new development that enlarges the world-view to embrace chronological events and offers moral exemplars in the quest for justice and personal dignity. From the christian side there is an appreciation of a world marked by oppression and injustice, a world to which Christ still comes. The sacramental initiation of individuals into this world cannot overlook such traditions and history, albeit a recent history for those such as the Aborigines of Australia. Hence there would seem to be greater scope than ever for an encounter of the two religious traditions with their specific representative and presentative symbols.

One avenue that seems to me well worth exploring is that of the catechumenate which in former times was a feature of christian initiation. Dionisio Borobio speaks of a possible universalization of a catechumenate before confirmation in adolescence.⁶⁷ In this he presupposes a rearrangement of the christian initiation process away from infant baptism. Instead, baptism could be delayed at will and the eucharist in the adult assembly would be seen as the culmination of a process that has involved the faith-community into which the new believer is received. From the point of view of encounter between christians and Aborigines adhering to their own traditions the way forward would seem to be that of a symbiosis as suggested by Aidan Kavanagh.⁶⁸ This means that baptism, confirmation and eucharist would retain their uniquely Christic character and symbolism but be open to apt cultural symbols from the Aboriginal tradition. An individual Aborigine then would be baptized and partake of the eucharist in an experience of grace that could be encompassed in an indigenized sacramental liturgy. As a christian this person could then pass through an Aboriginal rite of passage. In all, the Christian sacramental liturgy may well have been enriched, and the Aboriginal rite of passage christianized by Aboriginal christians passing through it.

This kind of experience which I have described more from the Aboriginal point of view of encountering christianity would, I think, be adjudged by Panikkar as pertaining to the intra-faith dialogue, the ultimate in encounter. The Aborigine baptized into the Christian faith is presumed to be thoroughly christian, to know Christ by dwelling within Christ (Polanyi) or by attending from Christ (Dulles). Has he had to yield anything of his Aboriginality in order to do this? Just as important for Christians is whether they can enter into this ultimate encounter by dwelling within the Aboriginal belief-system and still remain christian. These would seem to be the final questions to be faced when and if the Aboriginal tradition chooses to draw Christ into its sacramental initiation and the christian tradition ponders more deeply the older 'mystical understanding' of the Aboriginal way.

CONCLUSION

The deeper implications of these questions for an encounter can perhaps be framed by referring to Panikkar's distinction between faith and belief.⁶⁹ Beyond the belief systems, or symbol systems, the one hitherto mythic and the other mythic/historico-critical, is there a common faith into which adherents of either tradition are drawn in their initiations? But this is to come to the theology of religions which is beyond the scope of this study. What we can rest with at this stage is the recognition that for a worthwhile encounter there must be a balance of the mythos and the logos. Christianity as expressed in Roman Catholic renewed sacramental theology has recaptured the symbolic, especially by seeing Christ in 'bread which earth has given and human hands have made' and 'wine which is fruit of the vine and work of human hands' (from the new liturgy of the Mass). In this there is a closeness to the 'archetypal symbols of blood and soil'.⁷⁰ Aboriginal religion, for centuries immersed in these same archetypal symbols, has the opportunity to embark on a course with chronological history for the first time, to discover the value of logos in assessing past events and thus to learn that the story of Jesus led Christians to see him as the logos and wisdom of God. With such a balance of mythos and logos the future encounter of Aboriginal religion and christianity is, I believe, by no means unconditionally foreclosed.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- BELLAH, R.
1976 *Beyond Belief (Essays on Religion in a Post-traditional World)* Harper and Row, New York.
- BERNDT, R.
1974 *Australian Aboriginal Religion*, Fasc. 2 in *Iconography of Religions*, Sect. 5. E. Brill, Leiden.
Charles Strong Memorial Lecture: *A Profile of Good and Bad in Australian Aboriginal Religion*.
Colloquium, Aust. and N.Z. Theological Review, Auckland.
- BERNDT, R. and C.
1977 *The World of the First Australians*. Ure Smith, Sydney.
- BROOME, R.
1982 *Aboriginal Australians*. George Allen and Unwin, Sydney.
- BURRIDGE, K.
1973 *Encountering Aborigines*. Pergamon Press, New York.
- ELIADE, M.
1973 *Australian Religions*. Cornell Uni. Press, Ithaca.
- ELKIN, A.
1974 *The Australian Aborigines*. Angus & Robertson, Sydney.
- GEERTZ, C.
1973 *The Interpretation of Cultures*. Basic Books Inc., New York

NELEN YUBU

GILKEY, L.

1975 *Catholicism Confronts Modernity. A Protestant View.* Seabury Press, New York.

MADDOCK, K.

1975 *The Australian Aborigines.* Penguin, Melbourne.

O'DEA, T.

1966 *The Sociology of Religion.* Prentice-Hall Inc., New Jersey.

PANIKKAR, R.

1978 *The Intra-Religious Dialogue.* Paulist Press, New York.

RICOEUR, P.

1967 *The Symbolism of Evil.* Beacon, Boston.

ROHEIM, G.

1971 *The Eternal Ones of the Dream.* International Universities Press, New York.

SMITH, G. (ed.)

1952 *The Teaching of the Catholic Church.* Burns, Oates, Washbourne, London.

STANNER, W.

On Aboriginal Religion. 'Oceania' monograph No. 11; reprint of articles Dec. 1959 to Sept. 1963.

1979 *White Man Have No Dreaming. Essays, 1938-73.* A.N.U. Press, Canberra.

STREHLOW, T.

Central Australian Religion. Personal Monototemism in a Polytotemic Community. Aust. Assn. for the Study of Religions. Vol. 2, ed. V. Hayes.

STRENG, F.

1976 *Understanding Religious Life.* Dickenson, California.

THOMPSON, D.

Bora Is Like Church. Private Paper, Nungalinga College, Darwin.

WILSON, M.

1979 *New, Old, and Timeless.* Chevalier Press, Kensington, N.S.W.

ARTICLES

BOROBIO, D.

'The Four Sacraments of Popular Religiosity' in *Concilium, Liturgy and Human Passage.* Seabury Press, New York. 1979

COAKLEY, S.

'Theology and Cultural Relativism: What is the Problem?' in *Neue Zeitschrift Für Systematische Und Religionsphilosophie.* 21. Band 1979 Heft 3.

DULLES, A.

'The Symbolic Structure of Revelation' in *Theological Studies*, Vol. 41, 1980, No. 1. Georgetown Uni., Washington, D.C.

GANNON T.

'Religious and Social Change' in *Vidyajyoti, Journal of Theological Reflection*, Vol. XLVI, No. 4, April 1982. Delhi.

HOLMES, U.

'Liminality and Liturgy' in *Worship*, Vol. 47, No. 7, 1973.

KAVANAGH, A.

'Life Cycle Events, Civil Ritual and the Christian' in *Concilium, Liturgy and Human Passage.* Seabury Press, New York, 1979.

KELLY, A.

'The Wholebread of Life' in *Outlook*, Vol. 4, No. 8, 1982.

NOTES

1 Bellah, 1976; chap. 2.

1a Geertz, 1973; p.93.

1b Stanner, 1959-63; p.28.

1c O'Dea, 1966; p.41.

1d Streng, 1976; p.92.

1e Streng, 1976; p.93.

34 Stanner, 1979; p.120.

35 Stanner, 1959-63; p.57.

36 Berndt, Charles Strong Mem. Lecture; p.20.

37 Strehlow, Central Australian Religion.

38 Eliade, 1973; p.171.

39 Stanner, 1959-63; p.20.

- 2 Durack, M. 1969.
- 3 Bellah, 1976; pp.25-6.
- 4 Ibid. p.26.
- 5 Ricoeur, 1967; p.22.
- 6 Ibid. p.22.
- 7 Geertz, 1973; p.90.
- 8 Stanner, 1959-63; all references to the Punj are from this monograph.
- 9 Stanner, 1979; p.127.
- 10 Ibid. p.115.
- 11 Ibid. p.135.
- 12 Ricoeur, 1967; p.15.
- 13 Eliade, 1973; p.65.
- 14 Stanner, 1959-63; p.28.
- 15 Roheim, 1971; p.226.
- 16 Elkin, 1974; p.206.
- 17 Thompson, p.6.
- 18 Stanner, 1959-63; p.30.
- 19 Berndt, 1974; p.16.
- 20 Ibid. p.17.
- 21 Elkin, 1974; p.212.
- 22 Elkin, 1974; p.192.
- 23 Ibid. p.206.
- 24 Geertz, 1973; p.93.
- 25 Eliade, 1973; p.66.
- 26 Ibid. p.65.
- 27 Berndt, 1977; pp.288-91.
- 28 Ibid. p.291.
- 29 Holmes, 1973; p.388.
- 30 Ibid. p.391.
- 31 Ibid. p.390.
- 32 Stanner, 1959-63; p.56.
- 33 Ibid. p.58.
- 40 Smith, 1952; p.741.
- 41 Ibid. p.742.
- 42 Ibid. pp.774-5.
- 43 Ibid. p.883.
- 44 Ibid. p.875.
- 45 Geertz, 1973; p.97.
- 46 O'Dea, 1966; p.43.
- 47 Wilson, 1979; p.56
- 47a Coakley, 1979.
- 48 Eliade, 1973; p.67.
- 49 Maddock, 1975.
- 50 Strehlow, Central Australian Religion, p.39.
- 51 Kavanagh, 1979; p.16.
- 52 Stanner, 1959-63; p.38.
- 53 Stanner, 1979; p.140.
- 54 Panikkar, 1971; *The Ways of West and East*, Alba House, New York, p.74.
- 55 Dulles, 1980; p.67.
- 56 Burrige, 1973; p.206.
- 57 Gannon, 1982; p.171-85.
- 58 Bellah, 1976; p.253.
- 59 Ibid. p.255.
- 60 Geertz, 1973; p.129.
- 61 Maddock, 1975; chap. 1.
- 62 Broome, 1982; p.139.
- 63 Dulles, 1980.
64. Ibid. p.61.
- 65 Gülkey, 1975; pp.101, 122.
- 66 Kelley, 1982; pp.18-9.
- 67 Borobio, 1979; p.97.
- 68 Kavanagh, 1979; pp.16-22.
- 69 Panikkar, 1978; p.12.
- 70 Kelly, 1982; p.18.

PASTORAL WORKSHOP - INITIATION: ABORIGINAL AND CHRISTIAN

M.J. WILSON

IN THE LAST WEEK of October we held at Daly River a workshop for people working in a pastoral situation in relation to Aboriginal communities in the NT. It was interdominational in intent. The participants were:

ANGLICANS: Rev. Percy Leske (Numbulwar)
Mr Lance Tremlett (Groote Eylandt, Town Clerk, Angurugu)
Rev. Murray Johnson (Nungalinga College)
Rev. David Thompson (Nungalinga College)

CATHOLICS: Rev. Tim Brennan (Bathurst Island)
Rev. Peter Hearn (Port Keats)
Rev. Laurie Bissett (Daly River)
Rev. Martin Wilson (NYMU)

Several other people who had wanted to attend were prevented by other obligations. We were disappointed that the Uniting Church had not responded to our invitation.

Topic

For this workshop (hopefully the first of a series) the topic chosen was *Initiation: Aboriginal and Christian*.

PROCEEDINGS

The participants gathered at Daly River on Monday 25 October. Visitors were accommodated at the Daly River Centre and the meetings took place at the Centre. The facilities are really excellent for this sort of meeting.

The initial meeting took place on Monday evening. We established our method of proceeding, and some resource papers were distributed.

Resource Papers

M. Davis: 'Traditional Initiation Rites' – notes prepared by a lecturer in anthropology at UPNG for a course on a similar topic given at Holy Spirit Seminary, Bomana, PNG, some years ago.

- N. McMaster: 'Aboriginal Religion and Christianity' – a paper included in this issue of *Nelen Yubu* pp.3-21.
- E. Worms: 'Initiation' – draft translation of a section of the essay by Fr E. Worms, 'Les religions primitives d'Australie' in Nevermann, Worms, Petri (1972) *Les religions du Pacifique et d'Australie* (from the German original published in 1968) pp.318-326.
- D. Thompson: *Bora is like Church: Aboriginal initiation ceremonies and the Christian Church at Lockhart River, Queensland*, a resource book published by Nungalinga College 1982 (59pp).
- R. Berndt: 'Initiation' – from *Australian Aboriginal Religion*, fascicle two, pp.11-23 (1974).

The procedure adopted was that each person from a specific area would describe the pastoral situation in his area in regard to traditional initiation ceremonies and the practice of the rites of Christian initiation, with attention both to the present situation and the past. Then we would endeavour to discern the significant parameters in the situations. First of all we studied the various resource papers for information.

Tuesday 9.00 am:

M. Wilson presented an analysis of McMaster's paper. Some of McMaster's propositions were clarified by reference to his paper in *Nelen Yubu* No. 11 (March, 1982, pp.23-29) 'Better With . . . or Without? Four years' ministry in Kurlunurra, WA'.

The meeting detected a number of significant issues that we commented on both at the time and in later sessions – in some cases, repeatedly. In detail:

– *Symbols*. Geertz's definition of religion as a 'system of symbols etc.' indicates an important characteristic that Aboriginal religion and Christianity have in common, especially those forms of Christianity that are strongly sacramental. (By 'symbol' Geertz understands 'any object, act, event, quality or relation which serves as a vehicle for a conception – the conception being the symbol's meaning', cf. Tonkin *Nelen Yubu* No. 9, 1981:4)

In regard to the symbolic issue, we need to be aware of a number of sub-issues, e.g.

- a) Aboriginal life is becoming segmented, privatised. Symbols are losing their earlier communitarian effectiveness. Some are becoming counter-effective, having become issues that societies divide on.
- b) Aboriginal people feel caught mid-way between two worlds. They have lost the old example of the past where traditional symbols had a clear effectiveness – though there never was a 'golden age', and unity was often achieved by cruelty and at the cost of injustice. On the other hand they often feel overpowered by force of an imposed alien system which, paradoxically, alone or in adapted forms still being or yet to be worked out enables them to cope with the non-traditional demands of life in large, multi-clan communities outside of the clan territory which earlier provided the juridical basis for authority.
- c) Adaptation. The people show a great capacity to adapt their symbols to the demands of life in the emerging society. For example, instead of burning all a dead person's possessions as in the past, expensive items like Toyotas and radios and items of wider than private use like houses are now being smoked, as persons used to be, instead of being destroyed by fire.
- d) McMaster has well noted a resurgence of appreciation of symbolism among Western Christians. Among Catholics the revised Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults has revitalised the Christian initiation process. As Anglican thought on the functional timing of the sacraments

of initiation is in a state of flux here in Australia these days. the RCIA, going back as it does to early Church practice, probably offers us a fine chance of achieving a culturally adapted ceremony whose outlines we can hold in common.

-- *Holistic world-view.* The Aborigines tend to see man as an individual being in an undivided way – more as the Hebrews saw him than as the Greeks (and Westerners) with distinctions of soul, mind, body. While there were elements of life that were eminently sacred and secret, there was no clear dividing line between the sacred and the secular, the religious and the profane. At the same time many Aboriginal Christians are looking for a way of distinguishing clearly and practically between traditional religious beliefs and practices that they want to reject (for both religious and humanitarian reasons), and those that they want to keep, even reinforce on a Christian basis.

Mediator. McMaster proposed that persons formed by traditional Aboriginal religion, with a non-historical view of reality [it is whites who write about the 40,000 years of Dreaming!], would not appreciate the mediatorship of an historical Christ: that he was historical doesn't make him 'really real' for them, just puzzling.

On the other hand the group noted that the function of mediator is common in Aboriginal social life and is central in many important issues (land, death etc.) Authority is graded: the top men do not involve themselves directly in the affairs of lower groups, but work through the intermediate groups. Moreover many Aboriginal Christians have christianised their world-view by seeing God the Creator as the boss of the totemic beings and culture heroes – analogously to the way the Port Keats people conceived of Nugumanj as the boss of the culture heroes like Kunmanggur, Udapun, Mutjingga (cf. Wilson in *Tracks* 1978:25).

It was suggested that we should maximise Christ's role as mediator between us and his Father. [McMaster in fact makes basically the same suggestion on p.40] – though one might question the need of waiting for the development amongst the Aborigines of an historical consciousness!

Circumcision. McMaster reported (p.10) Stanner's distinction (*On Aboriginal Religion*, 1966: 109) between circumcision as concerned for the Murinbata with 'the highest secular values' and the later initiatory rite of the Punj with the 'highest religious values' -- the former 'made a man', the latter made him 'a man of mystical understanding'.

McMaster went on to report Berndt's commentary to the effect that both ceremonies were religious. On the general principle stated above ('holistic world-view') the group thought Berndt's comment was reasonable. However, the group suspected that the specifically religious element came from the attendant ceremonies, and Stanner's insight was quite valid.

There are a number of facts to be considered. The Groote Eylandt evidence is particularly forceful. On Groote Eylandt the Aboriginal Christians believe that, as Christians, they should abstain from all traditional religion. In contrast for example with Port Keats, they do not admit into the church even dancing or the didjeridu. Let in any bit of the old-time religion, they believe, however innocuous it might seem, soon the rest will follow. Faith in Christ surpasses all previous religious belief and practice. They do not accept that traditional religion identifies them as Aborigines, but that their specific style of kinship does. Hence kinship and its life-regulating rules are insisted upon. However, like the non-Christians, the Aboriginal Christians on Groote Eylandt still have their boys circumcised – generally by a doctor in hospital when the boy is still a baby or maybe between three and five years old. The non-Christian boys are taken through the ceremonies of induction into manhood at a later time (cf. Lance Tremlett's paper).

The secular, social, non-religious character of circumcision is borne out also by the practice at Port Keats mission. As Stanner records (*On Aboriginal Religion*, 1966:109), since the middle 1940s circumcision has been carried out in hospital by the medical staff. In the Port Keats case Stanner attributed the change of custom to the local missionary. Even though we missionary people might maintain that we are only responding to the expressed wish of the people, outsiders believe Stanner rather than us. Maybe, in spite of all contrary evidence, outsiders will also maintain that white missionaries caused the change on Groote Eylandt too. However, the important point is that Aborigines themselves who want nothing to do with traditional religion still practise circumcision.

Hence one must conclude that the Aborigines in the areas under consideration at least see the physical operation as principally social in relevance, secular and neutral as far as religion is concerned.

– *Punj*. The core of Stanner's presentation of the mystical content of Aboriginal religion was the post-circumcision initiatory ceremony called the 'Punj'. Its common English-language title in the Port Keats-Moil-Daly area is 'Sunday Business'. It has been revived in the area over recent years.

As described by Stanner in its pure form it has caught the admiring attention of scholars of comparative religion. However, the attitude of many Christian Aboriginal people in the area is very different.

They object to the ceremony on several counts.

Firstly, especially in its present-day revived form, it is an alien influence. The promoters are old men from areas to the south, the Fitzmaurice and Victoria rivers areas. The ceremonies have got 'mixed up'.

Secondly, its performance is marked by grog and all the social disturbance that goes with it.

Thirdly, as being practised these days, it includes cruel, harsh and debasing influences that right-thinking people find seriously objectionable, especially the young men who might be forced to undergo the rite. There is at least the threat of subincision performed as a 'disciplinary' measure, i.e. to subject young men to the power of the old ones. Undoubtedly, young men object to being forced to submit to such an operation that has no traditional basis in their area, particularly in view of the likelihood that the operators could be drunk when performing such a dangerous operation. Young men, and their guardians, are subjected at times to quite severe burning. There is the threat of violence to women – the penalty of subjection even to pack rape for offences they have been tricked into. Young men are subjected to experiences they find repugnant, e.g. being micturated upon (to put it nicely).

One might say that this is a debased ceremony, not the fine religious drama Stanner wrote about. But this is how it is being performed these days according to the estimation of Murinbata people, and for this reason they oppose it within their territory and for their own people.

Moreover, in view of its debased form, many of the Aboriginal Christians of Port Keats perceive that a spirit of evil is operating through it. In sum, the bullroarer is a symbol of danger and evil.

In contrast with the Groote Eylandt Christians the Port Keats people do not see any opposition to Christianity in beliefs about totemic beings and the Aboriginal mythology of creation. As mentioned above, they and Christians in other parts of the Territory fit the Aboriginal mythologies of the culture heroes into the context of the Hebrew mythologies that figure in the early parts of the Biblical account of creation and mankind's early history. They are willing

to use the cultural forms of dance in church and believe that in doing so they are enriching the Christian tradition with their own specific gifts.

Tuesday 11.00 am, 3.30 pm, 7.30 pm:
David Thompson on Bora

David Thompson presented his analysis of the initiatory ceremony (in which he himself participated) of the Aboriginal people living at the Lockhart River Aboriginal community on the eastern side of Cape York Peninsula within the Anglican diocese of Carpentaria. It is called the 'Bora'. The title of his thesis is a quotation from the people that expresses well their overall view both of their traditional culture and Christianity: 'Bora is like Church'.

The Lockhart Aboriginal people see their ceremonies as mediating a sacred power that supports and builds up community. The totemic beings are symbols of association reflecting a pre-theistic view of the world. In no way are they seen as rivals to God but parallel in function the biblical stories about the patriarchs and other ancestors of Israel. In regard to their society the Lockhart people see their ceremonies as similar in function to the sacraments in regard to the Church. The two processes, Aboriginal and Christian, have been going on in parallel. However, some interpenetration has begun and David sees a number of points where significant interaction is possible.

In regard to Christian initiation infant baptism is practised for Christian families. The Bora itself has borrowed Christian terms to express itself in English, especially 'godfather' and 'god-mother'. Their role should accordingly be strengthened within the context of sacramental baptism.

In regard to the time of administering Confirmation and admitting to Communion Anglican opinion is divided. David suggests that it would be especially meaningful at Lockhart if admission to Communion took place before the Bora, and after the Bora, i.e. after official induction into manhood, Confirmation would be received and used as an occasion for adult commitment to Christianity.

Discussion

Discussion covered a number of points raised in David's presentation, chiefly:

1. *The role of Christ as mediator* – Seen as an elder brother who underwent substitute death and the gift-bearing intermediary who settles a quarrel (Thompson 1982:36-38).
2. *The timing of the Christian sacraments:*

Anglicans: infant baptism in areas of 'Catholic' tendency, but not in areas of 'evangelical' tendency.

In Arnhem Land, generally the practice of adult baptism (e.g. by immersion). However, infants within a family are baptised if the family as a whole is receiving baptism. Missionary staff baptise their own children as infants.

In the adult situation, if the bishop is present, baptism, confirmation and eucharist are given together. Otherwise the baptised adult waits for the bishop's arrival for the reception of confirmation and communion.

Roman Catholic: infant baptism is the normal practice, first communion in middle childhood, confirmation (normally by the bishop) at the end of primary school.

It was suggested that this process needed to be rethought in view of the importance being accorded to catechumenate and post-baptismal catechesis by the revised RCIA (Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults). Also, before (and still after) the publication of the new rite for Christian initiation (1972), it has not been realised by many that baptism, confirmation and eucharist are three sacraments *of initiation!*

3. The *source of symbols* for culturally adapted ceremonies. The question was occasioned by the suggestion by means of which Fr Alvaro Botero Alvarez attempted to follow out a principle on liturgical adaptation proposed by Vatican Council II (Decree on Liturgy, No. 37) – cf. his paper in *Nelen Yubu* No. 9, September 1981, p.17. He wrote that in its endeavour to avoid ‘anything indissolubly bound up with superstition and error’ (Vat. II), ‘Liturgy cannot be a syncretism of myths and pagan rites. Christianity needs to break away as it did from the beginning in matters such as circumcision and bloody sacrifices, etc. Liturgical adaptation must look rather for elements from ordinary life, social forms etc. which express the tradition and culture of a people, but in general not for rites and religious forms properly so called.’

This point was discussed more fully during the final session on Thursday, *q.v.*

4. *Alcoholism*: The biggest present obstacle to Christianity, a social, physical and psychological disease. This was discussed at some length. It was suggested that it should be seen as a disease involving loss of will: moralistic preaching against it is ineffective. The alcoholic is a fit subject for the sacramental Anointing of the Sick.
5. *Sin*: In Aboriginal society it is best understood as the manifest breaking of a relationship.
6. *Symbolism of Water*: So often in Aboriginal ceremonies water figures almost as a counter-symbol: in baptism it makes one sacred, in Aboriginal ceremonies it finishes off a ceremony, removing one from the ritual state and enabling re-entrance into ordinary life!

On the other hand, the group observed that the function of being washed with water is seen as freeing a person from the bondage of tabus (e.g. for a widow), and it enables a return to normal life as a release from a dangerous state. Properly presented, the symbolism can still be psychologically effective, even in baptism.

Lance Tremlett on Groote Eylandt

Lance Tremlett presented a paper on the situation on Groote Eylandt, cf. appendix.

Discussion

1. Why are the Christian Aborigines so resistant of change to their kinship system?
 - They see their kinship rules and regulations regarding marriage in relation to OT rules for Israel. The phrase is used: ‘the God-given promise system’.
 - ‘Christian Aborigines are more honest Aborigines’ (Michael Gumbali, pastor at Ngukurr): they try to keep their rules and not cheat the system.
 - Kinship is their main sociological identifier.
 - One Aboriginal comment: Aborigines don’t talk specifically enough; hence confusion arises easily.
 - Missionary attitude: the gospel has been handed over to the people; white missionaries might never understand much more than they do now of Aboriginal culture; it is for the Holy Spirit now to lead Aboriginal Christians, who understand the inner secrets of their own culture into fuller understanding of the gospel – only in this way will the gospel be perfectly fitted into the Aboriginal way of life.

Wednesday 9.00 am:

Peter Hearn on Port Keats

The mission's founder, Fr Dick Docherty, frowned on 'pagan' ceremonies. Some young men collected the bullroarers and brought them to him for burning. So Punj ceremonies had ceased by the 1950s. They were revived in the late 70s through the influence of men from Kununurra and Peppiminati, and with the support of the local pastor, in spite of some Murinbata objection. The Murinbata finally stopped the ceremonies, as described in the first part of this report.

Some Aboriginal men maintain that they can distinguish good elements in their traditional culture from evil ones, and they want their judgement to be trusted. Traditional-style dancing accompanied by the didjeridu is freely used in church ceremonies.

For years infants have been circumcised in hospital. The last Christian-style ceremony for it was held in Fr John Leary's time as pastor.

The normal practice is infant baptism. Peter had thought of adapting the ceremony with the use of elements from a traditional 'name-opening' ceremony, but found it was too specific in scope. Rather than borrow symbols from traditional ceremonies, he feels we should give an Aboriginal slant to the transcendental elements already present in the Christian rite.

Wednesday 11.00 am:

Martin Wilson showed slides of and described a circumcision ceremony for about thirty youths at Peppiminati in 1976. The operations were performed mostly by two medical assistants from Port Keats who had been trained by Dr John Hargrave, with him supervising and occasionally operating. The boys were anaesthetised (mogadon, pentothal, local injections into the penis).

The group thought it strange that Fr John Leary and myself, with the assistance of Deacon Boniface Perdijert of Port Keats, should have opened and closed the ceremony with Mass.

Discussion

1. The absence of physical ordeal was noted. I reported Stanner's *viva voce* expression of disgust, but maybe the anthropologists have given that aspect of the traditional ceremony an importance that Aborigines themselves do not!
2. Aboriginal ceremonies are participatory, our Western ones are more cerebral and verbal. Aboriginal Christians tend to like old-style, full-length Christian ceremonies. Groote Eylandt Christians clearly reject racially segregated church services – as full harmony on the piano keyboard involves use of both black and white notes!

There was some disagreement (among the Catholic pastors) as to whether the Christian initiatory rites should be related to social stages of a recipient's development or rather to an individual's own stages of development. It was suggested that the two aspects, individual and communitarian, are correlative. Baptism etc. is initiation of a person (individual) into God's people (community).

It was felt that we should ceremonialise more, underline the community aspect (though without neglecting attention to the individual). It needs visible, symbolic expression, e.g. the person to be initiated (baptised, confirmed, admitted to Communion) could be painted up, brought in procession to church door, handed over . . .

3. Peter described (a propos the Karwadi, Great Mother, cult) the reported vision of Our Lady as the true Mother of All which was had by a man called Molindjin before the mission came

to Port Keats. Now very much a part of the local lore.

Wednesday 3.30 pm:

Percy Leske on Numbulwar and Roper River

In the old days the emphasis in initiation at Roper was on frightening the life out of the kids. The boys to be circumcised were laid on a table of men's backs and were given a dilly-bag to bite on. After the operation they were taken to the bush and kept in isolation from women for years.

Nowadays the ceremony is much more of a celebration and more open – the boys are not hidden under blankets etc. The fear of elders and acceptance of social discipline are still inculcated, but not to the same degree.

Traditionally the knowledge of land ownership, social rights and obligations was encapsulated and transmitted in song. Social organisation is land-based; authority is graded by seniority. On changes in post-contact situation, cf. earlier summary, under 'Tuesday 9.00 am'.

A theme of the Kunapi is the *way*. Our Christian approach (following advice from Dr Capell) should maximise Christ's own symbol of himself as *the way*, our God-given way. And we should ceremonialise our statement – stages of entrance into and growth within the church; the message stick symbolising the gospel etc. This sort of dramatic statement is meaningful for Aboriginal people. Their own scriptures were their ceremonies.

Circumcision nowadays is done in hospital under hygienic conditions. Doubts if anaesthetic is used.

Discussion

Along lines already reported.

Wednesday 8.45 pm:

Tim Brennan on Bathurst Island

In the first phase of the mission the most influential person was Fr John McGrath. He was well informed on Tiwi culture. He saw pre-Christian religion as pagan, so to be rejected by Christians.

Over the last fifteen years a more open view has been obtained. A lot of change has occurred. In regard to their culture as it is today, most of the Tiwi would say that they have a clear idea about their own culture, and see it as Christian.

Their two main ceremonies are Pukamani (funerary rites) and Kulama.

The Tiwi involve the Church in Pukamani – Mass, blessings, holy water.

Kulama is no longer the initiation ceremony, and has been much abbreviated. It takes place over three days during the Wet, within the town area. It is mainly songs, very little dancing. To sing at a Kulama one must judge oneself to be of considerable status. A person is generally about forty-five years of age before first offering a song at a Kulama. There is a pattern of name-giving at a Kulama, but the initiatory aspect has disappeared and there appears to be no desire to restore it. Recently the last man died who had been fully initiated through the whole Kulama process.

Regarding Christian ceremonies:

Baptism is generally for infants. The family attends, but it is a very minor ceremony. Christian names given at baptism are often a matter of much family debate.

On one occasion fairly recently through force of circumstances a baptism was administered within a funeral Mass. The idea seems to be attractive: recently some people asked for it to happen again. The child was going to be named after the dead brother of the man being buried.

First Communion is made while at primary school.

Christian marriage: only a small number (2 to 4) are celebrated each year, but there seems to be a renewal of interest in Church marriage.

The Tiwi give high priority to Ash Wednesday. It is attended even by those unable to receive the sacraments because of marriage outside the Church. There is also a Passion Play – mainly mime, not much speech, during Holy Week.

A lot of effort is being put into fitting Tiwi words on to hymns used in church and in fitting Christian words on to traditional melodies.

Discussion

Points made in discussion have been included in the foregoing summary.

Thursday 9.00 am:

Three summary statements were presented and discussed. In their amended form they are as follows:

PASTORAL WORKSHOP: ON INITIATION

1. Over the past few days this group has discussed initiation and the more general topic of traditional religion in its relationship to Christian belief and practice in Aboriginal communities that members of the group are or have been personally involved with.
2. Aboriginal Christians have been exercising discernment in regard to traditional religion:
 - a) Some Aboriginal people think it is better and more practical to reject it, especially in view of their belief that Christianity contains, actually or at least potentially, all that is of genuine religious worth in traditional religion, and surpasses it – while they find within their kinship system and social culture all that is necessary for them to be completely Aboriginal. In this way they can call themselves proudly and confidently 'Aboriginal Christians'.
 - b) Other Aboriginal people believe they have discerned the valid religious values that in their pre-Christian religion prepared them for Christ in much the same way as the pre-Christian religion of Israel prepared the people of Israel for the coming of Christ. Accordingly some traditional religious beliefs and customs (e.g. regarding the totemic beings) they feel free to accept and practise as Christians with a unique and specific style of being such.
Other beliefs and practices, however, especially those of recent invention, which involve extreme harshness, moral corruption, social disintegration, and seem to mediate the influence of spirits of evil, they reject vigorously and uncompromisingly.
3. While Aboriginal people do not clearly separate the religious from the secular in their culture (as if everything were either clearly and identifiably one or the other), nevertheless it looks as if initiation, including circumcision, is seen as an important social event. Even Aboriginal Christians who reject traditional religion feel they have not compromised their elected position by practising circumcision and other initiatory rites to adulthood.

A fourth possible proposition dealt with symbols, but not enough discussion had taken place on the issue to warrant a group statement.

It was noted that people get confused if symbols customary in traditional pre-Christian religion are introduced into Christian worship.

The most appropriate adaptation of Christian liturgy will have to wait for the time when well-formed Aboriginal theologians work on the matter with an intrinsically Aboriginal consciousness.

In the meantime we need to look at the symbols actually present in baptismal rituals. Some have been taken from ancient pre-Christian religious usages and christianised; others are secular symbols that have been given a specific Christian meaning (e.g. cross). We must be aware of the apparently universal, primordial symbols, like water, fire, blood . . .

The discussion ended with a series of questions regarding our baptismal ceremonies:

- Do they contain symbols that are already meaningful to Aboriginal people?
- Do they contain symbols that could better be replaced by Aboriginal symbols?
- Are there items in ordinary Aboriginal life (not specifically religious in the traditional style) that could be especially relevant and significant if introduced into the baptismal liturgy?

PLANS FOR THE FUTURE

The workshop ended with thought for the future.

It was thought that this sort of meeting is valuable and worth repeating. Inasmuch as the participants were able, they decided upon future meetings:

- Frequency:* once a year.
- Time:* early or mid-September — to co-ordinate with Anglican Advisory Conference meetings in Darwin around that time.
- Place:* Daly River Centre.
- Participants:* normally persons in a pastoral situation in regard to tribal communities in Northern Australia, particularly in the NT. It is highly desirable that it be widely interdenominational, thus including not only Anglicans and Catholics as this time, but also Uniting Church, Lutherans, Baptists. The presence also of Aboriginal pastors is particularly desirable.
- Topic for 1983:* send suggestions in to me (Martin Wilson) by the end of 1982.
- Means:* it is desirable that some specific papers be prepared for discussion. We did not think that we should look for resource persons: we should function as our own. However, if a specially qualified person were easily available, it could be useful to invite him/her along.

Each day was begun with Matins from the Anglican Book of Prayer and was concluded with Night Prayer (Compline) from the Roman breviary.

Appendix: Initiation on Groote Eylandt

LANCE TREMLETT

History:

Early missionaries seemed very interested in ceremonies and Aboriginal culture. Then the attitude seemed to change: anything not christian is heathen.

Over the past twenty to thirty years an acceptance and interest have been generated. The acceptance has been that Aboriginal religious life will continue and that those who do not choose to be christian should do what they want to do, and it is better to be in the open and not drive it underground. This has led to much more freedom of discussion between missionaries and Aboriginal christians, and missionaries and ceremonial leaders etc.

This it is believed has led to a deeper understanding and acceptance of one another. There is a strong belief among missionaries that the Holy Spirit will guide godly Aboriginal christian leaders to know what is right and wrong in their Aboriginal culture. Only a person born and bred in the culture will really be able to lead his people with full understanding. Of course the leaders must be well versed in the scriptures so that they know what God's leading in these matters will be.

Ceremonies:

The main ceremony is the maraian. On Groote Eylandt I only know of two ceremonies, the maraian and death ceremony commonly referred to as the 'business' or 'finishing-up ceremony'.

The 'kunapipi' is attended on the mainland but Groote Eylandters do not regard it as their ceremony.

Ethno-Biology:

There have been a lot of studies over the past eight years on plant, animal, insect, bird and marine life and in relating these to totem, land, kinship, seasons and medicine. The relationship between nature and life is closely interwoven. These studies should assist greatly in bible translation and in identifying the general thought patterns that Groote Eylandters have.

Changes:

Groote Eylandters initially resist change though it is all around them, but once they make up their minds to make a change, they become determined that it is going to work, e.g. relationship between Aboriginals and the mining company.

They have made adaptations in ceremonies. Most circumcisions are carried out in hospital with no ceremony, very often when the boys are babies or three to five years old. These operations are performed by doctors.

The boys still go through ceremony at the required age when they are accepted as men and taught the moral code of living.

Ceremonies are made to fit into work programs. Work times may be adjusted to suit the ceremony time. If the ceremony is away from Angurugu, not all go; some stay behind to look after the community.

There have been adaptations due to the economical demands of life in modern society. When visitors are at a ceremony they must be fed. In order to buy the food people must stay at work to get the money.

Dance festivals sponsored by the Groote Eylandt Aboriginal Trust and the Aboriginal Culture Foundation have brought many groups together who never mixed in the past. Several

hundred visitors stay for a week. Once we had fifty-seven people from Cape York, twenty from the Kimberleys, twenty from Hooker Creek plus most of the Northern Territory Top End communities were represented with twenty to thirty dancers each. During these times, there is a lot of cross pollination and discussion about ceremony.

There is a problem between Groote Eylandt and the communities north of the Eylandt in Arnhem Land. This problem I believe is the greatest threat to the Eylandt culture that exists at the moment. There is a very difficult 'skin' problem. A person can leave Yirrkala, fly to Groote Eylandt, a twenty-minute plane ride, and find he is in the opposite moiety. This causes great problems with the young people. They arrive believing they are in one moiety; before long they want to marry a girl who they believe would be in line, only to be told, 'No, she is the same group as you'. The people on the Eylandt cannot agree. Umbakumba will give a different answer from Angurugu. I believe if this continues, the young people are going to say, 'Well, if you can't work it out, we will run off and get married and if you have messed this up, then our totem, singing, ceremony are all messed up.' The young people will lose respect for their leaders.

There have been a number of suggestions as to why this has happened. One is that it is because they all speak a different language. The word for 'shark' is ambiguous: according as a tiger shark or a hammerhead shark is indicated, a person would be in a different moiety. The resulting confusion in moiety identification happened many years ago, but has only shown up recently with increased and easy mobility. This theory has been presented by the Aboriginals themselves but no one knows what can be done to resolve the problem. Nevertheless it leads to continual confusion and uncertainty.

The christian leaders are very strong that the skin promise system must continue and not be twisted but kept honest.

There have also been adaptations because of materialism. Once everything belonging to a dead person was burnt, now Toyotas, boats, homes etc. are smoked and passed on, though they may be out of use for a while. This seems to vary from family to family.

The only real Aboriginal tradition which has moved into the church life, and that not greatly, is traditional styles of painting. These paintings are not of traditional subjects, e.g. birds or animals with a bible text written under them, but they depict bible happenings painted in an Aboriginal style, e.g. 'The Easter Story', with the women at the empty tomb etc.

A concept I have arrived at by observation and clarified with the clan leaders is that on Groote Eylandt mediation is a meaningful thing. E.g. if there has been a fight, there is a peace maker. If a death from natural causes occurs, there is a person who is responsible for all funeral arrangements. If not from natural causes, then he has to make peace or satisfy people that things have now been put right. I have given a lot of thought and carried on a lot of discussion with both christian and clan leaders about Christ being our mediator (peace maker) between God and us.

These are the areas I think we should be looking to and building on.

COMMENT

M.J. WILSON / D. O'DONOVAN

IN A LETTER he wrote to me on 20 October 1982 Fr Dan O'Donovan provided some significant comments on my article on Aboriginal religion and Christianity in *Nelen Yubu* No. 13:3-13. He gave permission for me to publish the relevant part of his letter, which I am happy to do. I accept that 'syncretism' is best left with a pejorative meaning, *pace* M.M. Thomas (cf. O'Donovan, *Nelen Yubu* No. 11, p.3). We should not let terminological idiosyncrasy hide substantial agreement.

Dan was writing to thank us for sending him a copy of PMV Bulletin No. 88 *Hindu-Christian Dialogue in India*:

I was glad to get the 'Pro Mundi Vita' study on Hindu-Christian dialogue. (Also happy to see that I am not the only one having difficulties with Panikkar.) As you considered it 'very good', and I do also, I can't see what all the fuss about our 'disagreement' is about. 'Quae sunt aequalia uni tertio sunt aequalia inter se.' I fail to plumb the 'ideological basis' on which our supposed difference rests. I go along, for instance, with your careful statement of position under the heading 'Practical Proposal'. It says well what I have been trying to say with less skill. Again, I like your expression (p.5), 'the intrinsic virtual orientation of these pre-Christian values being brought to actualisation . . .' Two qualifications however:

1) Was it not actualised before? and 2) the word 'virtual' needs teasing out. The 'Actus' in question is the Christ-event, and is radically discontinuous as such. There is no way of getting around this. It is precisely at this point that Panikkar derails.

On the other hand, your conviction of our basic ideological difference leads you, at the very beginning, to falsify my position (p.4). I say that there *must* be 'interpenetration'* to the utmost degree possible. In my three contributions to *Nelen Yubu* I have purposely chosen the language of continuity/fulfilment. If I use the term 'substitute' once, the context explains, or ought to, that 'replacement' is not what I mean. I also use twice the image of 'death' (-resurrection). To spell this out would call for a paper in itself, and it might be worth while some time. Again, the whole flow of my three contributions should show that the image is not wholly negative by any means. What rises is what died, but changed.

So (returning to your text), you say that according to these 'not a few missionaries' (and at least one hermit) 'there can be no interpenetration, no syncretism'.

*In a later letter Dan pointed out that an unfortunate misprint had occurred in the *Nelen Yubu* version of the paper: on p.4, line 32, read interpenetration *instead of* interpretation.

May I suggest that we take the word 'syncretism' to mean what it has always (to my knowledge) been understood to mean. 'No syncretism does not mean "no interpenetration"'. 'No syncretism' means 'no syncretism'; and your words under 'Practical Proposal' state that clearly enough.

'Christocentric syncretism' (WCC Nairobi, and Martin Wilson p.5) is a completely meaningless combination of words, apart from being offensive to the non-christian partner — more so even than Rahner's 'anonymous Christian'. It is meaningless because for the christian party to the dialogue, this exchange is going to have to be, in one sense or another, christocentric anyway, and hence the word 'christocentric' might just as well be omitted; while for, say, the Muslim party, there can be no question of religious dialogue's being christocentric, since Jesus has been superseded by the last and greatest prophet, Muhammad. The only purpose the WCC formula serves is as a palliative to help the christian feel all right when he ought to be feeling all wrong.

In the introduction to Pope Paul VI's *Evangelii Nuntiandi* (December '75) syncretism is, once more, expressly ruled out (*EN*, 5).

Again, in your AASR paper (p.4), you represent me as saying that 'the Aboriginal convert to Christianity must reject whatever there is of religious content in his traditional way of life if he chooses to become Christian'. This is *not* what I am saying. Not. Absit. The only place, as far as I remember, in which I use the word 'reject' is in the Aquinas quote under my paper's title, and this could cause no one any difficulty. Everyone, christian and non-christian alike, is bound to reject evil wherever he/she finds it.

In the PMV article you sent me, Bede Griffiths makes the statement that 'mission is dialogue'. That is what I think too; adding only that 'progress' in such mission of the kind we look for, is grace, gift. We plant and water. This is our part of the job. The increase is God's, freely bestowed. The waitings and delays also fit in there, so that we need not be anxious. Of course, those who *cause* the delays unnecessarily will be called to account for it. (By the way, I heard last Easter that Bede Griffiths has moved to a Camaldolese hermitage in Canada. India will miss him. A good friend gone west.)

REVIEW

THE AFFINAL RELATIONSHIP SYSTEM:

A New Approach to Kinship and Marriage among the Australian Aborigines at Port Keats

ASLAUG AND JOHANNES FALKENBERG

Universitetsforlaget: Oslo 1981, 206pp.

Johannes Falkenberg and his wife Aslaug spent six months in 1950 carrying out anthropological fieldwork at Port Keats, Northern Territory. From this work came *Kin and Totem* in 1962, and now this present book, with promise of a further book on kinship and marriage as seen in relation to local groups and other permanent groups. Having read both books I never cease to be amazed at the enormous amount of data they collected during their sort stay at Port Keats.

This new book is a detailed study of kinship and marriage among the Murinbata (Murrinhpatha) people of Port Keats, the data being gained by observation and elicitation. The book is, as the subtitle says 'a new approach to kinship and marriage'. The authors focus in particular on the early work done in Australia by A.R. Radcliffe-Brown and are critical of his viewpoints and methods of describing the social organisation of the Australian Aborigines, referring to his paper 'The Social Organization of Australian Tribes' (Oceania Vol. 1, 1930-31). They write:

Actually, it would be easy to cite scores of cases from Port Keats either to support Radcliffe-Brown's theories on Australian kinship or to reject them. Thus, facts can be manipulated for contradictory purposes. But needless to say, a hypothesis that is based on a great variety of different facts is superior to one in harmony with a few facts only, and one of the main difficulties in applying Radcliffe-Brown's theories to empirical matter is that there are too many examples from real life which do not fit in with his models. To refer to these examples as 'irregularities' or 'deviations from the norm' in order to explain them away is too easy an escape from this dilemma. Actually, as will be shown in the present work by a variety of cases from the Aborigines at Port Keats, a great number of these 'irregularities' are in agreement with the Aborigines' own conception of kinship and can be fully explained on the basis of a real knowledge of the Aborigines' kinship system.

(p.20, 21)

They also state that Radcliffe-Brown 'described . . . Australian kinship systems as genealogical systems, implying that ego is, in principle, genealogically related to all the persons whom he addresses by kinship terms.' They say the weakness with this point of view is that he not only conceived of the kinship systems as being genealogical, but also misinterpreted the position of ego within the system.

They go on, referring to the Murinbata, ' . . . we may say that their kinship system is genealogical in the sense that if ego has a recognised social relationship to another person, and if he knows by what term of kinship to address that person, he will normally also know by what

terms of kinship he is to address that person's closest genealogical relatives. But there is a great deal of difference between this statement and the claim that ego is (in principle) genealogically related to all the persons whom he addresses by terms of kinship.' (p.12) They question if Radcliffe-Brown's analytical constructions can in every case be supported by empirical facts. They believe this to be an important part of kinship analysis, and have certainly done their best in displaying this by many examples throughout their book.

The authors cover three aspects of marriage. That is: the sexual, the economic, and the political aspect. These rights of marriage not only belong to the husband but all his nat:an (ngathan), i.e. his brothers, both real and classificatory, whether from his or alien hordes, may obtain certain sexual and economic (but not political) privileges from his marriage. And other men, particularly from his own horde may benefit sexually (but not politically or economically). The authors state, '... if one describes the form of marriage at Port Keats by referring to the relations between husband and wife only, paying no attention to the general relations between men and women, one would be certain to draw the wrong conclusions.'

The Sexual Aspect

As mentioned above, ego's nat:an (ngathan), i.e. brother, real and classificatory, and also others within his horde derive sexual benefits from each others' wives. The authors go into a lot of detail in describing the nat:an relationship.

The Political Aspect

Although a man's marriage places him under obligation to his wife's closest relatives, he in turn acquires two important assets:

- a) His marriage will confer on him membership of a certain wife-giver group. He then will promise and later give in marriage his wife's daughter.
- b) His marriage also results in privileges not provided by his sister's or sister's daughter's marriage. And the woman he marries moves into his horde and becomes a valuable member.

The Economic Aspect

To quote the authors: '... a woman's most important duty in marriage is that of providing her children, her husband, and his (unmarried) nat:an with food every day.' (p.87) '... a man's marriage enhances his prestige tremendously within and without his horde, and the more wives the greater his prestige.' (p.130)

As already mentioned, they disagree with Radcliffe-Brown's kinship systems based on genealogical criteria, but clearly demonstrate the Murinbata systems on affinal criteria. They say, 'It is true that all kinship terms may refer to ego's own genealogical relatives. But while all kinship terms have reference to an infinite number of (own and potential) affines, they refer only to a very limited number of persons to whom ego is linked by (traceable) genealogy, and while descent/genealogy creates no reliable basis for a ramifying framework of an all-embracing classification of persons in Aboriginal Australia, marriage provides such a basis.'

The book is a fine new approach analysis of marriage and kinship by two brilliant scholars, who worked in a second language to obtain details from a third in a remarkably short space of time. As one reviewer of their work has said, this book will appeal to social anthropologists and to social scientists in general. Although I didn't find the book all easy going, I would also recommend it to anyone working in the Port Keats/Daly River area who was interested in the local kinship and marriage systems.

C.S. STREET

CUMULATIVE INDEX

To Issue No. 14, December 1982

ALVAREZ, Alvaro Botero CJM (Tom Luby MSC tr.) Liturgy and Indigenous Cultural Values	9(1981):12-25
BARR, K., MSC Papers and Addresses on Evangelization; Methods of Evangelization; Consultation on Christian Communities; Culture	3(1979):5-17
BOLAND, Dr Tom Australian Missions	5(1980):3-21
BRENNAN, T., MSC Land Rights in the Northern Territory	8(1981):34-36
CLARKE, Bernard A. Social Implications of Funding Aboriginal Groups	13(1982):14-22
CONNOLLY, C.J., MSC Retreat at Port Keats with the Kardu Numida	2(1979):17-19
DODSON, P. Unity	8(1981):11
EVANS, Ted The Mechanics of Change	12(1982):3-11
EVERINGHAM, P. Address of the Chief Minister	3(1979):39-43
FORD, M. The Political Climate Within Which We Work	3(1979):44
HASSALL, George Report of Eighth Annual Conference AICC	8(1981):17-22
HOWLEY, J.A., MSC Homeland Movements -- Report of Churchill Fellowship Travel and Study	2(1979):9-13
JOHNSON, Sr Sally Some Aspects of the Tiwi Concept of Health	4(1980):39-50
JONES, Mary The History of Sacred and Biblically-inspired Dance in Australia	6(1980):3-18
KARDU NUMIDA ELDERS Development Plans for Waderr (Port Keats)	4(1980):14-16
KELLY, Denis Bilingual Education does not necessarily lead to Cultural Disintegration	1(1978):5-7
KEOGH, A., FSC Historical Geography -- Agriculture on the Daly 1911-1920s	2(1979):13-14
KIRBY, M.D. Recognition of Aboriginal Law: Historical Background	8(1981):3-10

KUNOTH-MONKS, Rose Church and Culture	12(1982):22-25
LEARY, J., MSC <i>Daly River Leadership Training Centre Courses:</i> Tiwi Courses I & II	1(1978):12-20
Daly River Catechetical Course Report	4(1980):7-9
Daly River Course Report	8(1981):23
Daly River Course Report – Santa Teresa	10(1981):24-25
Evangelization versus Development	3(1979):26-30
Dr Stanner, Anthropologist. An Appreciation	10(1981):3-5
LUBY, Tom, MSC Liturgy and Indigenous Cultural Values (Alvarez)	9(1981):12-25
McGOWAN, Sr Mary, FDNSC <i>Daly River Leadership Training Centre Courses:</i> Nadiri Course	1(1978):20-22
Daly River Centre	3(1979):31-36
Daly River Centre Catechetical Course Report	4(1980):9-10
Daly River Centre – Excerpt from Sr M. McGowan's Letter	5(1980):35
Daly River Centre Course Reports: Aboriginal Health Workers; Turkey Creek; Santa Teresa	6(1980):19-25
Daly River Centre Reports: Beagle Bay; Red Hill; Health Inservice	8(1981):23-29
Daly River Centre Report – Kununurra	9(1981):26-28
Daly River Centre Report – Santa Teresa	10(1981):24-25
McKELSON, K., SAC Notes for Staff on La Grange Mission: Kinship	7(1981):3-17
McMASTER, N., CSsR Broome Assembly of Religious, May 1980	6(1980):26-27
Better With . . . or Without?	11(1982):23-29
Mythos and Logos in Aboriginal/Christian Encounter	14(1982):3-21
McMILLAN, P., MSC Noonkanbah: The Reports, Statements, Documents	7(1981):18-31
McVEIGH, Leo, FMS Sharing – An Aboriginal Custom Being Abused?	12(1982):26-27
MARRAR, Frances My Trip to Yirrkala: Report on Aboriginal Women's Conference	1(1978):7
MEANEY, A.S., MSC Northern Territory Legislative Assembly, Inquiry into Welfare Needs	4(1980):17-28
MOIR-BUSSY, Sr Ann, FDNSC Status of Aboriginal Women vis-à-vis Status of Aboriginal Men	10(1981):17-23
MOSTOWIK, Claude, MSC Aboriginal Land Rights and Australian Christians	13(1982):23-27
O'DONOVAN, Daniel Open Letter to Author of <i>New, Old and Timeless</i>	4(1980):1-6
Continued Discussion of Transcendence etc.	7(1981):32-39
The Inter-Religious Dialogue	11(1982):3-22
Excerpt from Letter	14(1982):34-35
PEILE, A.R., SAC Towards a Proper and Understanding Health-Care Delivery to the Aborigines	10(1981):28-29

PERDJERT, Boniface	
Record of Interview for <i>Internationales Diakonatszentrum</i> (Freiburg)	1(1978):8-11
READ, C., FMS	
Submission on Aboriginal Teacher Education	4(1980):32-38
REYNOLDS, Sr R., FDNSC	
Aranda Literacy Programme: Santa Teresa	2(1979):1-4
Poem	4(1980):11-13
SISTERS OF ST JOSEPH	
Aboriginal Involvement Seminar: Notes	1(1978):28-29
STREET, Chester, SIL	
Port Keats: A Happy Community	6(1980):28-31
Toward a Murrinh-Patha Defined Need for Repentance	12(1982):12-21
STOCKTON, Eugene D.	
Black and White: A Conflict of Economic Perspectives in Australia	11(1982):30-36
THERESE-MARIE, Sr. FDNSC	
Fr Richard Docherty MSC, AM: Investiture in the Order of Australia	1(1978):29-30
TONKIN, Sr M.E., FDNSC	
Application of (Geertz) Definition of Religion to the Basic Features of Australian Aboriginal Religion (Murinbata)	9(1981):3-11
TIWI HEALTH WORKERS	
National Aboriginal Health Worker Conference: Report	1(1978):27-28
UNGUNMERR, Miriam-Rose	
Teaching (And Being Taught)	9(1981):35-38
WILLIAMS, Archbishop T.S.	
The Church in a Multi-cultural Society	10(1981):6-16
WILSON, M.J., MSC	
History, formation, aims of <i>Nelen Yubu</i> (formerly <i>Tracks</i>). Pilot edition	(1978):1-6
Nugumanj: Father in Heaven	1(1978):23-27
Fr Richard Docherty MSC	2(1979):4-8
The Dynamics of Contact	3(1979):20-25
Localisation of Christianity in Aboriginal Australia	5(1980):23-24
Reply to Fr Dan O'Donovan's Letter	5(1980):36-38
YTU Course AS 107: Australian Aboriginal Religion	6(1980):32-36
Rejoinder to Fr Dan O'Donovan's Discussion of Transcendence etc.	7(1981):36-39
Observations on Aboriginal Customary Law – Recognition?	8(1981):12-16
Nelen Yubu Missiological Unit and Nungalinya College	8(1981):30-33
Community Government at Hooker Creek	9(1981):29-34
Priests in Aboriginal Ministry: Cunnamulla Meeting	10(1981):26-27
Northern Territory: Diocese and Missions. A Chronicle	12(1982):28-39
Aboriginal Religion and Christianity: Ideological Symbolism, Ritual Sacramentalism	13(1982):3-13
Evangelisation of Aboriginal People in the Northern Territory	13(1982):28-37
Pastoral Workshop – Initiation: Aboriginal and Christian	14(1982):22-23
WOOD, P., MSC	
Home	5(1980):22

Reviews and Notes*

AASR, AAS, SAANZ, AHA -- August 1982 Conferences	13(1982):37-40
<i>AFER</i> , No. 100 -- <i>Inculturation</i>	8(1981):37-40
BARR, Kevin, MSC -- <i>Not to Destroy But to Fulfil</i> (Compass, Mission News)	6(1980):39
BERN, John -- Ideology and Domination: Toward a Reconstruction of Australian Aboriginal Social Formation	5(1980):39-40
BONIVENTO, Cesare -- The Nature of Evangelization according to <i>Evangelii Nuntiandi</i> -- <i>OMNIS TERRA</i> No. 109	5(1980):40
CAPELL, A. -- From Men to Gods and Back Again	5(1980):40-41
CHRISTIE, M.F. -- <i>Aboriginals in Colonial Victoria 1835-86</i>	6(1980):37-38
CHURCHES' TASK FORCE ON ABORIGINAL LAND RIGHTS	6(1980):40
COMBLIN, Jose -- <i>The Meaning of Mission</i>	10(1981):30-33
HENNELLY, Alfred T. -- <i>Theologies in Conflict etc.</i> (J. Flynn)	4(1980):41-44
<i>NELEN YUBU</i> NEWS AND NOTES	2(1979):20-22
O'DONOVAN, Fr Daniel -- <i>The Well</i> (K. Calvert)	8(1981):37
<i>OMNIS TERRA</i> No. 103 -- Australia: Pacific Mission etc.	5(1980):44-45
SCHULZ, Marlene -- <i>Group Media and Community-building</i>	5(1980):41
STANNER, W.E.H. -- <i>White Man Got No Dreaming</i>	7(1981):40-41
WILSON, M.J. -- <i>New, Old and Timeless</i> (Outlook, Compass)	6(1980):39

*Except where the reviewer or source is indicated in brackets after the title, all the reviews and notes have been written by M.J. Wilson.