THAT THEY ALL MAY BE ONE?

THE DEVELOPMENT OF ABORIGINAL LEADERSHIP IN THE ANGLICAN AND UNITING CHURCHES, 1965-1990.

RUSSELL KEITH

BACHELOR OF ARTS

HISTORY HONOURS THESIS

AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL UNIVERSITY

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It is not necessary that Traditions and Ceremonies be in all places one, and utterly like; for at all times they have been divers, and may be changed according to the diversities of countries, times, and men's manners, so that nothing be ordained against God's Word. . .

Every particular or national Church hath authority to ordain, change, and abolish ceremonies or rites of the Church ordained only by man's authority, so that all things be done to edifying.

[Article of Religion XXXIV of the Anglican Church]

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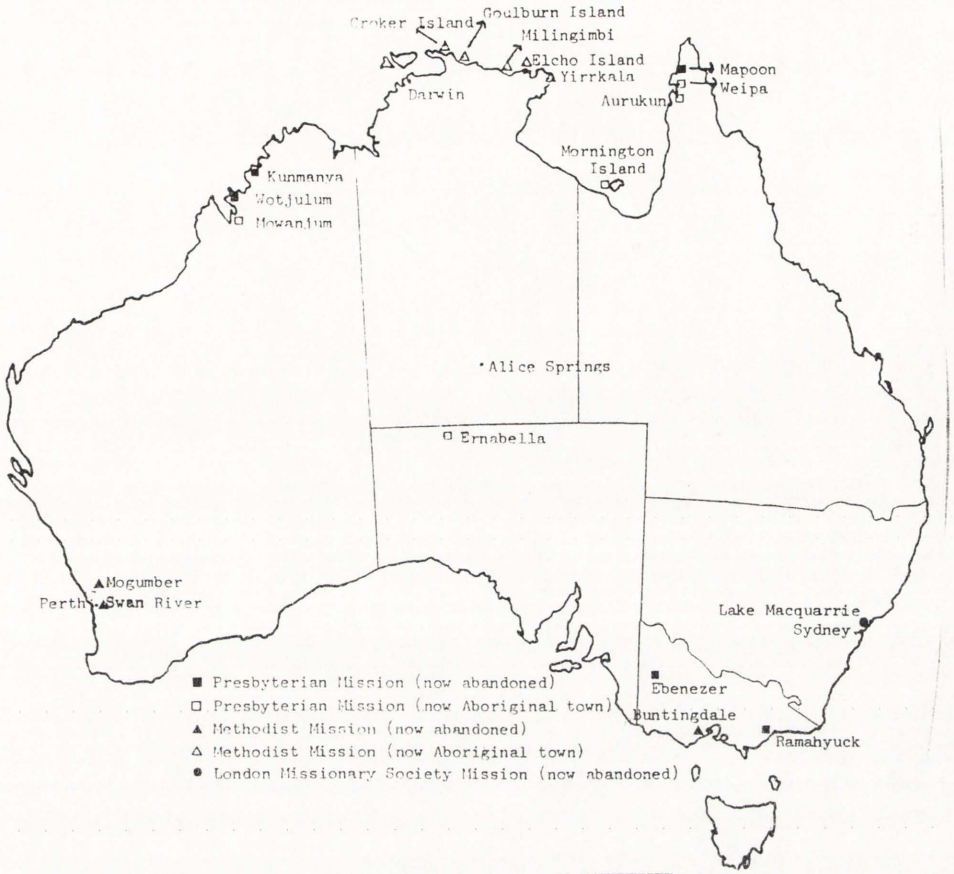

Aboriginal Missions established by Churches now in the Uniting Church in Australia
Source: Swain & Rose (eds.) Aboriginal Australians and Christian Missions.

Previous Anglican Aboriginal Missions

Introduction:
The Era of Self-Determination

> "Did he believe in Christ?" "Yes". "Did he think he was good enough for heaven?" "Yes". "Did he know what a sinner was?" "A wicked native", Fred replied. When asked about repentance, he repeated the General Confession. Ten days later Fred asked for baptism. Gunther told him: "'. . . when you believe in Jesus Christ'. He replied 'I long believe in him' . . . I endeavoured to show Fred that he did not firmly believe yet, that he was too wicked still."[1]

> Look to Jesus Christ, he is the carrier for my life and your life. I never come to the church, but he touched my dream and I understood about that from earlier missionaries who were good friends, number one friends. True friends.[2]

Since the European settlement of Australia there have been radical changes in white attitudes and responses to the Aborigines. Early white attitudes were characterised by the belief that the Aborigines had barely emerged out of the trees.[3] The Aborigines were generally considered either less than human and a kind of noxious animal or an underdeveloped human who needed help. C.S. Wake, a director of the Anthropological Institute, claimed in 1871 that Aborigines, representing "the

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1. J. Harris, "Christianity and Aboriginal Australia: Part 1. The Earliest Christian Missions", Zadok Institute for Christianity and Society, Series 1 Paper, p.9, quoting from James Gunther's Journal, 1838.

2. Burramarra in UAICC papers "The Discussions of Members of the Conference Held at Galiwin'ku. Monday, 22nd August, 1983 to Friday 26th August, 1983." p.20.

3. D.J. Mulvaney, "The Australian Aborigines, 1606-1929: Opinion and Fieldwork" in J. Eastwood & F. Smith (eds.), Historical Studies: Selected Articles, First Series.

childhood of humanity itself", "possessed hardly any of what are usually understood as phenomena of intellect".[1] Shaped by the philosophies of the day, the Churches' attitudes towards Aborigines, although often compassionate, were marked by a paternalism that despised Aboriginal culture and values.[2] The early missionaries came to save the Aborigines, not only from damnation and the destructive effect of white society, but from their Aboriginality as well. It also came to be thought that Aboriginal people were doomed and consequently that "Missionary work then may be only smoothing the pillow of a dying race".[3]

During the 1930s, when it was realised that Aborigines were not dying out, assimilation became the official government policy.[4] Although assimilation considered Aborigines to be fully human, the idea of assimilation was still founded on the premise that white culture was superior and the best thing that could happen to Aborigines was that they adopt white lifestyles and values.

In the 1960s and 1970s the principle of assimilation was found wanting and the new era of self-determination arose. Self-determination

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1. Quoted in W.E.H. Stanner, "Religion, totemism and Symbolism" in M. Charlesworth et al, Religion in Aboriginal Australia: An Anthology, 1984, p.140. cf. D.J. Mulvaney, "Opinion and Fieldwork", p.42.

2. R. Broome, Aboriginal Australians: Black Response to White Dominance, 1788-1980, ch.7, "Mixed Missionary Blessings".

3. Bishop Frodsham, 1906, quoted in Broome, Aboriginal Australians, p.101.

4. S. Bennett, Aborigines and Political Power, p.53.

would allow the Aborigines to decide what kind of lifestyle they would lead. It did not avoid the reality of the Aborigines' position both as a dispossessed people and a relatively powerless minority. It meant neither the end of white interaction and influence nor the forced adoption of white values. It involved the white community helping Aborigines to adopt whatever place they chose in Australia's multi-cultural society. That, at least, was the theory.

By the mid-1970s some kind of self-determination or self-management was the policy of most white organisations that worked with Aborigines and ostensibly of every government except Queensland.[1] Favourable interpretations of some earlier missionary work and selective quotation of mission and Church statements can show that a kind of self-determination was an aim that was being worked towards from the beginning. Keith Cole claimed that:

> The first priority of the missionaries was to form self-governing, self-supporting and self-extending (or self-propagating) churches, so that they would do themselves out of a job.[2]

However, the Churches only started to give Aborigines a part in decision making in the 1960s.

Before the 1970s, Aborigines did not readily conform to the wider Australian Church, although many had accepted and believed the Christian

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1. S. Bennett, Aborigines, p.27.

2. K. Cole, From Mission to Church, p.13. For a quite contrary view, albeit of Catholic missionaries, see M. Alroe, "A Pygmalion Complex Among Missionaries" in Swain and Rose, (eds.), Aboriginal Australians and Christian Missions, pp.30-44.

stories. Early this century some Aboriginal mothers were teaching them to their children.[1] According to Rev. Dr Robert Bos, a number of Aborigines accepted the Christian faith out of personal conviction, yet up until the end of missionary control of the communities they attended church services for pragmatic rather than religious reasons.[2] Although some Aborigines may have believed in the missionaries' religion, the forms of that religion had little meaning for them and were participated in only to gain the material benefits that the missionaries could offer. When these benefits declined, church attendance decreased. Church was a part of the white man's domain which was only entered into to gain some particular reward. This changed as the Church, rather than merely the Christian faith, became a part of the Aboriginal domain.

An example of this happening was the revival among the Yolngu[3] at Galiwin'ku in 1979 which was, according to Bos, an expression of Christianity in the Yolngu domain.[4] The faith of the missionaries, which had been a part of Aboriginal life for generations, was now being expressed in a Yolngu rather than a Western way. The revival was characterised by a style of worship, the fellowship meeting, that was appropriate to the

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1. J. Blitner's personal reflections.

2. R. Bos, "Christian Rituals and the Yolngu Domain" in Nungalinya Bulletin, no.13, p.5-7.

3. "Yolngu" hear refers to the Aboriginal people of north-east Arnhem Land. cf. R. Bos, "Domain", p.8.

4. R. Bos, "Domain". For a more detailed study of the revival see R. Bos, "Jesus and the Dreaming".

Yolngu culture, unlike the weekly Sunday morning worship in a church.[1] The Yolngu had not only accepted Christianity, but they had developed a form of worship that was appropriate for their culture. This is an example of the kind of development that happened in many places across Aboriginal Australia through the 1970s and 1980s. Other examples can be found with the people at Lockhart River and their use of Bora ceremonies[2] and the revival at Yarrabah.[3]

The era of self-determination saw a great change in attitudes for the Churches. In addition to the shift in government policy towards Aborigines, missionary work amongst the Aborigines had come to a crisis point. Many of the Aborigines, particularly in the missions in northern and central Australia, had become Christians, making the missionaries' role of evangelism somewhat redundant. The various denominations now had to make room for Aborigines as full members rather than as mission clients. Thus the change had two causes: society had come to consider that paternalism and assimilation were not the best responses for the Aborigines, and many Aborigines had long accepted Christianity and wanted to run their own worship and ministry.

The Anglican and Uniting Churches consequently underwent a radical transformation during the 1970s and 1980s in regard to their relation-

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1. R. Bos "Dreaming", pp.303ff.

2. D. Thompson, Bora is Like Church.

3. L. Hume "Christianity Full Circle: Aboriginal Christianity on Yarrabah Reserve" in Swain and Rose, (eds.), Aboriginal Australians and Christian Missions, pp.250-62.

ships with Aborigines. This transformation was often expressed by the statement that Aboriginal communities changed from being missions to Churches.[1] Aborigines within the Churches during the 1960s were largely passive recipients of welfare services and spiritual instruction.[2] Their position at the end of the 1980s was markedly different, with most predominantly Aboriginal parishes being led by Aboriginal ministers. Aboriginal members of these denominations had a major role in the decision-making which directly affected them and were developing a voice in the Church at large. They were, however, still a somewhat marginalised minority. The Anglican and Uniting Churches had completed the initial phase of developing an indigenous leadership for Aborigines within the Church, but had only begun to find a place for Aborigines within their structures where Aborigines could feel at home. This was particularly true for the 'urban' Aborigines in the southern states. In the Uniting Church such a place was being developed by Aboriginal initiative in the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress (UAICC or "Congress").

There were three major factors that brought about Aboriginal leadership in the Churches: the willingness of the Church authorities to accept and recognise Aboriginal leadership; the willingness of Aborig-

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1. K. Cole, From Mission to Church, J. Harris "Owning the Gospel: From Aboriginal Missions to Aboriginal Churches" in "Christianity and Aboriginal Australia". Edwards & Clarke, "From Missions to Aboriginal Churches" in Swain & Rose, (eds.), Aboriginal Australians and Christian Missions.

2. cf. J. Harris, One Blood: 200 Years of Aboriginal Encounter with Christianity, pp.853-5 & R. Broome, Aboriginal Australians, pp.115ff.

ines to take up leadership in the Church; and the provision of training to equip Aborigines to be Church leaders.

A major factor leading to the Church authorities' acceptance of Aboriginal leadership was the changing attitude in white society generally, which was demanding greater equality for Aborigines. Although it was arguable that the development of an indigenous leadership had always been the aim of the Church, the feeling that Aborigines were somehow inferior led to great stumbling blocks being placed in the way of any ordained Aboriginal leadership.[1] From early this century there were many examples of Aborigines taking up various leadership roles in the Church, but these were rarely given official recognition or great power.[2]

The willingness of Aborigines to take up leadership roles within the Church had been greatly influenced by two factors. Firstly Aborigines gained confidence by being given more power to control their own lives and from a greater familiarity with white society and its ways. Secondly, the Christian 'revivals' that occurred during the late 1970s and early 1980s, particularly at Galiwin'ku and Yarrabah, led to large numbers of conversions to Christianity. A significant feature of these

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1. Catholic Indians in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries had to struggle against similar racist prejudices of the Portuguese, who considered them not fit for Religious Orders "because all these dusky races are very stupid". C.R.Boxer, The Portuguese Seaborne Empire: 1415-1825, pp.249ff.

2. J. Harris, One Blood, p.855. K. Cole, Mission, p.77.

revivals was that they were Aboriginal initiatives and were led by Aborigines. They were an Aboriginal expression of the faith Europeans had brought to them.[1]

These revivals were perhaps not so much a cause of the growth of Aboriginal leadership in the Church as a symptom of the fact that Christianity was no longer merely the religion of the Europeans but had been assimilated by the Aborigines. Christianity had become a part of contemporary Aboriginal culture. This was manifested in the rise of Aboriginal leadership in the Churches and Aboriginal innovations in worship and theology.

The provision of training for Aborigines came with the foundation of Nungalinya College, Darwin, in 1973, a cooperative venture between the Anglican and Uniting Churches. In 1982 an extension 'campus', Wontulp-Bi-Buya, was established in Queensland. The Roman Catholics were involved in running Wontulp and also provided short term lecturers in Darwin.[2] A central feature of the training provided was that it

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1. Many consider that bible translation and the Churches' use of indigenous languages was a significant factor in the rise of Aboriginal leadership. Indigenous languages only started to receive a great amount of attention in the 1960s. Bible translations gave Aborigines direct access to Christian theology rather than being dependent on whites. C. Wood's & J. Harris' personal comments. A group of students at Nungalinya College in the 1980s were amazed to find out that the Old Testament was originally written in Hebrew rather than English, showing that God used the peoples indigenous language. A. Nichols, "Reflections: 1982-87", Nungalinya Occasional Bulletin, no.40.

2. The different policies of the Catholic bishops in each diocese allowed for different levels of ecumenical involvement.

aimed at being appropriate to Aboriginal thinking and lifestyle.

This thesis examines how the Anglican and Uniting Churches responded to Aboriginal Christianity between 1965 and 1990. In doing this it looks at the development of Aboriginal leadership within these Churches, as this was the most significant development for Aborigines in these Churches at this time. The focus of this thesis moves between Aboriginal experiences and the Church administrations' reactions, giving as much depth as is required to answer the central question.

I have chosen to study the Anglican and Uniting Churches as they were two of the three largest denominations in Australia and they had made substantial progress in the development of Aboriginal leadership. I did not include the Roman Catholic Church, the largest denomination in Australia,[1] as it was of less significance in this area. Although the Roman Catholic Church had been quite active in Aboriginal issues generally and had put substantial thought into the development of Aboriginal Christianity through the Nelen Yubu Missiological Unit, by 1990 only three Aborigines had been ordained in the Catholic Church, two of whom had only been ordained as deacons,[2] and the other, who was priested in 1975, had since left the ministry.[3] The greatest stumbling block in the

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1. I. Breward, Australia: The Most Godless Place Under Heaven?, p.98.

2. M. Wilson, Ministry Among Aboriginal People, pp.26 & 46

3. J. Harris, One Blood, p.864.

development of an Aboriginal Catholic clergy was the requirement of celibacy, a concept that was quite alien to Aboriginal culture.[1]

The Uniting Church in Australia was formed in 1977 by the coming together of Methodists, most Presbyterians, and almost all Congregationalists. Throughout this thesis the term "Uniting Church" in a context before 1977 refers to any of these three denominations.

Because this thesis looks at the Anglican and Uniting Churches its emphasis is on northern Australia. There had been no Anglican or Uniting Church missions in southeastern Australia since early this century.[2] Until recently these Churches had concentrated nearly all of their work with Aborigines this century in northern and central Australia, so it was in these areas that Aboriginal Church leadership developed. In southern Australia these Churches had been more closely identified by Aborigines with the society that robbed them of their land.[3]

In southern Australia independent groups such as the United Aborigines Mission, Aborigines Inland Mission, Church of Christ and Pente-

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1. M. Wilson, "Priests in Aboriginal Ministry: Cunnamulla Meeting" in Nelen Yubu, no.10 & J. Harris, One Blood, p.864.

2. J. Harris' personal comments. Some of the earlier missions survived as Government institutions, many of which continued to have a church presence. eg. Lake Tyers, Maloga/Cummeragunga and Point McLeay. J. Harris "Christianity and Aboriginal Australia: Part 5", p.2. For a brief Anglican mission history see K. Cole, "Anglican Missions to Aborigines" in Swain & Rose, (eds.), Aboriginal Australians and Christian Missions, pp.174-184.

3. J. Harris' personal comments.

costal groups were predominant among Aboriginal Christians. Many of the Aborigines from these groups, as well as a handful from the mainline denominations, formed the Aboriginal Evangelical Fellowship (AEF) in 1970.[1] Although the Anglican and Uniting Churches had a number of Aboriginal ministries in southern Australia in the 1970s and 1980s, most of these were white initiatives and had not developed the level of Aboriginal involvement that would give rise to Aboriginal Church leadership or an identifiable Aboriginal Christianity. Much of the Anglican and Uniting Churches' involvement with Aboriginal Christians in this area had been through the AEF.[2]

Although the Anglican and Uniting Churches had a wealth of similarities, their different ethos and structures led to different responses to the development of Aboriginal Christianity and the problems that arose in making room for another culture within their existing form. For the Anglican Church the main level of decision-making was the diocese, each of which was headed by a bishop who was the final authority on most matters and the main influence on diocesan policies. Australia was divided up into 24 dioceses. The Anglican Church also had decision-making processes at the provincial level, which roughly corresponded to the states, and the national level through General Synod,

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1. J. Harris, "Part 5" p.10.

2. Despite this, over a third of the Aborigines in New South Wales called themselves Anglicans in the 1986 Census, and nearly a quarter of the Aborigines nationally. Only about 4% of Aborigines answered they were Uniting Church. This does not at all reflect actual Church involvement, and raises interesting questions about how Aborigines filled out their census forms. ABSTAT25A.

which met every three years.

The Uniting Church operated much more on a national basis with power resting in the Assembly, which met every four years. Although each parish was more autonomous in the Uniting Church, not being answerable to a bishop, the Uniting Church had a much more centralised authority structure, held together by boards and committees rather than episcopal authority. The Uniting Church was divided up into Presbyteries, of which there were 54 in Australia,[1] Synods, which roughly corresponded to state boundaries and, as mentioned above, the Assembly. All matters of great importance, such as the Church's doctrinal statements[2] or requirements for ordination[3] were decided at the national level by the Assembly or its various committees. The major decisions for the general running and maintenance of the Church happened at the Synod level, while the Presbyteries dealt with more local matters.

The diocesan structure of the Anglican Church allowed each diocese to adapt to suit local needs, but also meant that it was extremely difficult to do anything at a national level. To a considerable extent, the sympathies of the bishop determined what happened in each diocese. The theology and ethos of the Anglican Church determined that the parish centred upon the priest and the diocese upon the bishop. Consequently the most significant development for indigenous leadership within the

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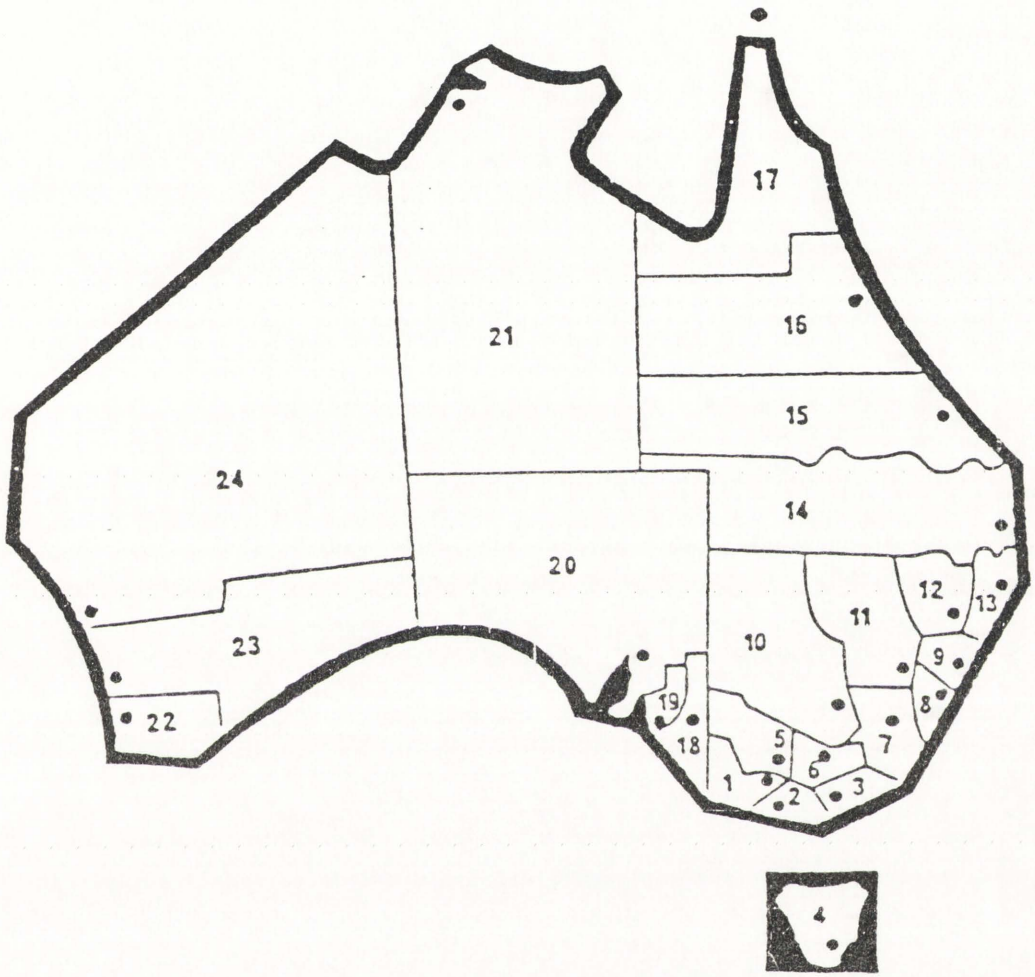
1. D. Brandon, Presbyteries: Alive and Well, p.1.
2. Uniting Church in Australia Constitution, Division 3.38.
3. Uniting Church in Australia Constitution, Division 2.14.

THE DIOCESES OF THE ANGLICAN CHURCH OF AUSTRALIA



1. Ballarat
2. Melbourne
3. Gippsland
4. Tasmania
5. Bendigao
6. Wangaratta
7. Canberra and Goulburn
8. Sydney
9. Newcastle
10. Riverina
11. Bathurst
12. Armidale
13. Grafton
14. Brisbane
15. Rockhampton
16. North Queensland
17. Carpentaria
18. The Murray
19. Adelaide
20. Willochra
21. Northern Territory
22. Bunbury
23. Perth
24. North West Australia

Source: Diocese of Sydney Year Book, 1986

Anglican Church was the development of an Aboriginal clergy.

In the Uniting Church, although the ordination of Aborigines was still very significant as it was a recognition of Aboriginal leadership and that Aborigines were capable of a Christian theology, structural changes were more significant as power lay more within the structures of the Church than in its clergy.

In the Anglican Church the development of Aboriginal leadership centred on the development of an ordained clergy, with the ultimate symbol of this being the consecration of an Aboriginal bishop. Changing the structures of the Church to accommodate the unique characteristics of the Aborigines was something which the Church had wrestled with, but by 1990 no great change had taken place. Structural change was not necessary to establish Aboriginal leadership in the Anglican Church. In the Uniting Church, although the ordination of Aborigines was a necessary step in the development of Aboriginal leadership, the greatest advance in the development of Aboriginal leadership was for Aborigines to gain a structure in the bureaucracy of the Church, through which they could control their own affairs within the Church and have their own voice in the network of commissions, Synods and Presbyteries.

Consequently, in examining the Anglican and Uniting Churches response to Aboriginal Christianity, Chapter 2 of this thesis follows the development of an Aboriginal Clergy within the Anglican Church and the attempt to set up a bishop for Aborigines, which by 1990 had suc-

ceeded in as far as an Aborigine had been consecrated, but had faltered in the area of structural change. Chapter 3 looks at the advent of an Aboriginal ordained ministry within the Uniting Church and the development of the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress. Chapters 4 and 5 deal with the difficulties the two Churches faced and how their different approaches dealt with them.

The sources for this thesis are varied. Much of it depends on personal interviews with some of the main actors. I interviewed Rev. Bernard Clarke in Adelaide, Rev. Dr Robert Bos in Townsville, Bishops Hall-Matthews and Malcolm in Cairns and Wood in Darwin, Rev. Kevin Baird in Yarrabah, and spent some time at Nungalinya College and talked to other relevant people in Darwin. Many of these people made personal and other papers available to me and I went through the Synod minutes of the Northern Synod of the Uniting Church and of the Dioceses of the Northern Territory and North Queensland. I also went through the minutes of the first five meetings of the Uniting Church Assembly and the minutes of the Congress. I wrote to all other Anglican Diocesan Registrars in Australia asking for relevant information, to which the majority responded with some information and some quite comprehensively. A complete list of sources and interviews can be found in the bibliography.

The contemporary nature of this study meant that there had not yet been a great deal written about its subject matter. As a result a substantial portion of this thesis is taken up by a narrative of the events that took place. My use of living sources also means that some

of the details are based on hearsay. The content and themes of the thesis were often gleaned from interviews, after which I sought documentary evidence to back up what had been reported to me. Oral sources suffer from the inaccuracies that creep into people's memories and are generally both the interpretation of events the interviewee thinks the interviewer wants to hear and the story that the interviewee wants the interviewer to hear. These problems were largely out-weighed by my cross-checking with a number of oral and written sources, albeit mainly Church sources. It is also the case that since the interviewee can give a 'primary' source that is tailored to the interviewers needs, he or she may provide information that would not otherwise be recorded and has an accuracy not found in written sources.

Bishop Arthur Malcolm and his wife, Coleen
Source: Church Scene, February 23, 1990

Rev. Malcolm robes Stephen Giblet for his ordination
Source: Swain & Rose, (eds), Aboriginal Australians and Christian Missions.

Chapter Two
A Bishop for the Aborigines: The Development of an Anglican Aboriginal Clergy

> We already have white bishops. If we have Aboriginal bishops this will bind us together in Christ our Lord.[1]

The first Aborigine to be ordained in the Anglican Church was James Noble, who was ordained in 1925.[2] However, he was only ordained deacon. He was the personal protege of Ernest Gribble and although his life was significant, his ordination was somewhat of an anomaly and had little bearing on the development of an ordained Aboriginal leadership in the Church.[3] The first Aboriginal priest in the Anglican Church was Patrick Brisbane who was ordained priest in 1970 on Thursday Island. His ministry was not particularly successful and he died soon after his ordination.[4]

There has been significant development of an Anglican Aboriginal ordained ministry in only two areas in Australia: Arnhem Land and north Queensland. Arnhem Land was one of the very few places where white settlers found little use for the land, until the more recent mining discoveries. Consequently, Aboriginal society was not as devastated there as elsewhere. Arnhem Land was a mission frontier where much of the Aboriginal contact with whites was through the Church. Through this

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1. Dinah Garadji in "Primate's Consultation on Aboriginal Ministry, Nungalinya College, Darwin July 8-12, 1985: Resolutions."

2. G. Higgins, James Noble of Yarrabah, p.50.

3. J. Harris, One Blood, p.856.

4. J. Harris, One Blood, p.859 & T. Hall-Matthews' personal comments.

contact the Anglican Church had built up strong relationships with the Aborigines.

The Church Missionary Society (CMS), an Anglican missionary society, had a continual presence in Arnhem Land from 1908 when it founded the Roper River Mission (now Ngukurr). It started the Emerald River Mission, Groote Eylandt, in 1921 and took over Umbakumba, also on Groote, in 1958. CMS also took over management of Oenpelli in 1925 and established Numbulwar in 1952.[1] After the establishment of the Diocese of the Northern Territory in 1968 CMS gradually gave over control of the Churches on these missions to the diocese. By 1981 it had no more than an assisting role.

Aborigines first gained some say on the missions' affairs with the establishment of Station and Church Councils in 1962.[2] The CMS was initially wary of the introduction of self-determination by the Whitlam government in 1973, but in 1976 declared that they:

> "have followed with great interest the development and work of the Aboriginal Community Councils, and see the development of self-determination as being in line with the Society's declared policy to encourage full participation and involvement of the Aborigines in the direction and management of their own affairs."[3]

CMS executive authority for work among Aborigines in north Austra-

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1. K. Cole, "Anglican Missions to Aborigines" in Swain & Rose, (eds.), Aboriginal Australians and Christian Missions, pp.180-1.

2. K. Cole, Mission, pp.46-7.

3. Quoted in K. Cole, From Mission to Church, p.51.

lia came to an end in 1981.[1]

Although there were Aboriginal Christian leaders at the missions as far back as the 1940s[2] they did not receive formal recognition. One of the earliest moves to develop an ordained Aboriginal leadership in Arnhem Land was in 1953 when the Bishop of Carpentaria (Northern Territory was a part of the Diocese of Carpentaria until 1968) selected 4 men to undergo theological training in preparation for ordination. However, he insisted on six years of theological training thousands of kilometers away from home. This was an unreasonable expectation for such men with numerous important family and social responsibilities. Consequently, the candidates declined.[3]

In 1970 seven Aboriginal men were given a five month training course at Darwin and Angurugu with a view to ordination.[4] Two of these men were ordained. Michael Gumbuli Wurramara was ordained deacon, then priest the day after, in 1973 by Bishop Ken Mason,[5] and Aringari Wurramara (Gumbuli's brother),[6] was ordained in 1985 after the completion of a Diploma of Theology at Nungalinya College.

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1. K. Cole, Mission, p.53.

2.K. Cole, Mission, p. 77. and J. Harris, One Blood, p.855.

3. J. Harris, One Blood, p.858. K. Cole, Mission, p. 79.

4. K. Cole, Groote Eylandt Mission, pp.70-1, & Mission, p.103.

5. K. Cole, Mission, p.85.

6. C. Wood papers.

Bishop Mason congratulates Rev. Gumbuli Wurramara on his ordination
Source: K. Cole, From Mission to Church

Bishop Wood ordains Rev. Aringari Wurramara
Source: K. Cole From Mission to Church

After Gumbuli the next Aborigines to be ordained in the northern Territory were two women who were ordained as deaconesses in 1984 after completing the Diploma of Theology course at Nungalinya College.[1] It was clearly the Church's aim to develop an indigenous clergy from the early 1970s.[2] The initial reason why there was over a decade of no Aboriginal ordinations after Gumbuli's is there were no Aborigines offering for ordination.[3] Aringari declined to seek ordination[4] until about 1980 and other Aborigines who were approached declined the offer. It was considered whether the bishop should choose possible candidates and they be pushed towards ordination, but this was considered inappropriate. There was definitely no overt bar from further Aboriginal ordinations, and the path was open for those such as Aringari who even-

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1. The position of deaconess, although an official recognition of leadership, is not one of the three Anglican orders of deacon, priest and bishop. It was the intention of the bishop to ordain these women as deacons but he was dissuaded from this course as the legislation for women deacons in the Anglican Church of Australia had not yet been passed. This was not necessarily a bar to ordaining women as deacons as it was arguable that a bishop had the power to ordain whomever he will.

2.see, for example, Butler, "Ministry Needs in Arnhem Land" in Checkpoint, Dec. 1974 p.7. (in Butler papers). It has arguably always been the church's intention to develop an indigenous clergy. However, this intention received a credible focus in the 1970s.

3. Reid's submission to Butler on ministry in Arnhem Land, 24 May 1978, Harris' submission, July 1978 & Butler's 'Contribution' of 12/9/78 in the Butler papers.

4. Letter David to Rt Revd. K.B. Mason, 29 September, 1976, re: Ordination of Aborigines, in the Butler Papers

tually chose to follow it.[1]

It is, however, reasonable to ask what led to such a lack of response to this open door. Such answers may lie in the image of the priesthood. The perceived function of a priest, in white minds as well as black, as administrator as well as pastor probably discouraged Aborigines from entering the priesthood.[2] John Harris, while living at Angurugu, gave a submission to CMS discussion of Aboriginal ministry in Arnhem Land in 1978 which started with the points:

> 1. It is essential to encourage as rapidly as possible, the emergence of an Aboriginal ministry.
> 2. People at Angurugu who could possibly fill this role (-e.g. the lay readers) hesitate because their view of the ministry is restricted to the kind of ministry they are familiar with.
> 3. Two of the main stumbling blocks are
> a)Administration
> b)lack of training

It was also the case that, despite the belief that an Aboriginal clergy would be a good thing, many whites believed that in their present state Aborigines were unsuitable as priests. When Clyde Wood first became Bishop of the Northern Territory in 1983 he was told by white Church members that there would not be any Aborigines ready for ordination before the year 2000.[3]

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1. The Butler papers, especially "CMS Summary of Discussion held in Darwin on Tuesday, September 12th, 1978, Re:Ministry in Arnhem Land."

2. Harris' and Wood's personal comments.

3. Much of the evidence regarding Bishop Wood comes from a personal interview and the papers that he made available to me.

A BISHOP FOR THE ABORIGINES

Although the door for Aboriginal ordinations was open from the time of Gumbuli's ordination, little happened until Bishop Wood took over the see.[1] Bishop Wood had been a priest in the diocese since 1973 but had had relatively little to do with Aborigines before his consecration. However, he had been greatly influenced by the writings of Roland Allen, who believed that within any true Christian Congregation God will have supplied all the skills it will require. Roland Allen considered that, rather than bringing in leaders trained outside the congregation, a congregation should use the 'home grown' talent it has in its midst. He also considered that it was detrimental for the community to have too great an outside influence on it through such things as excessive training.[2] Bishop Wood believed in the appropriateness of an indigenous clergy and considered it was necessary sooner rather than later. He was not the only one who had heard of these ideas. Bishop Mason and Canon

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1. Aringari was an ordinand before this time, but to my knowledge the only one. cf. B. Butler, "Some Notes on Future Ministry in Arnhem Land" February, 1983, in the Butler papers.

2. A summary of Allen's points from Gerald Davis, quoted by Bp Wood in his paper "The Thinking of Roland Allen..." is as follows:

1. A Christian community which has come into being as the result of the preaching of the Gospel should have 'handed over to it' the Bible, creed, ministry and sacraments.
2. It is then responsible with the bishop for recognising the spiritual gifts and need in its membership and for calling into service priests or presbyters to preside at the eucharist and to be responsible for the word and for pastoral care.
3. It is also required to share the message and the life with its neighbouring communities not yet evangelised.
4. The Holy Spirit working on the human endowment of the community's leaders are [sic] sufficient for its life. Don't 'train' them too much! Don't import from outside.
5. A Christian community that cannot do these things is not yet a CHURCH: it is a mission field.
6. The Bishop and his staff (cf. Timothy, Titus, etc.) are crucial.

Barry Butler went to a Pacific Basin Conference on Roland Allen in Honolulu in July 1983, shortly before Clyde Wood's consecration.[1]

Soon after his consecration, Bishop Wood called a conference for December 1983 of Aboriginal Church leaders in Arnhem Land in order to discuss Aboriginal ministry. During the course of this conference, after the communities had expressed a clear desire to have their own people as priests,[2] he asked the delegates to break up into their separate communities and select people to undergo training for ordination. The parishes of Ngukurr, Angurugu, Umbakumba and Numbulwar all put men forward who, after undergoing some training at Nungalinya College, were ordained as priests in 1985. The Oenpelli parish was not able to come to agreement over who should be a candidate at that time due to some inter-clan divisions,[3] but later they put forward two candidates who were ordained in 1989, one as priest and the other as deacon. An Aborigine was also ordained as deacon in 1987 and priest in 1988 at Minyerri. By 1989, every Anglican parish with a predominantly Aboriginal congregation in the Diocese of the Northern Territory was led by an Aboriginal priest.

The nature of the Aboriginal ordained ministry in the Northern

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1. B. Butler's personal comments.

2. C. Wood's personal comments & "Report on Conference on Ministry in Aboriginal Communities of East Arnhem Land - held at Numbulwar, December 9 & 10, 1983." in Wood papers.

3. This is explained more fully in C. Wood "Reflections"

The ordination of Jock Wurragwagwa at Umbakumba
Source: K. Cole, From Mission to Church

The ordination of Rev. Rupert Nungamajbar at Numbulwar
Source: K. Cole, From Mission to Church

Territory was unique and developed in a way which suited the local conditions. In line with Aboriginal leadership styles, there was an emphasis on team ministry, with a number of people assisting the priest both as deacons and as lay people.[1] Another feature was that only two of the men ordained by 1990 had completed training to the standard of the Diploma of Theology, a training course for ordinands, at Nungalinya College. This was due both to the urgency that was felt in the need for Aboriginal leadership in the Church and the policy of the bishop which gave familiarity and acceptance in the local situation a higher priority than theological training. All the men ordained as priests had completed the certificate of Theology at Nungalinya and were expected to continue training by Theological Education by Extension (TEE)[2] as they ministered in their parishes, with a few weeks of residential training in Darwin each year. However, although training did continue, it was far more spasmodic than originally planned.

A third feature of the Aboriginal clergy in the Northern Territory was that none of them received the minimum stipend set down for priests in the diocese. This was for two reasons. Firstly, the Aboriginal parishes were in communities with populations numbering only in the hundreds which were unable to provide such expenses. For example, to pay the priest at Minyerri, a community of about 150 people, the full

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1. This was a common feature of Aboriginal ministry. The Aboriginal delegates of the Primate's Consultation on Aboriginal Ministry, 1985, "stress[ed] that team ministry should be given Number One priority in Aboriginal Ministry, especially in isolated communities . . ."

2. See p.64 below.

stipend would cost $35 000.[1] Secondly, to give a priest working in an Aboriginal community the stipend laid down for ministry within middle class suburbia would have been to assume the need to support a lifestyle by the priest who was supposed to relate to a semi-tribal and economically depressed community. Consequently, in 1990 one of the priests lived on a pension, another on unemployment benefits, and the others received the average wage of their communities.[2]

The Aboriginal clergy in the Diocese of North Queensland stemmed from a Christian 'revival' at one particular mission, Yarrabah, and the very active policy of the bishop to create an Aboriginal clergy. Yarrabah was an Anglican mission established by Rev. John Gribble in 1892.[3] It was one of the places to which police forcibly transported Aborigines from all over Queensland, in accordance with the Aborigines Protection and Restriction of the Sale of Opium Act of 1897.[4] Yarrabah was taken over by the Queensland Department of Native Affairs in 1960.[5] It was also the home of James Noble, although his ordination took place in Perth.[6]

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1. The population of the smallest parish in the Diocese of Canberra and Goulburn is 1 000, while the smallest economically viable parish Diocese is 2 500. F. Keith & B. Norris, "Strategy for the Diocese of Carpentaria", 1989, p.2.

2. C. Wood's personal comments.

3. J. Thomson, Reaching Back, p.1 & 9.

4. J. Thomson ,Reaching, pp.9ff.

5. J. Thomson, Reaching, p.115.

6. G. Higgins, Noble, p.50.

The first person to be ordained in North Queensland was Arthur Malcolm. Malcolm trained with the Church Army, a lay ministry body within the Anglican Church, in Sydney in 1954.[1] In 1974 he returned home to Yarrabah, where he was a lay person in charge of the Church, until he was ordained deacon, then priest, in 1978.[2] He continued to lead a small congregation there until the early 1980s when there was a number of conversions to Christianity accompanied by various 'visions' and 'signs', the most notable being a child's 'butterfly' painting which was seen as showing the face of Christ.[3] This led to a strong Church at Yarrabah, with three or four hundred deeply committed Christians in a total population of 1500 people.[4]

At this time John Lewis was bishop. He, like Bishop Wood, had also been influenced by the teaching of Roland Allen,[5] but he took a lot more radical stand in regard to the training necessary for a person to enter into the priesthood. Bishop Lewis adopted the policy of ordaining those, black or white, who appeared to him to have an appropriate leadership role in the Church and gave very little place to the need of theological training. This policy was not always successful and has come under wide criticism. Bishop Lewis also strongly believed in the

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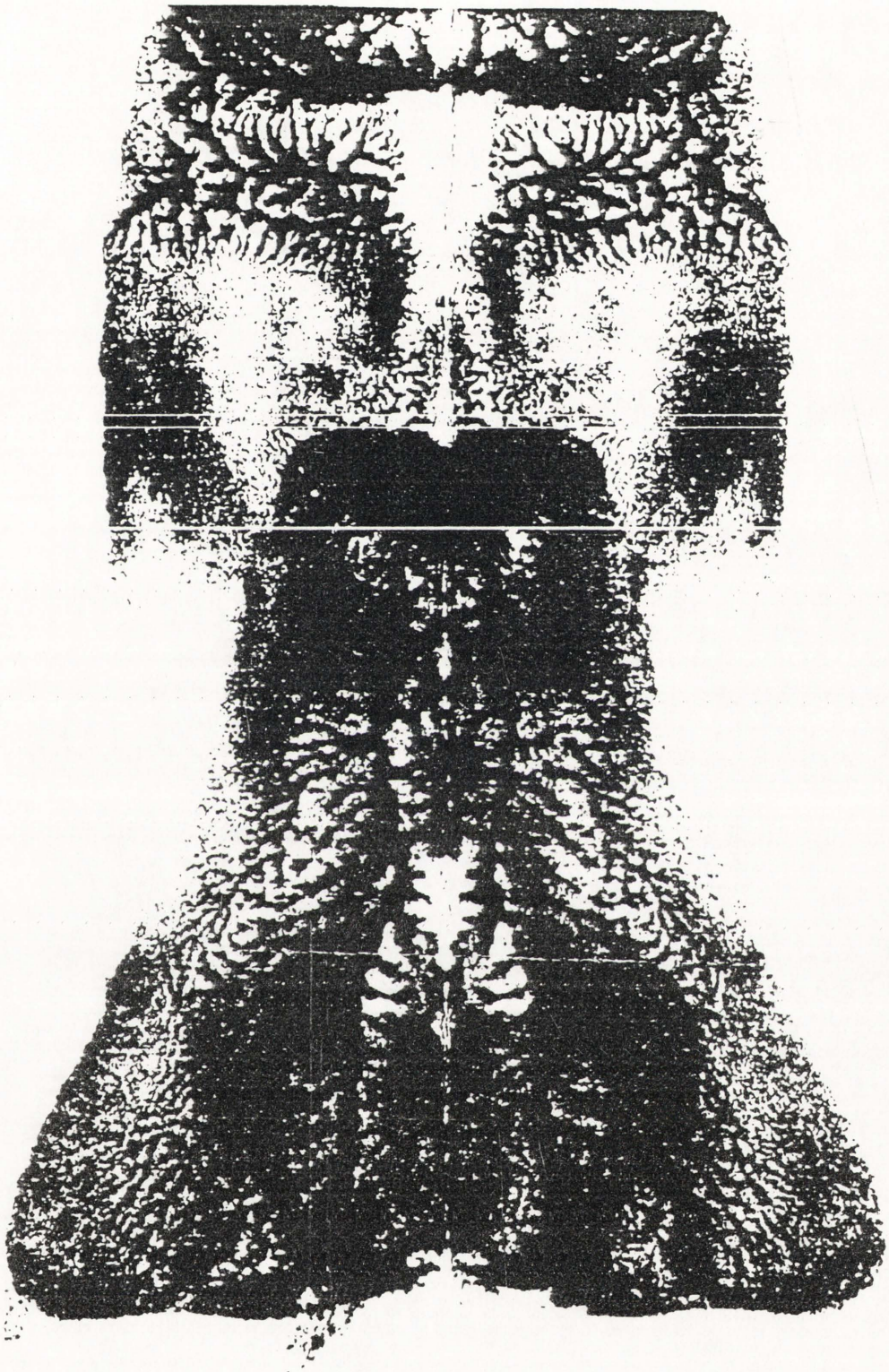
1. J. Thomson, Reaching, p.115.
2. Diocese of North Queensland Year Book, 1989.
3. L. Hume, "Yarrabah", pp.250-253.
4. J. Harris, One Blood, p.851.
5. A. Hall-Matthews' personal comments.



The Yarrabah 'Butterfly' Painting, seen as showing the face of Christ with hands held in prayer. After Bishop Malcolm's consecration it was also seen to show a Bishop wearing a mitre between the hands.
Source: Church Scene, February 23, 1990.

need for Aboriginal clergy within the Church. He therefore proceeded to ordain some of the Aborigines at the Church at Yarrabah who showed the desire and potential, in his view, to be Christian leaders.[1] The first Aborigine to be ordained after the revival at Yarrabah, and second to be ordained in the diocese, was Wayne Connolly, who was deaconed in 1982 and priested the following year. By 1990 fourteen Aborigines had been ordained in the diocese.

The Aboriginal clergy in North Queensland differed greatly from those in the Northern Territory as they came from a background where their traditional culture had suffered far more from white invasion. Whereas the Aboriginal communities in the Northern Territory came from mission settlements on the Aborigines' traditional land, the Yarrabah clergy came from mission settlements where the Church took care of Aborigines who had been dispossessed of their land. Consequently, in the 1980s they had little or no ceremonial life and few people knew their native language.[2] They did not have as strong a tie to any one geographical area, and their families were spread all over Australia.

Although Yarrabah was seen as a major centre for these Aboriginal priests, to which they often returned, it was not seen as the only place where they could happily live. They were therefore able to travel far

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1. Most of the clergy from Yarrabah received some basic theological training from Coleen Malcolm, Bishop Malcolm's wife, using the Nungalinya and other curricula.

2. For example, Arthur Malcolm's only language was English. Malcolm's personal comments & J. Thomson, Reaching, p.123. see also Thomson, p.126 & passim.

afield, ministering at different places for up to three years at a time. Two priests from Yarrabah ministered at Oenpelli before that community got a local priest,[1] another ministered at Oombulgurri in 1986,[2] and in 1990 there were priests from Yarrabah at Mt Isa, Dubbo and Wilcannia. The priests at Yarrabah believed they were the beginning of a national movement of Aboriginal priests, and saw their time in other places as a time of developing ministry and leadership by Aborigines in the local region.[3]

In line with this vision of a network of Aboriginal clergy all around Australia, Arthur Malcolm was consecrated Bishop in 1985. Although ostensibly this came about from a move by the Aboriginal people, it was perhaps more the case that it was the vision of Bishop Lewis and the Primate Archbishop Grindrod, who, along with a genuine concern for Aboriginal people in the Church, were under the pressure of the international Church community and the Australian community to show that the Anglican Church genuinely had a place for Aborigines. The coming of the Australian Bicentenary of European settlement also hurried things along.[4]

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1. K. Baird's personal comments.

2. Diocese of North West Australia Synod minutes, 1986, cited in correspondence from Registrar. See also K. Cole, "Anglican", p.178.

3. K. Baird's personal comments.

4. A. Hall-Matthews' personal comments; see also the following paragraph.

A BISHOP FOR THE ABORIGINES

The idea of having a bishop for a certain group of people rather than a geographical area had been in Queensland since the 1970s among the Torres Strait Islanders and became of interest to the Aboriginal people following the Yarrabah 'revival'.[1] Subsequently, a motion requesting General Synod to ". . . bring to the 1985 session of the General Synod necessary legislation to enable the appointment of an Aboriginal Bishop and a Torres Strait Islander Bishop by the Bicentennial year 1988"[2] was moved by Rev. Malcolm at the North Queensland Synod in May 1984, having been drawn up by the Standing Committee on Ethnic Ministries,[3] a body that was initially formed by the Synod in 1981.[4] This idea had a precedent in the Bishopric of Aotearoa, a bishopric for the Maoris in New Zealand.[5] Then in July 1984 the Primate held a consultation with all Aboriginal and Islander communities in North Queensland where it was decided that the way ahead would be for individual dioceses to appoint Aboriginal or Islander Assistant Bishops who would have a pastoral ministry in other dioceses. This would allow the consecration of an Aboriginal bishop without facing the legislative and doctrinal issues of developing a cultural episcopate.[6]

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1. Letter, 28 August 1984 from Bishop Lewis to Ven. Tung Yep, et al. Diocese of North Queensland Registry papers.

2. Synod of the Diocese of North Queensland N.M. 9:84.

3. Lewis' letter, 28 August 1984.

4. Diocese of North Queensland Synod motion 7:81, and minutes 60 & 68 of 1982 Synod.

5. Representatives of the Bishopric of Aotearoa, Canon Hone Kaa and Rev John Paterson, came to the March 1985 Consultation. Diocese of North Queensland Registry papers.

6. J. Lewis' letter, 28 August 1984. "Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Bishoprics Report" in the Rodgers papers.

The idea was then raised by North Queensland delegates at the Provincial Synod of Queensland in August. They also submitted a paper by Dr A. Brent on the theology of a cultural episcopate.[1] This paper was referred to the Doctrinal Commission who found the paper somewhat wanting, although they encouraged further development of the idea.[2]

In October 1984, following the directions of Bishop Lewis,[3] the Standing Committee on Ethnic Ministries recommended an amendment to the motion asking for General Synod to prepare legislation for Aboriginal and Islander Bishops by 1988. They asked instead that General Synod set up a Standing Committee to report back on the issue at the following session of General Synod in 1989. Bishop Lewis also asked the Standing Committee on Ethnic Ministries to "prepare a submission on the structure and basis of an Aboriginal/Torres Strait Islander Bishopric within the Diocese" for the diocesan Synod in May 1985.[4] At the North Queensland Synod in May 1985 "A Canon to Create the Office of Assistant Bishop to the Bishop of North Queensland with Special Responsibility to Aboriginal

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1. "Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Bishoprics Report".

2. Diocese of North Queensland, Cultural Bishopric, Paper by Dr. Alan Brent, Comments by Various Eminent Theologians, 1985.

3. Letter from the Bishop to Standing Committee on Ethnic Ministries, 24 September 1984. Diocese of North Queensland Registry papers.

4. Letter from the Bishop to the Standing Committee on Ethnic Ministries, re: Aboriginal and Islander Bishoprics, 24 September, 1984, Diocese of North Queensland Registry papers.

People" was passed.[1] Thus two courses of action had been set in motion: firstly, to get the Church nationally to be thinking towards the idea of cultural episcopates in Australia, and secondly, to consecrate an Aboriginal bishop in the Diocese of North Queensland who would accept pastoral and other duties outside the diocese, with a view of working towards a national Aboriginal bishopric.

There followed a Primate's Consultation on Aboriginal Ministry which was held at Nungalinya College in Darwin in July, 1985. At the first session of this conference all the whites were evicted, except David Thompson who acted as minute secretary. This conference resolved:

> ". . . that Aboriginal Anglican Bishops be ordained [sic] and appointed throughout Australia, and further that this Conference identifies the immediate need of North Queensland diocese, and in the future, the diocese of the Northern Territory."[2]

Although this consultation was a wholly Aboriginal forum, as an Aboriginal request for a bishop it did not command a great deal of respect among many of those working with Aborigines. Much of the agenda for the consultation had been determined by whites before the Aborigines met. It was therefore not so much a consultation asking Aborigines what they wanted but a consultation asking Aborigines to 'rubber stamp' what had already been set in motion. As has often been discovered in the attempt to implement self-determination policies, there can be a great

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1. Canon 4, Eightieth Synod of the Diocese of North Queensland, May 1985.

2. Resolution 1, Primate's Consultation on Aboriginal Ministry, Darwin, July 8-12, 1981.

difference between giving Aborigines an authority structure over which they have control and allowing them to develop their own structure.[1]

In accordance with the Synod motions, Bishop Lewis moved at General Synod in August 1985:

> "That Standing Committee prepare for the next session of General Synod a report on possible options for the establishment of Bishoprics for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities of the Anglican Church of Australia . . . "[2]

The consecration of Arthur Malcolm as the Assistant Bishop in the Diocese of North Queensland with special ministry to Aboriginal people took place soon after on 12 October 1985. Bishop Lewis clearly intended Bishop Malcolm, as far as possible, to be a bishop for all Aboriginal people, and as such Bishop Malcolm visited much of Australia as an Aboriginal bishop and represented Australia overseas at such events as

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1. See, for example, the attempts to introduce Aboriginal councils in P. Albrecht, "Hermannsberg: a meeting Place of Cultures.", Nungalinya Occasional Bulletin, no.14. Margaret Bain, in "The Meeting of Tribal Aborigines and Whites", Nungalinya Occasional Bulletin, no.10, gives a brief description of the kind of problems involved in superimposing white modes of behaviour on Aborigines. She concludes: "so much that is planned, often by governments, requires or implicitly demands, that aborigines change their mode of social organisation. In the past this has caused great difficulty for tribal people. The problem is no less today: it is perhaps greater and, as I have pointed out, when transaction [professional, instrumental and goal directed form of relationship as opposed to personal family/friend relationships] is imposed by whites, it works against community development and self management." Bishop Hall-Matthews considered that the "initiative for Aboriginal and Islander Bishops seemed to come from the received traditions of Anglicanism in Australia, rather than from the Islander and Aboriginal people themselves." A. Hall-Matthews papers & personal comments.

2. Anglican General Synod motion 76/85.

World Council of Churches (WCC) Conferences.

Bishop Malcolm was not, however, a bishop for Aborigines but an Aboriginal Assistant Bishop in the Diocese of North Queensland. His consecration was pushed through within the diocese with the hope that he might be a bishop for all dioceses. Many saw this as an inappropriate move. There was not any opposition to the principle of having bishops who were Aborigines. However, some people resented what was perceived as a backhanded attempt to establish a national cultural episcopate in a move that came more from the needs perceived by the whites than the Aborigines. Australia's first Aboriginal bishop was perceived by some both in Australia and throughout the Pacific, to be somewhat of a token.[1]

Bishop Malcolm was representative of only one of the many Aboriginal groups in Australia. One of the features in much white policy has been to lump all Aborigines into the one category. This assumes a national Aboriginal identity which is not necessarily felt by the Aborigines. Bishop Malcolm grew up on the Yarrabah mission and was trained in Sydney. He spent most of his working life in an urban context. His experience was somewhat removed from many Aborigines in central Australia and Arnhem Land. Consequently, although Aborigines everywhere were glad that North Queensland had an Aboriginal bishop, they did not neces-

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1. A. Hall-Matthews, comments and papers.

sarily see him as their representative.[1]

The ministry of Aboriginal priests from Yarrabah has had mixed success. They formed the "James Noble Fellowship", a fellowship of support for Aboriginal priests. In 1988 division started to arise amongst this fellowship over whether there should be a compulsory rule of abstaining from alcohol for its members. The James Noble Fellowship contained a number of reformed alcoholics and drug abusers.[2] In 1990 four of these men, led by Rev. Michael Connolly, who had resigned from the diocese in 1988, broke away from the Anglican Church to form Juyuga (cool waters) ministries, an alternative ministry to the Anglican Church at Yarrabah. This group broke away in order to make a stand over abstaining from alcohol as the diocese was not willing to make a separate compulsory rule of life for Aboriginal priests in regard to alcohol, especially when most of the priest already abstained or only drank socially in moderation.[3] This group was probably also founded on the disaffection of Michael Connolly, who was not the priest in charge at Yarrabah after his term from 1985-7 had ended, even when he was sure God had said he should be.[4]

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1. C. Wood's personal comments.

2. K. Baird personal comments. L. Hume, "Yarrabah", p.254.

3. Malcolm and Baird said that all of the Aboriginal priests abstain from alcohol, while Lewis, quoted in Church Scene, 30/3/90, claimed that "some of them do drink socially in moderation."

4. K. Baird's, A. Malcolm's, A. Hall-Matthews' personal comments.

The clergy of the James Noble Fellowship centred on Yarrabah, which had one stipendiary position, apart from that of the bishop. The other clergy either worked on Palm Island, which had one stipendiary position, or at other parishes around Australia, continued further training, or found some other form of employment while assisting at Yarrabah or Palm Island. In 1990, 4 of the North Queensland Aboriginal clergy were ministering or training outside the Yarrabah/Palm Island district. This left a number of clergy at Yarrabah at the time of the split with no more than assisting positions in the church.

By 1990 there were no Aboriginal priests in the Diocese of Carpentaria. Three Aborigines had been ordained deacons, one of whom was a woman, and another of whom had since died.[1] The reason for this small number, when compared with the Dioceses of the Northern Territory and North Queensland, was that, in the view of the Bishop of the diocese, the Aboriginal leadership within the Church had not yet developed to a position where it was appropriate or helpful to ordain any individuals as priests. Such ordinations would happen as individuals were trained. This stemmed firstly from the view of the priesthood held by the bishop whereby, as opposed to Bishop Lewis, a priest required a substantial degree of training. Such training was being achieved by TEE through Wontulp and at St Paul's College on Thursday Island. Secondly, the Aboriginal communities in the diocese were far more isolated than Yarrabah, yet did not share the relative protection from cultural destruction that the communities in Arnhem Land received. Thus it is quite likely

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1. A. Hall-Matthews' personal comments.

The Ordination of Stephen Giblet and Jimmy Doctor

The two Deacon candidates and one Confirmee are led with the Bora initiates' song
Source: Swain & Rose,(eds.) Aboriginal Australians and Christian Missions.

Bishop Hall-Matthews ordains the candidates
Source: D. Thompson, Bora is Like Church.

these communities failed to benefit greatly from the confidence and degree of organisation that was received through greater contact with either their own or white culture.

The only other dioceses to ordain Aborigines were Adelaide and Sydney. Ken Hampton was ordained a deacon in Adelaide on 20 December 1986. He had a very active part in Adelaide's "Nunga" (Aboriginal) ministry and was co-editor of the book Survival in Our Land, an Aboriginal history of the first 150 years of South Australia. However, Ken Hampton died within months of his ordination, and by 1990 there had been no-one else to take his place.

Jack Braeside was ordained as a deacon on 8 May 1988 in Redfern. He later moved to Mildura in the Diocese of Bendigo where he worked with Aboriginal communities along the Murray River. He was the subject of some controversy as, under the direction of his bishop, he had been working on the New South Wales side of the river, which was in the Diocese of Riverina and under the jurisdiction of another bishop.[1] To my knowledge there were no other dioceses that had ordained Aborigines by 1990. During 1990 the Diocese of North West Australia had two ordinands at Oombulgurri doing training with Nungalinya College through TEE.[2]

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1. B. Cooper's personal comments.

2. Letter to author from Registrar of Diocese of North West Australia, 19 April, 1990.

The Anglican Church had not undergone any structural change to accommodate Aborigines and had not developed any national Aboriginal body. Anglicans had approached the development of Aboriginal leadership at the diocesan level and had focussed on the traditional stronghold of power in the Church, the hierarchy.[1] This approach did not give Aboriginal people a national voice and ministry. The integration of the Aboriginal and wider Church was quite successful in the dioceses with a high proportion of Aborigines and a relatively long and strong relationship with those Aborigines, but Aborigines in other dioceses remained alienated from the Church. The Anglican Church was to a large degree impotent on many questions of Aboriginal affairs as it was unable to make a national response.

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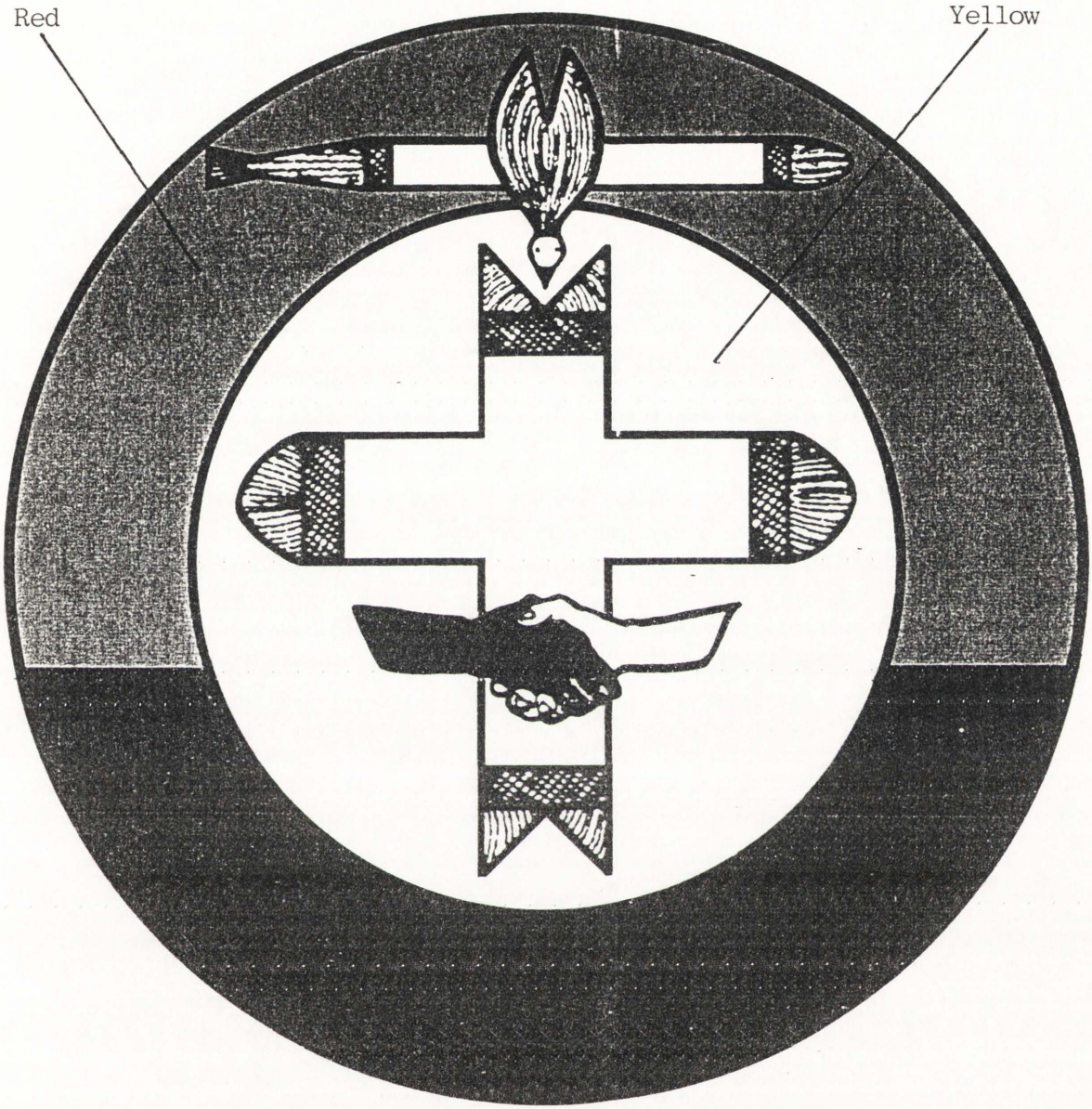
1. In the Anglican Church of Australia power was shared between the bishop and the Synod at the diocesan level and between the priest and the parish council at the parish level. However, the overall leadership role the clergy had, combined with its legal power, made it the focus of decision making.



The Emblem of the UAICC, created by Rev. Gondarra. It is made up of a dove, symbolising the Holy Spirit, a fighting stick, used as a symbol of peace, a cross made up of a message stick and a totem, and the black and white clasped hands. This is on a background that reflects both the Aboriginal flag and the Uniting Church logo.
Source: Mission Review, July 1984

Chapter Three
A National Black Congress: Aborigines make their own position in the Uniting Church

> It was good to hear you say you were shocked, brother, because we get a shock every day of our lives, with some of the decisions that are made concerning us about our future![1]
>
> WE ARE SICK AND TIRED OF PEOPLE COMING TO US AND SAYING THIS IS THE RIGHT WAY, OR THIS IS THE WRONG WAY.[2]

Most of the Aboriginal leadership in the Uniting Church came from the Northern Territory and Queensland, where the Methodist and Presbyterian Churches had missions earlier this century. The Presbyterian Church had missions in Queensland at Mapoon (established 1891), Weipa (1898), Aurukun (1923) and Mornington Island (1914).[3] In 1973 the Presbyterian Board of Ecumenical Mission and Relations (BOEMAR) adopted the policy of making the missions communities under Aboriginal control, although this came into conflict with the Queensland Government's Aboriginal legislation.[4] In 1978 the Uniting Church came into a bitter conflict with the Queensland Government over control of Aurukun and of Mornington Island,[5] throwing Aboriginal issues into the fore of the Uniting Church's thinking from its beginning as a new Australian Church.

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1. UAICC papers, "Galiwin'ku", p.32.
2. UAICC papers, "Galiwin'ku", p.7.
3. Edwards & Clarke, "Aboriginal", pp.189-90.
4. Edward & Clarke, "Aboriginal", p.190.
5. J. Harrison, Baptism of Fire, pp.27ff.

A NATIONAL BLACK CONGRESS

The Methodist Overseas Mission started its first mission in Arnhem Land in 1916 on Goulburn Island.[1] This work spread to Milingimbi in 1923,[2] Yirrkala in 1935,[3] Croker Island in 1941,[4] and Elcho Island in 1942.[5] The United Church of North Australia took over these missions in 1972.[6]

The first significant move towards self-determination for Aborigines on the Methodist missions in Arnhem Land was in 1965 when a commission of enquiry was held by the Church into the management of its Aboriginal missions. At this time it was decided to develop a system in which each community had a Station and Church Council, with representatives elected from both white and black sections of the communities.[7] These councils would gradually have greater Aboriginal representation until there was eventually full Aboriginal control. Before this commission mission supervisors had close to absolute power. They were the decision maker, judge and juries on virtually all matters except those they chose to refer elsewhere. These new councils were the first opportunity Aborigines had in directly affecting the decision-making on the

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1. M. McKenzie, Mission to Arnhem Land, p.9.

2. M. McKenzie, Mission, pp.25ff.

3. M. McKenzie, Mission, p.79.

4. L. Lamilami, Lamilami Speaks, p.257.

5. M. McKenzie, Mission, pp.134ff.

6. M. McKenzie, Mission, p.194. The United Church in North Australia was a cooperative of the Methodist, Presbyterian, and Congregational Churches in north Australia.

7. Edwards & Clarke, "Missions", p.196.

missions.[1]

This policy was gradually implemented until 1974 when a second commission of enquiry was held. This commission was seen by many as the turning point in the United Church's relationship with Aborigines.[2] The aim of the commission was to review the development of the policies established in 1965. There were no Aborigines on the commission itself but the commission moved around the communities and worked with and through the local Aboriginal leaders.[3] One vital member of the commission was Rev. Harvey Perkins who had worked in Asia for World Council of Churches and Christian Conference of Asia (CCA) and had an understanding of social change not widely present in the Church in Australia.[4] The communities were warned three months in advance that the commission was coming and asked to prepare what they wanted to say. Whereas the commission was planning to look into the pace of the development of Aboriginal control, they found that the Aborigines wanted complete control immediately. What made this commission so significant was that rather than merely listening to Aboriginal views it accepted the Aboriginal agenda. The commission found that the communities still desired a Church presence and assistance, but the Aborigines wanted complete control over all of their affairs. The report of the commission was

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1. B. Clarke's personal comments.

2. B. Clarke's personal comments. see also B. Clarke & B. Harris "Free to Decide: A Major Change in Style" in Missionary Review, pp.21-4.

3. Free To Decide, p.1.

4. B. Clarke's personal comments.

named "Free to Decide".

In response to the commission's recommendations the United Church in North Australia handed over formal control of the communities to the Aboriginal town councils on 1 July, 1975.[1] Although some of the missionaries resisted this change, the policy of the Church was unequivocal and those whites who were not able to adjust to the new policy soon moved on.[2] Some whites maintained a degree of control through their advisory roles. Although the Aborigines were officially in charge, it was often the case that government agencies would work through the local white people, who were usually more familiar with the wider Australian bureaucracy. The white advisory staff could therefore maintain a degree of power by being the channel of communication with the government.[3] Nevertheless, actual Aboriginal control became more and more a reality.

Aboriginal control of Church affairs increased as they gained greater representation on Church councils. An ordained leadership took longer to develop. The first Aborigine to be ordained in the United Church was Lazarus Lamilami who was ordained on Croker Island in 1966.[4]

Terry Djiniyini Gondarra, the third Aboriginal Uniting Church minister in the Northern Territory, was ordained in 1976 after training

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1. R. Bos "Dreaming", p.171.

2. B. Clarke's personal comments.

3. See B. Clarke, "Social Implications of Funding Aboriginal Communities." Nungalinya occasional Bulletin, no.2.

4. L. Lamilami, Lamilami, pp.223ff.

at Alcorn College, Brisbane, Malmaluan and Rarongo colleges in Papua and New Guinea and Nungalinya College.[1] Djiniyini then became the minister at Galiwin'ku, his home, and was the minister there when the 'revival' occurred there in 1979. This revival was to have a great effect on the Aborigines of all denominations in Arnhem Land and beyond.[2] Djiniyini was a lecturer at Nungalinya College and wrote perhaps the first works on Christian theology by an Aboriginal. He was one of the founding leaders of the Congress and also became the Moderator of the Northern Synod of the Uniting Church in 1985.

The Presbyterian Church did not ordain any Aborigines before the formation of the Uniting Church in Australia in 1977.[3] However, with a view to training Aboriginal leaders within the Church, BOEMAR ran a course at Aurukun for 14 elders and other leaders from eight parishes in January and February 1974. John Brown reported:

> After the course was concluded, those elders who had completed the course satisfactorily were authorized to celebrate the sacraments in their churches as well as preach the gospel. This authorization has not been called ordination, but only because of the difficulty of obtaining permission from the Assembly of Australia to ordain people after such a limited amount of formal theological study. It has been called an interim ministry. The men were authorized "as a temporary administrative measure".[4]

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1. R. Bos, "Fusing Aboriginal and Christian Traditions" in D. Harris et al, The Shape of Belief, p.133.

2. J.Harris, One Blood, p.849-50.

3. J. Harris, One Blood, pp.856-7.

4. John P. Brown "Theological Training for the Aboriginal Churches" 1974 in the Bos papers.

The requirements for ordination in the Uniting Church were set by the Board of Education for Ministry (BEM), a national body, and were uniform throughout Australia. These requirements included a specified level of theological training. It was therefore difficult for many Aborigines to meet the ordination requirements before Nungalinya College developed a course for ordinands that was recognised by the BEM. This was accomplished in 1980.[1]

Although the path to ordination in the Uniting Church was open for Aborigines in the 1980s, Aborigines still felt the frustration of being in an organisation that was dominated by another culture. In response to this frustration the UAICC was formed. The idea of the Congress first came to Rev. Charles Harris in 1981.[2] Rev. Harris was a minister in the Uniting Church in Paddington, Brisbane. He had been a pastor of a vacant Assemblies of God (AOG) congregation in Ayr, Queensland, during the early 1970s, but when a white pastor became available Charles Harris was moved aside. He then went to Brisbane where he met Pastor Don Brady, an Aborigine who was with the Methodist Church and was an active land rights campaigner. Rev. Harris became a Methodist pastor in Paddington, and after further training he was ordained in the Uniting Church in 1980.

In 1981, as a representative of the Commission for World Missions

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1. Nungalinya report in Northern Synod Handbook, 1980 in NTRS 55, Drawer 40.18.4.

2. Much of the following detail is from B. Clarke. See also Edwards & Clarke, "Aboriginal", p.198.

(CFWM) he went to a CCA Theological Reflections conference with Rev. Clarke at the Bay of Plenty in New Zealand. At the conference he was staggered at the level of organisation of the Maoris and there ability to speak out on their own affairs. At a following CFWM board meeting he asked why his own people could not be organised in a similar way. Rev. Clarke told him there was no reason and encouraged him to do something about it.[1]

Rev. Harris then organised for a conference which was held at Crystal Creek near Townsville in August, 1982. To this conference he invited all the relevant Church leaders and Aboriginal Christians he could think of. He invited people from both the Uniting Church and other denominations, but the only whites who came were from the Uniting Church. Rev. Harris' background was significant in determining who was invited to this conference. As he was from Queensland he had extensive family ties throughout that state. His wife was from New South Wales so he had another network of Aboriginal Christians he knew through her, such as Yuni and Eric Walker who had Pentecostal links and Frank Roberts who was with the Aborigines Inland Mission (AIM). He also had extensive connections through his association with the AOG. There were links through the Uniting Church with Cedric Jacobs and Trevor Holmes in Western Australia. These kinship and other ties were important in enabling the establishment of the first meeting. Consequently, there were members of the Uniting, Anglican, AOG, AIM, and other Churches at

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1. B. Clarke's personal comments.

UAICC President Rev. Charles Harris & Consultant Rev. Bernard Clarke
Source: Mission Review, April 1988

Rev. Djiniyini Gondarra
Source: Mission Review, April 1981

the meeting. Some Maoris who were in Australia at that time for a CCA conference also attended.

Kinship ties tend to mean more to Aboriginal people than the denominational boundaries that the white Churches imposed, particularly in southern Australia where the geographical divisions the different Churches accepted between their missions did not coincide with the tribal boundaries. This led to members of the same family being associated with different missions which did not always have the most Christian of relationships between each other. Addressing these divisions was one of the aims of the Congress,[1] as was often the case in Aboriginal Christian movements.[2]

> People were taught it was a sin to go to another church. This is a problem which has been caused by denominational distinctions which have no meaning in Aboriginal and Islander lives. It is important to break down the vicious circle which is imprisoning too many. It is important to let the Holy Spirit shine through, and bring now life to our people.[3]

> We should be careful not to fall into the dogmatic positions characteristic of the white church. Our people have been confused by denominationalism. The differences are really in name only, but the Aboriginal and Islander people are caught up in these barriers. There are Aboriginal people who are keen to mix with us, but whose white leaders will not allow them to do so. Denominationalism

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1. Meeting of National Black Congress Interim Committee and CFWM during 1983 in UAICC minutes, p.2; 6-8, Galiwin'ku UAICC Conference 1983 minutes p.16, 21; National Committee Minutes 84.2.8.

2. B. Hollingsworth, "Aboriginal Christians and Denominationalism", Nungalinya Occasional Bulletin, no.33.

3. UAICC papers, "Discussions and Meeting of the Interim Committee and Committee of the Commission for World Mission During 1983." p.8.

works against us, as a people, to divide us.[1]

Despite this inter-denominational emphasis, from the Crystal Creek conference on the Congress became more and more of an Uniting Church institution. At the early Congress conferences all Aborigines could vote, but as time went on this right was restricted to Uniting Church members. This was due to both the lack of initial response from other white Churches and the practical fact that for the Congress to be successful it needed to tap into white resources and the most efficient way to do this was close affiliation with the Uniting Church. Most of the founders of the Congress also already had strong relationships with the Uniting Church.

At the Crystal Creek conference the National Black Congress was formed. Soon afterwards it was decided that Rev. Harris should be relieved of parish duties and tour the country spreading the vision of the Congress around Australia and giving invitations to the next meeting of the Congress, held at Galiwin'ku in August, 1983. Over 80 people attended the Galiwin'ku conference; a substantial commitment when the isolation of its location is considered. At Galiwin'ku the name was changed to the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress.[2] Initially national conferences were held annually, meeting in Ballina, New South Wales in 1984 and Belgrave Heights, Victoria, in 1985.

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1. UAICC "Minutes and Discussions of the National Committee, February 15th, 16th and 17th 1984, at Wesley College Sydney." 84.2.8: Chairman's Report.

2. Galiwin'ku Conference 1983 minutes, resolution 83/19.

The Congress was officially recognised as a part of the Uniting Church at the Uniting Church's Fourth Assembly in 1985. The original plan for the Congress was that it be a Synod of the Uniting Church but established on cultural rather than geographical lines. This plan was rejected for another which, although giving the Congress a similar level of autonomy, gave it a more subordinate role in the Church's overall structure. The Congress became a body under the Commission for World Mission, through which it reported to the Assembly. The Assembly gave to each Synod the power to give to, and to take back from, the Congress responsibility for Aboriginal ministry.[1] It was intended to make the Congress responsible for all Aboriginal ministry in the Uniting Church.

The Congress was divided up into regions corresponding to the Synods, and each region was to decide in conjunction with its Synod what kind of structure it would have. The Northern Territory and Queensland regions each decided to form an Aboriginal Presbytery within their region, named respectively Bethel and Calvary, which would share the same geographical area of the other Presbyteries within their region but would include the Aboriginal people. In this way the Congress gained direct representation at the Synod level in these states similar to other Presbyteries as well as their representation through the CFWM at the national level. The Bethel Presbytery later found that the Presby-

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1. UCA Assembly 85.84.2 commends UAICC Regional Committees to the Synods & 88.35.2 adds Division 4 (49), which defines the place of the Congress, to the Uniting Church in Australia Constitution.

tery model did not best fit its needs and became the Northern Regional Council of Congress, which gave it similar power with less paper work. Any Aborigine who was a member of the Uniting Church automatically became a member of the Congress. Aborigines of other denominations could be "members in fellowship".

The aims of the Congress were based on a marriage of justice and evangelism. Rev. Harris stated:

> The primary aim of the Congress is evangelism. Aboriginal and Islander Christians want to respond to the command of Jesus to "Go and make disciples". But evangelism is not just organising the occasional rally, or even door knocking. Evangelism means caring for the whole person. We want to be free to engage in a holistic ministry to our own people. Yes, we want them to know Jesus as Lord and Saviour. And yes, we are concerned about housing, employment training, community development, alcohol rehabilitation, land rights, health and youth work.[1]

The motion formally establishing the Congress at the Assembly was passed with the spontaneous singing of the Doxology. However, the Fourth Assembly was not all a time of celebration for its Aboriginal delegates. It was also a time of hurt and confusion. In 1982, in line with a WCC resolution regarding the 1988 Bicentenary, the Assembly had committed the Uniting Church to:

> only take part in these celebrations if sufficient progress has been made towards the just claims of the Aboriginal people for land rights, freedom to rebuild their society, and financial compensation.[2]

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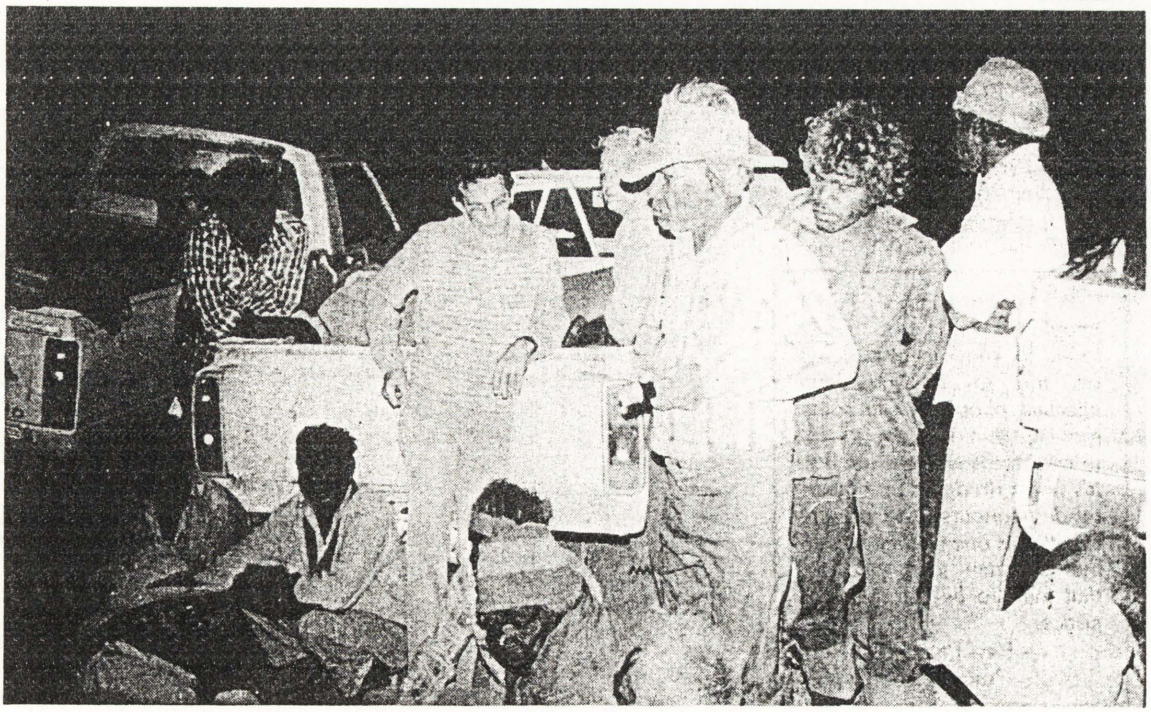
1. C. Harris "Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress Report to the Commission for World Mission" Doc. 83-11-D1, 3. in UAICC papers.

2. UCA Assembly motion 82.48.

Pastor Frank Roberts, Rev. Silas Wolmby, and Mr Eric Walker, leaders in the Congress.
Source: Mission Review, October 1986



The road blockade that attempted to prevent mining on Aboriginal land at Noonkanbah. Rev. Bernard Clarke is in the centre.
Source: Mission Review, January, 1981

However, as is often the case with large Churches, and especially in a case like the Uniting Church which has a major decision-making body at the national level, not all its members agreed with the decisions made affecting them. The Church had not gone through thorough discussions at the parish level before making such a major and controversial decision and subsequently found division amongst its ranks. It was therefore faced with alienating a large portion of its white membership, whom it represented, or going back on the promises it made to its minority and relatively powerless black membership.[1] The Assembly therefore passed a motion which, although recognising that the demanded conditions has not been met and calling for greater justice for Aborigines, encouraged all Uniting Church people to join the celebration of white invasion.[2] What was initially seen as the Church's greatest action of solidarity with the Aborigines turned into the Aborigines' greatest disappointment.

The Congress showed it was familiar with the principles of long-suffering and forgiveness. It would appear that something Aborigines had to put up with in their dealings with the Church, as with all white organisations, was the discrepancy between promises made in sincere enthusiasm and actions carried out in the face of harsh reality.[3] The Congress reacted to this situation in two ways. Firstly, it organised

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1. D. Wood, "Celebrating the Australian 200th and the Christian 2000th" in St Mark's Review, no.129, 1987.

2. UCA Assembly motion 85.40.

3. UAICC report in CFWM report, 5.2.2 in Fifth UCA Assembly minutes, p.126.

its own peaceful "March for Justice, Freedom and Hope for all Australians" for Australia Day 1988, which it invited the white Church to join.[1] Secondly, it made moves to heal the divisions between the white and black Church. It did this by proposing to make a covenant between the Church and the Congress.[2] For the Congress the symbolism of a covenant would be seen as action in place of the empty words they were familiar with. For others the covenant would be an important consciousness raising exercise. Unlike previous commitments, the covenant was not something to be rushed into on the heat of the moment or a decision of the executive without the unilateral support of the members. It was to be formulated over a number of years through discussion with all members at the parish level.

As an Aboriginal run wing of the Uniting Church the Congress was a success. In 1990 it was claimed to be the largest Aboriginal organisation in Australia. It was wholly run by Aborigines, with the help of a small number of white consultants who were employed by the Congress and did not have any decision-making role. The Congress had also managed to avoid any great schisms which was a major achievement for an Aboriginal organisation of its size. Aborigines consensus style decision-making tends to lead to a strong unity within their organisations until irreconcilable differences arise, whereupon such organisations often blow up

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1. UAICC report, 5.2.1, Fifth Assembly, p.126.
2. UAICC report 5.3, Fifth Assembly, pp.127-30.

into smaller factions,[1] as was the experience at Yarrabah.

The Congress faced its first great internal challenge in 1986 with the politics of one of its founding members and national treasurer[2], Rev. Cedric Jacobs. Cedric Jacobs, a Uniting Church minister from Western Australia, was the founder of the "One Australia Movement", an organisation founded on the right wing politics that sometimes accompanies fundamentalist Christianity.[3] The One Australia Movement considered that the Aboriginal struggle for land rights was a divisive element in Australian society and that Aborigines should forgive and forget the past. This ran against some of the basic principles of the Congress and its vision of holistic evangelism. Although the Congress was all for national unity and harmony, they did not want it at the expense of their own heritage which they believed to be given to them by God. Consequently, after repeated pleas for Rev. Jacobs to stop publicly putting forward a stance that was contrary to the policy of the Congress[4] and detrimental to its cause, Jacobs was removed from the National Committee. He subsequently withdrew from the Congress, although technically he remained a member.[5]

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1. Clarke's personal comments.

2. August 1984 Ballina Conference Minute 13.

3. cf. C. Jacobs, Healing a Divided Nation: Land Rights - An Aboriginal Perspective.

4. It was also contrary to the policy of the Assembly of the Uniting Church of 1979, '82 & '85. UAICC "National Committee Minutes", November 1986.

5. UAICC report 5.1.3, 5th Assembly, p.123 & UAICC National Committee minute U86.2.19.

It was the concern of some that being part of the wider Church was leading the Congress away from its original vision of bringing a gospel of justice and freedom to all Aboriginal people and isolating it from those outside the Church. By 1990 Rev. Harris, having recently retired as president, had come to consider the Congress to be a "token black organisation". Rev. Harris' vision for the Congress saw it as correcting the injustice his people suffered and leading the white church away from "materialism, money, monument and man". He thought the Congress had instead been led away from this vision by being caught up in the conservatism of the wider Church.[1]

Being a national body, the Congress was able to develop relationships with Aborigines in areas where the Church did not have strong ties and provided networks of support whereby small Aboriginal groups could gain a voice and support in the Church in a way that was not otherwise possible. However, the Uniting Church was left with the problem of maintaining a true rather than merely formal unity between the Aborigines and the rest of the Church. The development of a separate structure within the Church that allowed Aborigines to do things their way necessarily meant some kind of division. Aborigines and those involved with Aborigines worked within the Congress and therefore did not have the same level of interaction with the rest of the Church. The wider Church could leave the Aborigines to worry about Aboriginal affairs and

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1. C. Harris' personal comments.

avoid any great interaction or integration with them.[1] Although it was the case that having Aborigines somewhat isolated within a particular structure of the Church was closer to the Church's aims than to have them isolated from the Church altogether, which was more the case before the development of the Congress,[2] the ultimate aim was to achieve unity with diversity whereby Aborigines were very much a part of the whole Church yet, with everybody else, still able to express their own identity.

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1. UAICC report 5.1.10, 5th Assembly, p.125 Assembly minutes.

2. R. Bos' personal comments; see also R. Bos "The Congress: A New Movement in Aboriginal Christianity" in Cultured Pearl, p.167.

Chapter Four
Diversity:
Problems in Developing a Multicultural Leadership

> When we are explaining across cultures the Uniting Church structures are very difficult to understand. An example is the eldership which are designed for balanda, and they don't work in an aboriginal congregation. There is, therefore, a need to work on what IS the Uniting Church.[1]

By the end of the 1980s the Anglican and Uniting Churches had established Aboriginal Church leadership. This leadership centred on northern and central Australia. At the end of the 1980s the religious affiliations of Aborigines tended to correspond largely with the geographical divisions established by the various missions earlier this century. The different denominations had divided up the Aboriginal mission field between them. Anglican Aborigines tended to only come from the areas where the Anglican missions had been, and Uniting Church Aborigines came from the Methodist and Presbyterian areas. The Congress started to change this trend, as it appears to have attracted Aborigines from outside traditional Uniting Church areas, particularly from 'non-denominational' Churches,[2] and has been able to share Aboriginal resources and expertise around the country.

In developing this Aboriginal leadership the Churches had to adapt to the Aboriginal culture and situation. The creation of Aboriginal

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1. UAICC papers, "Discussions and Meeting of the Interim Committee and Committee of the Commission for World Mission During 1983." p.7.

2. Members in fellowship have a high profile and many of the leaders in southern Australia are former pastors from other Churches.

leadership in the Church did not merely involve the training and promotion of Aborigines within the Church. It also meant the meeting and mixing of the Aboriginal and wider Church cultures. This was further complicated by the fact that, although Aborigines around Australia were increasingly sharing a common identity, many elements of Aboriginal culture varied greatly from one area to another. This cultural milieu both shaped what form Aboriginal leadership within the Church took and also meant that the wider Church had to adapt to accommodate these different cultures.

One of the first difficulties that had to be dealt with in giving Aborigines a place in the wider Church was how to reconcile the Aboriginal and wider Churches' different approaches to leadership and decision-making. Traditionally Aborigines tended to have group rather than individual leadership. In traditional Aboriginal society there were no chiefs. Traditional Aboriginal society had a political system that was suited for decision-making within small groups, where everybody had a defined relationship. It was decision by consensus. No individual decided what to do but through the careful expression of views, without direct debate or contradiction, group decisions were reached.[1] The Churches were faced with the problem of developing a decision-making and leadership style that was compatible with this Aboriginal style, yet

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1. cf. S. Harris, "Yolngu Rules of Interpersonal Communications.", Nungalinya Occasional Bulletin, no.25; D.L. Webber, "Interpersonal Behaviour in Relation to Aboriginal Programs.", Nungalinya Occasional Bulletin, no.26; M. Bain, "Meeting" & J. von Sturmer, "Talking with Aborigines", Nungalinya Occasional Bulletin, no.27.

able to cope with thousands of viewpoints and with working in interaction with white society.

Two examples of this difference in leadership styles can be taken from the two Churches. In 1980 the Northern Synod of the Uniting Church was faced with a controversial decision on the use of some land at Alice Springs. In the discussion matters of land rights were conflicting with economics and practicalities and a vigorous debate developed, as is expected with any difficult decision-making in a democratic white institution. The reaction of the Aboriginal delegates at this Synod was to gather together and sing "Bind us Together". For the Aborigines such open conflict was hurtful and they tried to move to heal the divisions in the Synod before going on to resolve the questions at hand. To many of the whites involved, the action of the Aborigines appeared immature and irrelevant.[1]

The second example comes from the conference on Aboriginal ministry held at Numbulwar in 1983 by Bishop Wood. The Bishop had made a list of 9 questions for discussion. Gumbuli Wurramara was Chairperson. After question six had been discussed Gumbuli asked the Bishop what was next. "Item seven", the Bishop replied. Gumbuli again asked what was next, to which again the Bishop replied, "Item seven". A third time Gumbuli asked what was next, at which time the Bishop realised something was wrong and said they should go on with item eight. During the pro-

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1. R. Bos, "Dreaming", p.330. & "Domain", p.3.

ceedings the following day Gumbuli suggested they discuss item seven, whereupon the Bishop found everyone to be in agreement. There had obviously been some controversy the previous day over this item so it could not be brought forward for public debate until this had been settled in the Aborigines' own, non-confrontationist way.[1]

The Uniting Church's solution to this dilemma in the establishment of the Congress was to leave the Aborigines to sort things out between themselves. The Congress allowed a wide division between the white and Aboriginal decision-making processes. Within the Congress the Aborigines could decide matters in their own way. This left the problem of adapting such a huge structure to an Aboriginal style, but the Aborigines were free to do this as they chose without having things forced upon them.[2] The Congress still had to interact with the wider Church, but this could be done by the executive of the Congress who were more familiar with the methods of the wider Church.

Within the Anglican Church this problem, like all others, had to be approached in each diocese. A national solution was being sought in the establishment of an Aboriginal bishopric, although this idea was criticised for being the imposition of a white model of leadership upon the Aborigines rather than an Aboriginal development. In the Northern Territory this problem was answered by the development of team minis-

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1. C. Wood's personal comments.

2. For an example of discussions on such matters see "National Committee Workshop", appendix one to a Conference circa 1987, p.6, in UAICC minutes.

tries within each Aboriginal parish, whereby although the priest was the only person authorised to celebrate the sacraments, a number of people assisted him in the decision-making and other ministry within the parish. These would include elders in the Church and non-stipendiary ordained Aborigines. At the diocesan level this problem was addressed by regular meetings of the Aboriginal leaders which were conducted with sensitivity to the cross-cultural problems. This solution was dependent on the wisdom and sensitivity of those involved.

In the Diocese of North Queensland this problem was addressed by the consecration of an Aboriginal bishop. This put someone who shared the same cultural processes in a key position of authority who could therefore respond in the appropriate manner. However, this person had to mediate between the two cultures and had to meet the different expectations of the wider Church and its hierarchy while working within an Aboriginal setting.

The Diocese of Carpentaria was similar to the Northern Territory as the Bishop tried to address this problem with sensitivity to the local situation and with time develop a team leadership within the Aboriginal congregations that came from the Aborigines themselves.

The Churches also had to find forms of leadership which were compatible with particular Aboriginal customs. This difficulty was felt very acutely in Arnhem Land where traditional relationship rules came in conflict with white organisation. For example, in many Aboriginal

communities there existed traditional rules whereby there were certain people whom a particular individual was not allowed to talk to or directly look at. People who had such a relationship with the local minister were not likely to attend a service the minister was running as to do this would infringe these rules. Such rules also made services difficult, as to bring a whole community together into one place for services, or at least to have a gathering which might be made up of anyone from the community, could lead to uncomfortable situations.[1] These problems were partly addressed by the development of team leadership and ministry in the Church and also by a gradual weakening of such traditional relationship rules which the Aborigines often found impractical in the town setting.

The other side of this problem was the need of ministers to fulfil kinship obligations and prefer and defer to certain individuals while, at the same time, playing a leadership role in an organisation that ostensibly had an impartial leader who equally represented the whole community. Once again, the team ministry model of leadership helped to deal with this problem.

Throughout the 1980s Aboriginal Christians were putting their culture under review in an attempt to put it all 'under the lordship of

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1. C. Wood's & B. Clarke's personal comments; Wood "Reflections"; cf. R. Broome, Aboriginal Australians, p.112.

Christ'.[1] The Aborigines at the Primate's Consultation on Aboriginal Ministry, 1985,

> endorse[d] Aboriginal culture and identity but express[ed] the need to find Christ in the centre of the culture and find what is good and what should not be kept."

There were moves both to reaffirm their traditional identity and to examine traditional culture in a critical light. Aboriginal leaders in the Church firmly believed that their culture was given to them by God, but that, as in all cultures, there were elements that had developed in it that were against God's will. A minority of Christian Aborigines were opposed to all ceremonial life. These tended to be from those brought up under certain missionary rules in the first half of this century.[2] Some ceremonies and practices were actively encouraged and others discouraged.[3] A significant feature of this cultural review was that, unlike cultural changes imposed by missionaries earlier this century, it was an Aboriginal review. The wider Church authorities believed that it was generally not within their power or right to conduct such a review of another culture. On all cultural questions it was only those within the culture under question who knew God's guidance who could decide what was and was not compatible with the Christian gospel. It was among the principles of the Congress that their culture was part of their God-given heritage and that the gospel spoke prophetically to all cultures.

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1. "Notes on the Arnhem Land Church Leaders Conference at Angurugu 28-30 June 1989" in Wood papers; cf. A. Nichols, "From the Principle" in Nungalinya News, no. 31, June, 1983. This was a major theme of the 1990 Galiwin'ku Thanksgiving.

2. R. Bos' personal comments.

3. R. Bos, "Dreaming".

Another feature of Aboriginal leadership within the Church was that it tended to be localised. It was often 'home-grown' to suit the local situation and was not readily transportable to other areas. Different areas had their own customs which were often not intelligible to Aborigines from other regions. Consequently, innovations in matters such as Christian liturgy were not generally transportable from one region to another. The incorporation of the Bora ceremonies at Lockhart River into Christian rites of passage or a communion service[1] could not be used meaningfully in Arnhem Land. Nor could the adaption of Bukulup as a baptismal service at Galiwin'ku[2] be used meaningfully at Aurukun.

Similarly, leadership that was founded more on familiarity and respect within a local community than on theological training was not readily transportable. Most Aboriginal Church leaders ministered in their home region. The Aboriginal leaders from the more urban areas were generally more mobile, such as Rev. Harris and the Yarrabah clergy. However, the Yarrabah clergy sometimes found great difficulty in offering leadership to people who did not necessarily recognise their authority.[3] This problem was further compounded by the fact that these priests had been ordained according to the Roland Allen model, whereby it was their local experience rather than specific training that gave

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1. A. Hall-Matthews' personal comments; D. Thompson Bora is Like Church.

2. R. Bos, "Fusing Aboriginal and Christian Traditions" in The Shape of Belief, p. 134.

3. B. Cooper's personal comments.

them their authority.

It was not only the case that many Aboriginal leadership skills were not readily transportable. Many of the Aboriginal leaders were not very mobile themselves. A feature of many Aboriginal communities, especially those in areas such as Arnhem Land, was the strength of bonds and obligations within the community, especially for a community leader. This led to decreased mobility as people from these communities did not wish to be apart from their home for extended periods, and needed to be able to return fairly frequently for various ceremonial and other obligations. This is one reason why study by extension was an important part of Nungalinya College, as it allowed students to study without long periods away from home. Rev. Gondarra provides an example of this lack of mobility. He had the skills required to become the national president of the Congress and was seen by some as the natural successor to Rev. Harris, but he declined to take up this position after Rev. Harris retired as to do so would require him to be too far away from home for too long.[1]

Another important dimension to Aboriginal leadership in the Church was the place of women. During the periods of very low Church attendance which many of these Churches suffered, particularly during the 1970s when the Church was no longer seen as a means to white resources and was not yet seen or made to be relevant to the Aboriginal situation,

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1. Rrurrambu's personal comments.

it was a small number of women who maintained the Church. In communities that did not have a resident priest it was often the case that the Church was led by women.[1] However, at that time women did not receive any formal recognition of their role.

As the Church became part of the Aboriginal domain men took a greater interest. Although women continued to play a major role in leadership within the Church, men tended to take the role of any overall leadership of the Church when the Church became an important part of the community life.[2] As long as women led the Church, the Church was not seen as a part of mainstream Aboriginal society. It is interesting that Bishop Wood observed that, in Arnhem Land, when white people or Aboriginal women ran the Church and preached the gospel they did not encounter very much direct opposition, but when Aboriginal male elders took up positions of authority in the Church some of the other elders tried to stop Church activities. It was only as Aboriginal men represented the Church that it was perceived as a threat to the tradition of the society.[3] It is arguable that this only shows that men perceived it to be a threat when men led the Church. Nevertheless, if female Church involvement was perceived as a threat by men or women, they did not express this openly by the same active opposition.

By 1990 there were no women ordained as priests or ministers in

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1. eg. Oenpelli: see K. Cole Mission, p.139.
2. cf. R. Bos, "Dreaming".
3. C. Wood's personal comments.

the Anglican or Uniting Churches. There was one female Uniting Church ordinand studying at Nungalinya College, but she had to wrestle with the literal interpretations of Bible passages on the role of women in the Church that many of her fellow students held.[1] At that time there were no female priests in Australia in the Anglican Church. Aboriginal women had been ordained as deacons and deaconesses, but deacons are only assistants in the Church and do not hold much power.

Although Aboriginal women did not take up the highest leadership positions they did continue to play a major role in the team ministry model that was adopted. One solution given by an Aboriginal priest at an Arnhem Land Church leaders meeting in 1990 for the problem of the local priest having too great a load in one of the parishes was for some women of the parish to be ordained.[2] Women played a similar role in Carpentaria. Women also had a major part in the UAICC. A number of the founding leaders of the Congress were women. The Congress also passed legislation to ensure a minimum female representation of 20% at the Synod level from each region and a minimum of 5 women on the National Committee. However, the top positions of president, and vice president were always held by men.

The keystone to the development of Aboriginal leadership in the Anglican and Uniting Churches was Nungalinya College. It was only with

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1. D. Madden's personal comments.
2. D. Madden's personal comments.

the development of Nungalinya College that the Churches were able to give Aborigines training which was appropriate to their situation and which the Aborigines could feel comfortable with. Although Aborigines could train in any number of institutions around Australia or the world, in practical terms such training was inaccessible to most Aborigines. The Aborigines living in the communities where the Anglican and Uniting Churches had their strongest relationships were not used to the style of education given in most theological colleges. The value of the training such institutions would give was also questionable. The Church did not want to train Aborigines to be like white ministers. They wanted to give Aborigines access to training in order to develop leadership for an indigenous Church.

Nungalinya College evolved out of joint training enterprises between the Anglican, United and Baptist[1] Churches during the 1960s and early 1970s. It became incorporated as a training college in 1973.[2] In 1976 the college commenced Theological Education by Extension,[3] whereby students would study courses in their own communities under the guidance of a tutor, using tapes and materials from the college. This allowed the students to remain in their home environment and to apply their learning to their local situation as they studied. These courses would often require short periods of residential training in Darwin. As the

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1. Although the Baptist Church was involved in the early stages it did not become a part of the formal cooperative venture. J. Goodluck's personal comments.

2. K. Cole Nungalinya College, p. 4.

3. Nungalinya College Report 1979 Northern Synod Handbook, p.54, NTRS 55, Drawer 40.18.3.

college developed it became more centralised with more of the courses being conducted in Darwin. This was a point of concern for some of the members of the college as it was feared that the more the students were being trained in urban Darwin, away from the conditions of their communities, the more their training would alienate them from their communities.[1]

In line with the vision for the college to be a training centre for Aboriginal leadership, the college, since the appointment of Rev. Lazarus Lamilami as a lecturer in 1977,[2] has always had Aborigines on the staff, and a majority of Aborigines on the college's council since 1983.[3] It had been hoped that an Aboriginal principal would be appointed after the retirement of Tony Nichols as principal in 1987,[4] but such a move did not seem appropriate at the time. The succeeding principal, Rev. Les Brockway, was the candidate put forward by the UAICC.[5]

As the college received a large number of students from the Aboriginal communities in Queensland it was decided to set up an extension campus in that state. Wontulp was consequently founded by Rev. Dr

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1. K. Cole, Nungalinya, p.7.

2. R. Bos to Ken, 5 November 1979, 1981 Review Committee submissions in NTRS 49 30.8; Bos' personal comments.

3. K. Cole, Nungalinya, p.20.

4. Nungalinya College Handbook 1990 p.4; Brockway personal comments; A. Nichols "Reflections".

5. "From the Principle", Nungalinya News, no.50, March 1988.

Robert Bos in 1982.[1] Wontulp remained a part of Nungalinya and in practice was an administrative centre through which TEE courses could be more easily run in Queensland. Wontulp, as a deliberate policy, did not purchase any buildings for teaching purposes. Short residential courses were held in hired buildings and all other courses were by TEE. Nungalinya courses could also be studied at the Uniting Church's Institute for Mission in Sydney and at the Diocese of Carpentaria's St Paul's College on Thursday Island.[2]

As a combined Churches training college Nungalinya College was a success.[3] Although the two Churches involved did have their differences, they were able to work through them and continue to provide a training college for Aborigines that met both Churches' needs. The Churches differences were not so much over matters of doctrine but over their approaches to developing Aboriginal leadership within the Church. The Anglican Church was mainly concerned with theological training, through which it could build up the spiritual life of the Aboriginal communities. The Uniting Church was more interested in direct community development, along with spiritual development. The Uniting Church was therefore more interested in putting the college's finite resources into community development courses. The Uniting Church also wanted a strong-

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1. Nungalinya College Handbook 1990, p.4.

2. R. Bos' personal comments; Nungalinya College Handbook, 1990, pp.50-1.

3. Personal comments of Brockway, Clarke, Wood. cf. letter from M. Ford, A/Divisional Director, Department of Aboriginal Affairs, to B. Williams, 21 December, 1977. NTRS 49, 30.1.1.

er emphasis on social justice for Aborigines in the teaching.[1] The two Churches' different ethos also led to them having a different view of the college. For the Uniting Church the college was the corner stone of its work with Aborigines in the Northern Territory. It was the training centre for Aborigines through which the Church could advance the position of Aborigines in Australia and help them establish the lifestyles they desired. For the Anglican Church the college was more of a theological college where they could train their indigenous clergy,[2] and thereby, through the development of the Church, improve the position of Aborigines. It is significant that Aborigines from the Anglican communities have shown very little interest in Nungalinya's community development courses.[3]

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1. B. Clarke's personal comments; UAICC "National Committee Minutes", April, 1987.

2. B. Clarke's comments on submission to '81 Nungalinya College review in NTRS 49, 30.8; R. Bos' personal comments.

3. There were no such Anglican students in 1990, which was not untypical. Butler's personal comments.

Chapter Five
Unity:
Aborigines as a Part of the Church

> Are Aborigines who enter the church hierarchy promoting the maintenance of white hegemony and thus becoming apolitical with regard to the broader Aboriginal issues (for example, land rights)? Or will they, in the future, become a powerful voice in their own right, wielding more political power for their own people, in the style of South Africa's Bishop Tutu, or the Melanesian "pastors in politics" in Vanuatu?.[1]

During the 1970s and 1980s Christianity was no longer a foreign religion in many Aboriginal communities. A number of writers have drawn a parallel between the development of an Aboriginal Church and the European Reformation, in that in the Reformation people who had accepted the faith of the Roman Church no longer wished to accept that Church's culture and control.[2] Instead they instituted their own traditions, Church structures and forms of theology that expressed their Christian faith in their own context. It was in this spirit that the thirty fourth article of the Anglican Church was written in 1562.

> It is not necessary that Traditions and Ceremonies be in all places one, and utterly like; for at all times they have been divers, and may be changed according to the diversities of countries, times, and men's manners, so that nothing be ordained against God's Word. . .
>
> Every particular or national Church hath authority to ordain, change, and abolish ceremonies or rites of the Church ordained only by man's authority, so that all things

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1. L. Hume, "Christianity Full Circle" in Swain & Rose, (eds.), Aboriginal Australians and Christian Missions, p.261.

2. See for example: Gondarra, Let My People Go, p.14, & A. Nichols "Reflections", p.3.

be done to edifying.[1]

The problem that beset the Australian Churches in the 1970s and 1980s was how to enable Aborigines to express their own cultural uniqueness without having to form a separate denomination, as those who wished to express their uniqueness did in the Reformation. With the Australian Aborigines they hoped to accomplish what they failed to do in Europe, create true unity with diversity. Diversity was sought in areas such as form and style of liturgy, emphasis and approach to theology, and the structure of authority and leadership. In the 1970s and 1980s developing an indigenous leadership was a main priority of the Churches. There were also developments in areas such as liturgy, as in the above case of Galiwin'ku. Nevertheless, leadership was the priority as it was only as an indigenous leadership developed that a truly indigenous liturgy or theology could emerge. It is noteworthy that at Galiwin'ku, during the time of the revival, the Church was led by Rev. Gondarra, the first Aboriginal Uniting Church minister to have completed a thorough theological training.[2]

The response of the Anglican and Uniting Churches to the different problems involved in the development of Aboriginal Christianity were very much dependent on the Churches' different structures and ethos. The Anglican Church had an hierarchical structure while the Uniting

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1. An Australian Prayer Book, p.635.

2. R. Bos, "Fusing Aboriginal and Christian Traditions" in The Shape of Belief, p. 133.

Church was more bureaucratic. The Anglican Church's ethos also tended to centre all activity upon the Church at either the parish or diocesan level. The Uniting Church developed more purpose orientated structures. Although many Anglican dioceses did have bodies such as commissions for social responsibility, these had to fit in with the Church hierarchy and were peripheral to the life of the Church.[1] The Uniting Church's ethos and structure were more directly attuned to social concerns. The Anglican Church tended to try to bring about social change by strengthening the Church so it had a greater influence on society through its activities and members. The Uniting Church tried to bring about social change more by forming committees to address particular problems and focused more on the structure of society.[2]

The Anglican Church's ethos was fundamentally more conservative. Anglicans tended not to tamper with the structure of society, and especially not to tamper with the structure of the Church, but to try to bring about change from within. The Uniting Church ethos did not share the same love for the status quo and was more open to challenging the foundations of society and the Church. The Uniting Church was also a much younger Church, having come together in 1977. Its structures were therefore not deeply established and were still being worked out, a

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1. North Queensland's Standing Committee on Ethnic Ministries was disbanded in 1987 as it was considered no longer necessary after the consecration of an Aboriginal and a Chinese Bishop in North Queensland and a Torres Strait Islander Bishop in Carpentaria. Diocese of North Queensland Synod, N.M. 12.87.

2. cf. I. Breward, Australia, p. 96.

point not lost on the Aborigines. It was said at the Galiwin'ku Conference:

> "We feel that nothing has finally crystallised in the Uniting Church so changes are still possible before it all gels. This is one reason why it is important to impress on the church how we want to be part of it. If we go for an Assembly we may be told to go and get our own money. As an Aboriginal Synod we are a child of the system, and must be fed by the system. We see ourselves together with other Synods and belonging to the Synods. However, where there are white missionaries there is no freedom."[1]

The Anglican Church did very little to change its structure to accommodate Aboriginal Christians. It rather started to give Aborigines a place within its hierarchical structure. As Aborigines took a greater place within the hierarchy of each diocese they could adapt that diocese to better suit their local situation. Innovations could be made in the development of Aboriginal liturgy and leadership, within the guidelines of the Church structure and traditions. As a result the Anglican Church was able to achieve the goal of establishing an indigenous Church that was an integral part of its wider communion. However, it was only able to do this in areas where the Church had a long standing relationship with Aborigines.

The Uniting Church's response to the rise of an Aboriginal Church was to give them a fairly free rein over their affairs by establishing a body for Aborigines in the Church bureaucracy. In doing so they were able to give self-determination to Aborigines in the Church. The Congress gave Aborigines a channel through which they could make their

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1. UAICC papers, "The discussions of Members of the Conference Held at Galiwin'ku. Monday, 22nd August, 1983 to Friday 26th August, 1983." p. 16.

views heard by the Church and enabled the Church to respond in a unified manner on Aboriginal issues. However, the Uniting Church was not able to develop the same depth of structural unity as the Anglican Church between Aborigines in the Church and the wider Church. In setting up a separate body within the Church to deal with Aboriginal affairs they established an institutional division between Aborigines and the wider Church. The Congress' covenant proposal was an attempt to breach this institutional division.

In developing a place for Aborigines within the Church there were two extremes the Churches tried to avoid: assimilation and separatism. The more the development of Aboriginal Christianity meant Aborigines conforming to the wider Church, the more the Church was being assimilationist. The more the Church gave room for Aboriginal uniqueness, the more it was being separatist. According to Church aims, both black and white, neither separatism nor assimilation, in their broad sense, were bad in themselves. It was a question of degree. To become part of an organisation means in some way to be assimilated by it. Conversely, to express a unique identity is to be in some way separate. It was not assimilation that was to be avoided but the subjection of one culture to another. It was not separate cultural identities that caused concern but the idea of further dividing the Church into different factions.

The Uniting Church was able to give Aborigines far more than merely an advisory role with the establishment of the Congress. Although the Church was sometimes slow in handing over all matters related

to Aboriginal affairs within the Church to the Congress,[1] and final power still remained in the Synods,[2] the Congress did come to control nearly all the ministry to Aborigines in the Uniting Church. The only constraints for the Congress were conformity to the overall Church structure and ethos. This conformity was not a controlling constraint but merely a necessary feature of belonging to a larger organisation. It only came to bear on such matters as requirements for ordinands, as such people had to meet the standards of the Church to be made official representatives of the Church.

However, the Congress was not free of the tension created by having Aborigines with real power within a predominantly white institution. One of the fears of whites about the Congress was that it was a separatist movement. Remaining part of a predominantly white organisation necessitated Aborigines to some extent conforming to that organisation. As unity with the Uniting Church was one of the aims of the Aborigines of the Congress[3] they were willing to pay this cost. They did however want the room to express their own identity within the Church and in order to do this they continued to review their structure and position within the Church. Although the Congress did have real power over its own affairs its power within the Church at large was

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1. Complaints were made about this by the UAICC National Committee. Minutes, November 1986. cf. National Committee June 1987 minute 11; National Committee May 1988.

2. UCA Constitution Division 4.49; see above p.46.

3. UAICC report to CFWM Doc. 83-11-D1; "3. Summary of Our Aims" in UAICC National Committee Minutes February 1984 84.2.11 & June 1984; UAICC Galiwin'ku Discussions, p.16.

still limited. One proposed structural change was that rather than being a body under the CFWM it become a Synod like body directly under the Assembly.[1] Another change proposed was for the Congress to form an independent Church.[2] Although such a proposal has not been adopted, that such a proposal was suggested shows that there were still problems to work out in the development of a truly multi-cultural Church. That such a proposal could seriously be considered shows that the power of the Congress, although not absolute, was real.

In the Anglican Church each diocese was individually incorporated and most power lay in the individual dioceses. The consecration of an Aboriginal bishop was an attempt to give Aborigines some power in the Church, but since a national Aboriginal bishopric or some equivalent structure was not developed, Aborigines only had the power they could express through the individual dioceses. In the dioceses with a large number of Aboriginal clergy this put them little worse off than any other group in the Church who had to work in with the bishop.

The diocesan structure also allowed the Church to adapt to the

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1. Shayne Blackman's "Discussion Paper on Structures", May 1987, in UAICC minutes.

2. National Committee paper "Indigenization" circa 1988 in UAICC minutes:
"c. Move towards being an indigenous church closely related to the Uniting Church (and possibly other churches). . .
2.3 No firm position was adopted or recommended. The National Committee believes that there are many advantages in a move towards an indigenous church but at this stage it is important to develop the Congress work in all states equally. There is much to be done and these and other questions are not critical for the present. It does not recommend any changes for the moment.

local diocesan situation. Consequently, as long as there was a sympathetic bishop, which was the case in all the dioceses with a large Aboriginal population, Aborigines had influence on the Church. They did not have great power themselves, but in the Anglican Church such power lay more in the hierarchy, particularly the bishops, than in any particular group. Although North Queensland did have an Aboriginal Assistant bishop, this bishop was still only an assistant and therefore not in the main seat of power. For an Aborigine to become the bishop of a diocese would be a significant move in Aboriginal power as that person would be in the position of power over whites within that diocese as well as blacks. Although such a move would be significant, it would still only have an effect at the diocesan level.

The episcopal nature of the Anglican Church made questions of power far more complicated than in the Uniting Church. As power in the Uniting Church was far more structural it was more easily seen. Power in the Anglican Church was balanced between the clergy in the hierarchy and the laity in the Synods and parish councils. Synods and parish councils were democratic bodies, so power in these lay in the majority groups, who were under the leadership of the clergy. It is arguable that in theory Aborigines had virtually no power in the Anglican Church as there was no body representing them. It is also arguable that the Church's relationship with Aborigines was paternalistic as any suggestions of change within the Church were reviewed by the hierarchy which decided what was in the Aborigines' best interest. However, such arguments can be made in regard to all lay people in the Anglican Church.

The power of any particular group within the Anglican Church, such as Aborigines, was largely dependent on their influence on the hierarchy.

By 1990 the Anglican and Uniting Churches had established an Aboriginal Church leadership. This was mainly occurred in the regions where the Churches strong relationships with the Aborigines. The development of this leadership involved the meeting of two cultures which had to adapt to suit each other. In the Anglican Church, Aborigines had to adapt to the framework of the wider Church while the Church adapted to the local Aboriginal situation within the bounds of that framework. The Uniting Church adapted its framework to accommodate the Aborigines.

The 'era of Self-determination' saw a great change in these Churches' relationships with Aborigines. Both Anglican and Uniting Church Aboriginal communities went from being missions to Churches. The Uniting Church went even further and allowed Aboriginal Christians freedom to form a national Church structure where they were able to respond to God in the way they thought appropriate. The inflexibility of the Anglican Church meant that it was trapped by its diocesan boundaries. In a small number of dioceses Aborigines were able to establish an Aboriginal Christian identity, but most dioceses did not have the 'critical mass' of Aboriginal members that would enable an Aboriginal Church to develop. These dioceses could not offer Aborigines an uniquely Aboriginal Christian identity, only conformity to the wider, white dominated, Church.

APPENDIX A: ANGLICAN ABORIGINAL ORDINATIONS[1]

Date	Deaconess	Deacon	Priest	Bishop	Diocese
1925		James Noble*			Perth
1969		Patrick Brisbane*			Carpentaria
1969		Alan Polgen*			Perth
1970			Patrick Brisbane*		Carpentaria
1973		Gumbuli Wurramara	Gumbuli Wurramara		Northern Territory
1978		Arthur Malcolm	Arthur Malcolm		North Queensland
1982		Wayne Connolly			North Queensland
1983		Neil Fourmile			North Queensland
1983			Wayne Connolly		North Queensland
1984	Betty Roberts				Northern Territory
1984	Dinah Garadji				Northern Territory
1984		Leslie Baird			North Queensland
1984		Dudley Bostock			North Queensland
1984		Valentine Clumpoint			North Queensland
1984		George Friday			North Queensland
1985		Aringari Wurramara	Aringari Wurramara		Northern Territory
1985		Jock Wurragwagwa	Jock Wurragwagwa		Northern Territory
1985		Rupert Nunggumajbarr	Rupert Nunggumajbarr		Northern Territory
1985		Steven Giblet*			Carpentaria
1985		Jimmy Doctor			Carpentaria
1985				Arthur Malcolm	North Queensland
1985			Neil Fourmile		North Queensland
1985			Leslie Baird		North Queensland
1985		Kevin Baird			North Queensland
1985		Michael Connolly			North Queensland
1985		Saul Burns			North Queensland
1985		Conrad Yeatman			North Queensland

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1. This table was compiled from diocesan Year Books, interviews and other sources. I can make no claim to it being exhaustive.

* Deceased.

1986	Ken Hampton*		Adelaide
1987	Nathaniel Farrell		Northern Territory
1987	Nancy Dick		Carpentaria
1987		Kevin Baird	North Queensland
1987		Saul Burns	North Queensland
1987		Conrad Yeatman	North Queensland
1987	Lloyd Fourmile		North Queensland
1987	Allan Mathieson		North Queensland
1987	Wayne Stafford		North Queensland
1988		Nathaniel Farrell	Northern Territory
1988	Harry Huddleston		Northern Territory
1988		Dudley Bostock	North Queensland
1988		Valentine Clumpoint	North Queensland
1988		Lloyd Fourmile	North Queensland
1988		Allen Mathieson	North Queensland
1988	Jack Braeside		Sydney
1989		Peterson Nganjmirra	Northern Territory
1989	Kenneth Mangiru		Northern Territory
1989	Ross Wurrawilya		Northern Territory
1989		Wayne Stafford	North Queensland

APPENDIX B: UNITING CHURCH ABORIGINAL ORDINATIONS[1]

Date	Name	Synod
1966	Lazarus Lamilami*	United Church (Methodist)
1976	Philip Magurlnir*	United Church (Methodist)
1976	Djiniyini Gondarra	United Church (Methodist)
1980	Charles Harris	Queensland
1983	Peter Nyaningu	Northern
1984	Silas Womby	Queensland
1984	Keith Warner	Queensland
1985	Mawunydjil Garawirrtja	Northern
1985	Minyipirriwuy Garrawurra	Northern
1985	Rronang Garrawurra	Northern
1985	Shayne Blackman	Queensland
1985	Trevor Holmes	Western Australia
1985	Cedric Jacobs	Western Australia
1986	Raymond Bandicha	Northern
1989	Dudley Gabunaboi	Northern

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1. This table was compiled from UAICC minutes, interviews and other sources. I can make no claim to it being exhaustive.

* Deceased.

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