

C O N T E N T S

EDITORIAL	(ii)
NGURRA KARNPI Martin J Wilson msc	3
WONGALALA Dan O'Donovan	9
MUNGARI 'Broome News'	11
HUGO RAHNER'S ESSAYS Dan O'Donovan	14
HEALING AT PORT KEATS John Hilary Martin op	20
VIDEO REVIEW M J Wilson-msc & D Ryan sj	25
FROM THE SECRETARY'S DESK . . .	30
BULLETIN BOARD	32

EDITORIAL

In this issue one of our constant contributors, Dan O'Donovan, parish priest of Fitzroy Crossing in the Kimberleys, begins quite a venturesome series. Through the medium of Hugo Rahner's essays he wishes to relate the local question of inculturation of gospel belief and practice to the church's long experience of basically the same dynamic since its very first meeting with the cultures it was born out of or confronted from the very outset. At times we can think that our local situation is so special as to be unique. It is heartening and encouraging to realise that we are part of a really massive scene of action.

At the time of writing this editorial Dan O'Donovan himself is recuperating in a Perth hospital from a serious car accident. By way of experiment in this number we have started a 'Bulletin Board' after the model of the computer clubs, where items of news like Dan's accident, which people widely would like to know about, can be posted up. Being only a quarterly, **Nelen Yubu** cannot be really topical. All the same, we would like to offer a facility where people involved in the Aboriginal apostolate throughout the extent of a vast land could communicate with one another.

The other items in this issue are self-explanatory.

This coming year I shall be operating out of the Daly River Centre, combining NYMU and Lumko. Keren will continue to do the secretarial work - typesetting and production - from Leura. She is also working hard at a second edition of Fr Worms' book on Aboriginal religion as the first edition is just about sold out.

We would be grateful if all correspondence regarding subscriptions were to be addressed directly to Keren at Leura (exact address on the inside front cover). Chevalier Bookshop (PO Box 13, Kensington, NSW 2033) has agreed to market our various productions: in effect at the moment this means Peter Malone's **In Black and White and Colour**. We are hoping to include with this number a flier from Collins-Dove advertising the six PICT booklets, one of which is the result of my missiological study of the Australian church's contemporary outreach to Aboriginal Australians.

The NYMU staff wish everybody the blessings of Christmas.

Martin Wilson msc
Editor

NGURRA KARNPI

18 Park St, Kalgoorlie

Martin J Wilson

In 1986 I was gathering material on the church's outreach to Aborigines which achieved published form as one of the volumes of the PICT series published by Collins-Dove for the National Catholic Research Council which had conceived of and sponsored the research project into the contemporary Australian pastoral scene. (PICT = Pastoral Investigation of Contemporary Trends.) In order to keep more or less within the set limits, I had to prune away a lot of interesting material. One case of outreach that I had found particularly touching had to do with **Ngurra Karnpi** in Kalgoorlie where a parish priest and a group of sisters responded to the plight of Aboriginal fringe-dwellers in the best tradition of Christian mercy.

In the first draft of my report I gave a rather extensive account of Ngurra Karnpi by way of a particular case-study. It is difficult to tell a contemporary story, particularly if it is very much to the credit of people who are still involved. A fulsome account can embarrass to the extent of offence; a soberly moderated one can be so insipid as to be meaningless. When faced with the need to prune quite a few words away, I simplified my task by omitting Ngurra Karnpi as a block. However, the story is well worth telling, even in compressed and modulated form.

The information was gathered in taped interviews with Sr Agatha LSP at Kalgoorlie in August 1986. She checked and amended my field-notes account. It was also checked by Fr Maurice Toop at Port Hedland the following month.

* * * * *

In 1967 the Little Sisters of the Poor opened a home for old people at Victoria Park, Kalgoorlie. That was the time when Aboriginal people, through the Commonwealth referendum, had gained citizenship rights, award wages, and 'drinking rights'. They came in from the country and camped on the 'fringes', especially along the pipeline that brings Kalgoorlie its water from the west. Aboriginal people came to the old people's home asking for food. About a dozen set up

camp in the laundry. The Little Sisters decided they must do something specifically for the Aboriginal fringe-dwellers.

In 1970 the Sisters built a Day Care Centre where the people could shower and get a change of clothes. They began to camp around it, sometimes as many as 200. Fr Maurice Toop, then parish priest of Boulder (older and formally distinct part of Kalgoorlie) began to sleep at the Centre to help protect the Sisters and the old people from young Aboriginal men who were often aggressively drunk. In 1972 he tried to help the people get themselves organised by starting an Aboriginal association, 'Yamatji Ngurra' (Friendship Place). It had its meetings, with food and some prayers, at the Day Care Centre. In 1973 he asked to be relieved of his parochial duties so as to become full-time chaplain in the Aboriginal apostolate.

The Little Sisters decided that the old Aboriginal people needed a nursing home of their own. With financial help from DAA and the Department of Health the present building was put up in 1974. It is adapted as far as possible to Aboriginal needs, especially in having a large general purpose room with open central fire-place (the 'Round-house'). To relieve the old and the Little Sisters from the pressure of so many people around the place, Fr Toop purchased some houses down town for the people to use. The plan only worked for six months. Then everybody was back at the Day Care Centre.

The plight of the Aborigines was extreme. Fr Toop said that he could name 120 Aborigines, young and old, who had died between 1974 and 1979. Others he did not know by name. He conducted most of the funerals, and also the 're-burials', i.e. second-burials. Six months or so after a burial, the people would gather at the grave 'to finish him off: they would move in a circle around the grave, chanting; then they would scabble over the surface with their fingers to obliterate all signs of the grave: then the surviving partner could re-marry.

In 1975 the Sister presently in charge, Sr Agatha, took over at the Centre. She is a tall spare Irish woman. She had wanted to work as a missionary and had done so in India. When she found that she was unable to get her visa renewed, she had been asked to come to Australia. She was horrified at the idea of coming to a rich country like Australia, not a mission, and to the gold-fields at that! However, at Victoria Park she had grown to love work with the old miners and prospectors.

Some of the Aborigines were asking Fr Toop to find a place for them to live, away from the drinking. Around 1975 the Little Sisters gained possession of a block of land with an abandoned hall on it at Grant's Patch, an old mining area one hour's drive north of Kalgoorlie. (New technology has since allowed the mine to be re-opened, re-processing the mullock heaps.) Fr Toop had gained permission to cut wood on it, and a man in town who owned a wood-cutting machine had offered to go into partnership with him. Fr Toop had started the venture to give the young Aboriginal men something to do. They asked to live out there. Fr Toop joined them, living in a tent and working with them on the wood. The Aboriginal men brought the cut wood into town and sold it for \$20 a load. The spirit out at Grant's Patch was excellent, and the inhabitants of Kalgoorlie marvelled at the change.

Fr Toop was too simple. He did not know that his partner had taken him in and that he was at the wrong end of a crooked deal. The men also took to drinking again: they were financing their habit by selling off the petrol they had got on credit.

Relief to the alcohol problem came through contact with an alcohol rehabilitation centre being run at that time at Wandering, about 100km south-east of Perth, by an Aboriginal woman from NSW, Val, married to a whiteman, Jim Bryant. A group came from Wandering by bus and stayed for three weeks. Twenty went back to Wandering with them. When the twenty returned from Wandering after three months, it was, Sr Agatha said, like a resurrection. They were new men, and proud to be so.

When Fr Toop was refused funds by DAA for a secure water supply at Grant's Patch, he was also confronted with a financial situation he had been totally unaware of, as he had left the finances to his white partner in town. The project was \$35,000 in arrears. Everything was sold, even his own personal utility truck. The archbishop offered him the parish of Osborne Park in Perth. He continued his Aboriginal work from there. The Yamatji Ngurra Association kept on going. Fr Toop and the chaplain in Perth, Fr Bryan Tiernan SAC, would come to Kalgoorlie every two months to make sure the fringe-dwellers were not being neglected.

In January 1981 at a meeting in the Round-house, two or three educated Aborigines living in Kalgoorlie said they did not want white leadership: they would take over the association and drop the name 'Yamatji Ngurra'. The priests withdrew.

NELEN YUBU

Very soon the fringe-dwellers were once more being neglected and again they started coming to Ngurra Karnpi for food. The Sisters wrote to the then Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Senator Chaney, himself a West Australian: DAA asked the Sisters to feed the fringe-dwellers until something could be arranged. This they did for one and a half years more. Meanwhile DAA opened a soup-kitchen in Kalgoorlie and constructed a small village, Ninga Mia, on the outskirts of town. It was dubbed by the nickname of 'Ninga' Jim Brennan of Leonora who sponsored the project.

An Aboriginal police-aide, Preston Thomas, and his wife Beverly were made managers. Preston excluded drunk and unruly people from the village, and the the people disliked him as a policeman. The fringe-dwellers were missing out and once more they were demanding food and care at Ngurra Karnpi, to the distress of the old and sick Aborigines who were living there. Sister Agatha would drive car-loads out to Ninga Mia, and sometimes they would refuse even to get out of the car. Of recent times relations between Ngurra Karnpi and Ninga Mia have improved greatly.

In illustration Sister Agatha told me the story of one Easter day when she was ill with flu herself and so busy caring for the old and sick patients that she could not get to the church services. On top of that Preston Thomas rang up looking for a pair of shoes for an old woman. Sr Agatha offered a pair of her own and told Preston the size. Having gained the knowledge he wanted Preston went off and bought a special pair of warm winter boots for Sr Agatha and came with his wife to present them to her.

One of the local problems is that the Aboriginal people are divided into factions and there is no strong leadership. In 1985 they could have got a seat on the local government council, but they fielded three competing candidates and split their vote.

The role of the Little Sisters is primarily a service to the aged Aborigines. Moreover, they try to help families with clothes and support; to provide or get jobs for young Aborigines; to improve relationships between Aborigines and whites.

Some of the Catholics among the workers at Ngurra Karnpi have begun a spiritual association, 'Friends of Jeanne Jugan' (foundress of the Little Sisters of the Poor): two Aboriginal girls, four white ones. They meet for a short period of prayer in the chapel at the beginning of the day. They also meet to study such things as the documents of Vatican II.

In August 1986 there were 16 old Aboriginal people in residence. Twenty two workers: three full-time, the rest part-time. Sr Agatha herself selects them. She does not require any religious affiliation, only that they be sensitive and caring. But only Catholics can be members of Friends of Jeanne Jugan.

Funding

The Department of Health covers running costs to a limited extent. In 1985 the deficit was \$7,000. The Home Missions Fund gave \$2,000 towards it: the rest had to be found by the Little Sisters of the Poor. Australian Catholic Relief (ACR) were asked to fund three part-time Aboriginal workers: to help Ngurra Karnpi and get training for themselves at the same time. ACR replied that their charter did not allow them to fund that sort of thing, i.e. employees.¹

Fr Maurice Toop

During 1984 the new bishop of Geraldton, Bishop Hickey, asked Maurice Toop to work in Geraldton diocese for a while as chaplain in the Aboriginal apostolate. After taking part in the Nungalinga College Orientation Course in May 1985 he took up residence at Meekatharra. However, in 1986 he asked to be relieved of the duty. In the course of my fact-finding journey around Australia I was able to stay a few days with him at Port Hedland, where he was 'doing supply' before returning to his home diocese of Perth. He believed it was better to get a religious congregation involved in the roving sort of chaplaincy work: this gives a better guarantee of continuity.²

He believes many of the Catholic pastoralists in Western Australia are worried about the land issue. As one said, We know we are living on their land, but don't know what can be done now. Some stations have handed over an old homestead for their former Aboriginal station-workers to use; others who may like to do likewise are deterred by the danger that can be posed to their families by wandering parties that camp in such places with grog. In the bad economic conditions for farmers, owners cannot afford to offer employment; and most residents on the stations are only managers.

Fr Toop observed that many parish clergy pay little or no attention to the Aborigines in their parishes. Some are racist, but the trouble with most is that they do not have an appropriate

missiology to know what to do. Some say they are already too busy: which only means that they give Aboriginal outreach a very low priority. In this regard it is interesting to compare the observations made by Hilton Deakin in his 1975 report to the Bishops Conference, **The Church and Aborigines** (1975:76-77).

ENDNOTES

1. This issue of the ACR charter is one that requires urgent and serious attention. When I was preparing for the June Lumko workshops in Darwin, in the name of the bishop of Darwin I approached ACR for funds, especially for those Aboriginal people who incurred a lot of expense in travelling a few thousand kilometres to Darwin and back, plus living expenses to cover a fortnight away from home. ACR replied in effect that its charter did not allow it to fund missiological and pastoral endeavours! We finally got funding from the German mission-aid society, Missio. However, Missio stated that this was a one-off grant: they thought the Australian church should have funds that would give this sort of support, and they said that they were writing to the Australian Bishops Conference to suggest that such support should be available. - In fact, on the advice of the Lumko Missiological Institute, before applying to Missio I had approached the Swiss Catholic Lenten Fund which has shown itself quite generous in regard to Lumko programs. The Swiss reply was kindly, but the gist of it was bemusement that a "rich country like Australia" should approach them for funds. They went on to suggest that I approach the local diocese, failing to notice apparently that I was writing on behalf of the bishop of Darwin!
2. In fact the Mill Hill Missionary, Fr Dirk Tolboom, stationed at Mt Magnet, took over pastoral care of the Meekatharra area from Fr Maurice Toop. Associated with him in pastoral outreach since 1986 are four Good Samaritan Sisters. (In 1986 they were Srs Therese Denny, Carmel Bourke, Val Deakin, Catherine Bell.)

* * * * *

W O N G A L A L A¹
(or The Noah Covenant)

Dan O'Donovan

Washes the surf through crags and reefs of thought,
leaving brine-flecked my rough untended hair.
Cavernous eyes, though weak and wasting now,
still wearily watch out northward to where
isles wait and listen, ay, and sometimes speak,
and wayward murmurings drift to me that say:
Go not away, Ancient, go not away.
Can we not utter us a fairer day?

Ungur, my mother, also presses me:
'Why stand you there, forever questioning?
Does cormorant delay to lay her eggs?
Or scorpion forbear to bare his sting?
Look how the palmy islands reach to you
whispering in the wind and in the spray:
Stay with us, Brave One, do not go away.
Can we not sing ourselves a fonder day?

One day a dove flew over from afar,
plucked a wild gum-twig from my bushy head,
returned in haste the wing-way she had come,
while from my hair the lightest fragrance spread.
Mocked the sea-silence as I strained to know,
mocked the salt humor of each beach and bay:
Way away, Purku, follow her away,
still will you ever find us at our play.

Five dingos howled at
the many-colored snake arched in the cloud.
They howl today.
And I stand
facing the islands
questioning.

NELEN YUBU

WONGALALA REFERENCE:

- 1 This poem is about the north Australian shore. It conceives of it as the wide brow of an Aboriginal elder.

Ungur is the mythological water-snake of the North Kimberley Wunambal people, a fertility figure.

Wongalala is, in fact, a deep waterhole in Kalumburu, where many of that people live. I thought it a pity that so beautiful a name should not be more widely known. If you search into the depths of Wongalala, you will find Ungur. Which is not to say (S)He is not also in the sea.

'Purku' is Walmajarri word for 'old man', a reverential title, and is pronounced **Burgoo**, (first 'u' as the 'ou' in **should**.) I have heard it used in Darwin, so presume it has more general currency.

* * * * *

(continued from page 13).

also commented that many of the older Aboriginal people are too frightened to shop in the larger centres, and those who are unable to read do not feel comfortable asking for assistance from strangers. They also felt that the other centres were geared to the European way of budgeting rather than being on a person-to-person basis. They noted that certain things they stopped buying (e.g. tinned fruit) due to lack of money, are now once again affordable.

Mungari applied to the Lotteries Commission for \$12,000. The Lotteries Commission provided \$5,000 which has been used for welding, freezer, cash register, shelving and painting. All equipment is secondhand. The initial food stock amounted to \$2,500.

Currently Mungari finds itself in need of \$5,000 to be spent on increasing the size and range of stock. It is hoped that Mungari will be able to extend its range to include diabetic and low-salt products due to the high incidence of vascular, renal, liver and obesity problems, and diabetics amongst Aboriginal people in the Kimberleys.

* * * * *

MUNGARI

Broome Community Food Centre

UNDER THE UMBRELLA of Bishop Raible Co-Op. Assoc. (both are non-profit making ventures), Mungari opened on 20 July 1988 and is presently open between 2 pm and 5 pm, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday. It provides a range of dry and frozen food items to people on low incomes (pensioners, beneficiaries and those eligible for a Health Care card) in the Broome district.

Mungari aims to foster a social justice philosophy based on human rights, including the right to adequate and affordable food. It seeks to give people the opportunity to buy food within their budget as well as to participate in the operation of the centre at whatever level they choose. In this way it seeks to respect the dignity of the individual.

Background

It has been apparent for some time that people on low incomes have serious difficulties managing financially with the spiralling cost of living. The situation in the Kimberleys is exacerbated as the distance from markets and built-in labour and freight costs inflate prices of all commodities and services far above the norm.

There are many families in Broome living below the poverty line who are forced to accept government assistance because their income is insufficient to meet basic needs such as food, clothing and shelter. On 1 January 1988 statistics showed 700 people received pensions and a further 600 were in receipt of pensions in the Broome shire. It is estimated that 60% of these people are of Aboriginal descent.

Broome's supply of emergency relief funds have been exhausted and DCS have tightened their guidelines for emergency relief to

Published in **Broome News** during 1988: report of an interview with Sue Luketina. 'Mungari' is Djaru for 'food'.

exclude singles and couples without children, making food barely affordable for those whose financial situations are in crisis.

The Bishop Raible Association was established fifteen years ago to enable local people particularly Aboriginal families on low incomes, to purchase household goods (furniture, electrical, kitchenware etc.) at reasonable rates and conditions.

The extension of the Association's service to include foodstuffs has not proved to be difficult administratively nor in a practical sense. Tasks necessary to open the food centre included painting, fixing shelves, cleaning, stacking shelves, electrical work, pricing goods as well as holding meetings to make various decisions.

These tasks were undertaken by a number of local people both individually and collectively, mainly on a voluntary basis. Of the twenty or so people involved fifteen are Aboriginal people and approximately the same number are in receipt of DSS payments).

As well as providing a much needed service to low income earners the Food Centre will provide training and experience in a range of marketable skills for those involved. It must be noted that there are very few training or educational opportunities available in Broome. As the Centre will be run largely by volunteers from the ranks of the unemployed, their job prospects will be enhanced by their participation in the various aspects of the Centre.

As stated previously, users of the Centre would be restricted to those who qualify for a Health Card. The scheme will thus have minimum impact on local business and will be a service to those who cannot afford to pay normal market prices, rather than an alternative shopping outlet for the whole community.

Second Harvest (Inc.)

The establishment of the low cost community food centre, Mungari, has been done with the advice and encouragement of Second Harvest (Aust.) Inc. Mungari purchases its goods through Second Harvest and maintains close links with them. Second Harvest is well established in WA and has been instrumental in establishing and providing ongoing service to fifteen community food centres throughout the State since 1981. Second Harvest believes in social justice for all and runs on a participatory model.

Development

It is hoped that Mungari will not only provide low cost food but will also be an experience of community building and participation on all levels. It is envisaged that the Centre will provide employment in meaningful tasks, work for people otherwise unemployed so that they may develop and improve specific skills.

Hopefully, Mungari will continue to encourage local Aboriginal people to be involved and their participation and contributions will in turn help to build a sense of worth, self-image and achievement.

In addition, it is hoped that the experience of establishing and maintaining the Centre will provide people with a sense of belonging to a group and they will be able to experience a sense of ownership to the project.

Sustainability

Provided that the range and quantity of food is continued and expanded, it is felt that people will continue to use Mungari on a growing basis. There are plenty of volunteers to complete necessary tasks and it is seen that in time employment opportunities will be created.

Work for local people on Community Service Orders is also under consideration. Negotiations are presently taking place with the Bidadanga Aboriginal Community regarding Mungari's selling fresh fruit and vegetables grown at the Community. Bidadanga currently has seven workers in the garden and are hoping to sell produce in an effort to increase their independence. The Bidadanga Community is approximately 200km south of Broome.

Establishment Costs

Suitable premises for storage and sale of items have been provided by the Bishop Raible Association. This has proved convenient as local Aboriginal people know the area and feel 'more comfortable' shopping there. These people noted that they find Mungari to be not only cheaper and smaller but more friendly than Broome's shopping centres, as they know the people at Mungari. They

(continued on page 10).

HUGO RAHNER'S ESSAYS

Gospel's meeting with Mystery-religions

Dan O'Donovan

THE BIBLE ABOUNDS with mythical elements, deliberately taken over from extra-biblical sources, and doctrinally integrated by Israel's sacred writers.

The folkloric story of Balaam's Ass (Num.22,22-35) is a classic instance in the Pentateuch. Its lesson: whereas Balaam, for all his gifts as seer, could not see this spiritual thing (the angel of the Lord) staring him in the face, the she-ass could (v.33). Three times Balaam struck her with his stick. "Then the Lord opened the ass's mouth and she said to Balaam: 'What have I done to you, that you have struck me these three times?' " Reminding one of another question later on: "O my people, what have I done to you? In what have I wearied you? Answer me!" (Mic.6,3, with its direct reference in v.5 to Balaam). And of that other: "...If I have spoken wrongly, bear witness to the wrong; but if rightly, why do you strike me?" (Jn 18,23).

"...And the she-ass said to Balaam: 'Am I not your she-ass, upon which you have ridden all your life long to this day? Was I ever accustomed to [make sport of] you?' And he said, 'No' (v.30)."

The author of the Yahwistic strand of the Pentateuch found pleasure in making animals talk. (Cf.Gen.3,1ff).

In reference to this passage, Scripture scholar David Stanley speaks of "its awkward insertion into the movement of the Balaam epic",¹ and goes on:

Fr Dan O'Donovan, the pastor at Fritzroy Crossing, WA, is a frequent contributor to **Nelen Yubu**.

His reason for reproducing the story of Balaam's ass is the instruction of his reader upon a point of OT doctrine of first-rate importance. It is the theological principle that God can, and does, make use of His creation, animate and inanimate, rational and irrational, as bearers of His Word of salvation to men. This sensitivity to the symbolic nature of the world and of human history, its quasi-sacramental value in revealing Yahweh's salvific activity on behalf of His covenanted people, enabled Israel's sacred writers to lay under tribute all manner of stories relating the sum of man's experiences in his encounters with God. This point of view, which is so characteristic of Israel's inspired writers, is essentially theological and didactic. It is this attitude...which reveals the famous Hebrew talent for successfully assimilating, by means of the strong solvent of her unshakeable faith in the one God, so much that she found in the mythologies and pagan culture of her Near Eastern neighbors.²

One can read these words, written in 1958, in the light of the clarification by the second Vatican Council of the Church's traditional position on biblical inerrancy: "...the books of Scripture must be acknowledged as teaching firmly, faithfully and without error that truth which God wanted put into the sacred writings for the sake of our salvation..."³

There are clearer examples of direct gleanings by Israel from other folklores and religious mythologies. The Book of Psalms alone contains quite a number.

The present article, the first in a series, is not however about mythical elements in the Scriptures, but rather about how the early Church related with the varying mythologies it met with in its evangelising mission.

As Paul was mysteriously "impeded by the Holy Spirit" (Acts 16,6.7) from directing his steps toward further Asia, and as no record remains of the apostle Thomas' activities or methods in India, our investigation must be confined to the world of greco-roman culture which had made its own religious assimilations, notably from Persia.

To this end I shall now relay the general content of a valuable collection of essays on the subject by Hugo Rahner, *Griechische*

Mythen in Christlicher Deutung (Greek Myths in Christian Interpretation) Rhein-Verlag Zürich, 1945. Rather than directly translating it in toto, I shall use the main body of the book insofar as it has a bearing on our own north Australian contemporary interests. Thus, as well as conveying Rahner's own thought, I shall be selecting and reorganising.

In the opening chapter (pp.5-72) the author argues (in 1945!) for the possibility and need in the world of an authentic christian humanism. He believes we can benefit from observing how the ancient greco-roman religious culture was seen by the Church of the first centuries as becoming **fully itself** only in its incorporation into Christ. It can serve as paradigm or model for modern inculturation of every kind.

Early christianity, he says, nurtured above all on Paul's theology, found itself speaking in a world heavy with the air of mystery from the "Mystery Religions". He quotes C Clement: "Christianity distinguished itself from the mystery religions by its historical nature and the altogether different meaning it attached to the appearing and the death of its redeemer...; so much so that it can be said with Heinrici, 'If someone were to enquire as to the overall character of primitive christianity, one should say that, rather than being itself a mystery religion, it was anti-mysteryreligions'."⁴ One can nevertheless detect in Paul himself, in Ignatius and other proto-christian writers, an undeniable accommodating effort at "a subdued sort of mystery language."

In what Rahner calls the second period, i.e. of Gospel-Mysteryreligions interaction, corresponding roughly with the third century, we find that the Mysteryreligions have become a widespread formative factor in the Empire. They have also gained admittance into the neoplatonic theosophy and mysticism. At the same time, in the Church theology and cult have taken more defined shape than before. It is to this period and only to this, that we must look for an immediate statement of the Gospel vs. Mysteryreligions case.

The christian **apologists** with Tertullian at their head fought the Mysteries as "diabolical imitations" of the christian Truth. Opponents of fast-growing gnosticism revealed how the priests of this new teaching mixed christian elements in with the myths and rites of the mysteryreligions.

The **theologians**, after Clement of Alexandria, began on the other hand to address the Mystery of the Word to greek-speaking people in

images they (the mysteryreligion Greeks) felt at home with. From their theological understanding, all subsequent Greek Christianity took shape.

Thus it happened that through apologists and theologians alike, by different ways, a certain "Mystery" - terminology found its way into Church language, a fact corroborated by more recent research into the history of the words "mysterion" and "sacramentum".

The third phase covers the decline-period of the ancient religions. Here we see the Gospel in full ascendancy at last, with opposing voices like that of emperor Julian, or Porphyry the Alexandrian neoplatonist, becoming fewer and fewer. This is the period of the mysteryreligions' really coming into their own within the Church. Many expressions, many liturgical rites are there to attest it. Pseudo-Denys the Areopagite is a good illustration. His language and vision were to exert a lasting influence. But even before him we have only to listen to John Chrysostom preaching about the "horrifying and freezing mysteries", to note the dramatic change in liturgical forms in the so-called Apostolic Constitution, or in Basil to see that the Hellenism that was, had slowly evolved into the Byzantine Word, bringing with it what it had most treasured, christianised now, and radiant with another Light.

Rahner then sets down the two feet of his thesis. They are the twin principles the early Church established as basic to any assimilation/integration of foreign religious elements into the christian "novum" (new thing):

I shall try to show that Christianity, in its divinely revealed nature in Christ, has nothing essentially to do, either in its origin or in its development, with the nature of the ancient Mysteryreligions. I shall thus make perfectly clear the complete disparity between them. But I shall then have to describe how, from the third century on, the early Church went to meet the mystery-loving Greek, by presenting him with the Church's Mysteries in his own religious language and imagery. "Come, bids mystagogue Clement of Alexandria in the famous mystery-chapter 12 of his *Protrepiticos*, Come,...I will show you the Logos, and the Mysteries of the Logos, and I will explain them in the images familiar to you. Here is the Mountain loved by God, no longer, like Kithairon, a stage for tragedies, but set

NELEN YUBU

aside for the dramas of Truth...O how truly holy are these Mysteries, how much purer this Light! I shall become holy by initiation into the Mysteries. The Lord, himself as hierophant, unveils the sacred symbols. And with the angels, you will one day dance the roundelay about the uncreated, immortal and truly one God; and God's Word will join in our songs of praise".⁵

Rahner goes on to single out Chalcedon's description of the nature of the hypostatic union in Christ as particularly helpful in understanding the correlation of the Mystery (read Christianity) and the Mysteries (read Mysteryreligions).

That fourth ecumenical Council (451) tells us that, in the Word Incarnate, two natures, the divine and the human, exist "asynchytōs...adiairetōs" (unconfusedly...undividedly).⁶ The two natures, that is, were not so united as to be con-fused from two into one; nor yet were they so separate as to be di-vided, forming two persons. They were unified in an historically singular way for which a new name had to be coined: the "hypostatic" union, i.e. union of the two natures in the one "Person" (hypostasis) of the eternal "Son".

In the question we are dealing with, says Rahner, it is likewise necessary to hold to the theandric middle ground between an all-too-human mixing, or con-fusing, in the sense of genetic or noetic dependence (of Gospel on Mysteryreligions) on the one hand, as though Christianity were no more than one other form of the universal religious phenomenon; and on the other an un-human separation as though the nature of Christianity were simply of a greatness incommensurable with any human work.

In this he anticipated the second Vatican Council and Pope Paul VI's apostolic exhortation "Evangelii nuntiandi", both of which declare the first principle of inculturation to be that very incarnation law which is embodied in Christ's person. As I have treated of this at some length before ⁷, we can now move on to the remainder of Rahner's book.

First he speaks of "The Mystery of the Cross" (pp.73-100); then of "The Mystery of Baptism" (pp.101-124). Six chapters follow, each on a subject from greek, or "near-eastern" mythology which the Church accepted into its vision as enriching (pp.125-486). We shall be working backward, leaving the chapters on the Cross and Baptism

to the end. We shall start with his two chapters on the cults of sun and moon.

In a fascinating study, **Feuer und Feuerzeuge im Sage und Brauch der Nordwest-Australier** (Fire and Fire-tools in the lore and custom of the north-west Australians)⁸, Ernest A Worms advanced the theory, on etymological grounds, that underneath the Bardi people's story of the eaglehawk who was the first to bring them fire (from the sun? cf.p.159), there seems to lie "an ancient sun-culture stratum", which "today, in the Kimberley, has become partly overlaid by more recent [than 1950] influences".

One thinks of the Aboriginal flag. See also the photo-illustration of Painting I in my article **Marie Minga: theologian in paint**, in **Nelen Yubu** 34 (1988) p.9, and the comment.

This suggests the potential value of sun-imagery, sun-song, sun-dance or liturgical rite in the creation of today's Aboriginal christian proclamation.

The early Church's adoption and use of this powerful nature symbol should be of special interest, therefore. Rahner treats of it in chapter 4 of his work.

(to be continued)

NOTES:

1. D M Stanley, Balaam's Ass, or a Problem in New Testament Hermeneutics, *Catholic Biblical Quarterly*, 20 (1958) p.54.
2. *Ibid.*
3. A good footnote explains that 'this is not a quantitative distinction, as though some parts treated of salvation (and were inerrant), while others gave merely natural knowledge (and were fallible). It is formal and applies to the whole text...' The note should be read in full. (Walter M. Abbott, *The Documents of Vatican II*, Chapman, London, 1966, p.119).
4. C Clement, *Der Einfluss der Mysterienreligionen auf das älteste Christentum*, Giessen, 1913, p.81f. (Rahner, p.46).
5. *Protreptikos XII*, 119,1-120,2.
6. Denzinger-Rahner, *Enchiridion Symbolorum*, ed.1960, § 148.
7. Cf. *The Inter-religious dialogue*, **Nelen Yubu** 11(1982) especially pp.8-11.
8. *Anthropos*, 45 (1950) pp.145-164.

* * * * *

HEALING AT PORT KEATS

John Hilary Martin op

PORT KEATS IS AN Aboriginal township of about 1,000 people if we include the surrounding area, located in the Northern Territory about 250 km southwest of Darwin. Unlike most Aboriginal communities, several tribes live together at Port Keats and not just one. The five major tribes at Port Keats are similar in culture although with some notable differences in external expression; the didgeridoo for example, is played at ceremonies by some of the tribes but not by all. Linguistic differences are more pronounced going beyond simple variations in dialect to involve complete difference of language. Murrinh-patha is the lingua franca spoken by all in the area, and along with English is the language used in the local school system. The tribal pluralism at Port Keats is a factor which constantly serves to complicate relationships between the tribes, and between them and the European community. Port Keats is a closed community in the sense that only Europeans with permission of the council may reside there. Normally this permission is granted only to those employed by the local Aboriginal Council, such as teachers, nurses, priests and religious of the local church.

Toward the end of last year a number of the white staff were planning to leave; perhaps they felt that they needed to leave, or for whatever reason knew that they would not be returning to the community. This was not remarkable in itself since a turnover of European staff is planned for and felt to be desirable. But there

Fr Hilary Martin is a Dominican from USA. He did his PhD at UCLA in history. He has taught at the Graduate Theological Union, Berkeley, Cal. and in Australia on a commuting basis at YU since 1982. His research interest is in primal religion. He is engaged in ongoing field-work in the Port Keats region.

HEALING AT PT KEATS

had been a number of difficulties at Port Keats in the last months of the year which had generated anger and frustration among the several groups living there. The Elders at Port Keats did not want people to leave on a sad note, but to look back on their time at Port Keats positively.

Traditionally it is the role of the Elders to ensure that a community is running well, to keep individuals from fighting and to offer strength and support to those who need it. At the instigation of the Elders a ceremony was to be performed which was an offering of their strength and support in making peace. It was offered to anyone who sought it, Europeans as well as Aborigines. This was a traditional Aboriginal way of ensuring that things were running well and would continue to run well in the community.

The specific occasion for the ceremony revolved about the difficulties of a small number of individuals then living at Port Keats, and while the rights and wrongs of the issue were not trivial and ran deep, it would take us too far afield to try to sort them out there. In any event they were not the central reason why the Elders conducted the ceremony, and indeed the particular issue was not even mentioned in the course of the ceremony or in preparations for it.

Those offering their strength and support were Elders of the community; not **all** who might be described as Elders at Port Keats were involved (that was not thought necessary), only a representative number from the different tribes. Those Elders who took part included Freddie Cumaiyi, Billy Parmbuk, Edward Nemarluk, Thomas Kungiung, Gabriel Kungul, and Boniface Perdjert who is Deacon of the Church at Port Keats as well as being a community Elder.

The ceremony was held in the church at Port Keats, a focus of Aboriginal and European worship. Since this ceremony was not a ritual following any pattern in use in the Church, it might be well to describe the ceremony here in some detail. The Elders, who had assembled first, sat in front of the altar of the church facing those who gradually gathered before them. There was a crucifix on the centre of the altar behind them, flanked by lighted candles. (The candles had been lit before the ceremony began, but no particular reference need be made to that since **lighted** candles always accompanied any service in the church and would be something familiar to Europeans). When all had gathered the ceremony began

NELEN YUBU

with Deacon Boniface offering a prayer (which took the form of an instruction) in both Murrinh-patha and English. He spoke to both the Europeans and the Aboriginals who were seated on the ground before him. In the instruction he explained something of the traditional role of the Elders in keeping and in making peace in a community and of their desire on this occasion to leave 'a good remembrance' in the hearts of the European community of Port Keats, particularly those who would be going away 'for a long time'. But this peace [a reconciliation] was intended for all and would be extended to anyone who sought it. After the prayer was concluded there was a period of silence with people sitting quietly in their places. After a time individuals, one by one, approached the Elders to receive their **blessing**, i.e. some words of encouragement uttered quietly in a low voice to each individual personally with a clasping of hands, or a touch like a laying on of hands.

During this time most in the congregation approached Boniface, although not all. Some approached one Elder only, or perhaps two, while others made sure of touching each one of them. It did not seem to be necessary to approach them all. In the prayer which Boniface had offered in the beginning people were encouraged after greeting the Elders to pray quietly before the altar where the Blessed Sacrament was reserved. It is easy to see in this suggestion an implication that Jesus, too, is an **Elder** who should be approached, but this was never explicitly stated. It is a connection which a European might easily make, but the relation of Jesus, the Elders, and the ancestors is an extremely complex one and beyond the scope of this description.

When an opportunity had been given for all who wished to do so, to approach the Elders (which took quite a long time since many Aboriginals and Europeans were present), Boniface announced that the Aboriginal community wanted to present another expression of its encouragement and support, particularly for those who would be leaving Port Keats. It was hoped that it would leave them with a happy remembrance as they went away. This expression took the form of two dances.

The first dance was performed by dancing women (Murrinh-patha). Although not painted, they were accompanied by **nanthi mirnka**, i.e. clapsticks, and the singing of songs in Murrinh-patha. (**Singers** are an identifiable and established group, as distinct, for example, from those who would be more identified as **dancers**). The dancers

formed a semi-circle facing the Elders and their dance pattern was traditional to Port Keats. The second dance was performed by Marringarr women ('accompanied', as a European might put it, by three singing men using clapsticks and a **marluk**, i.e. a didgeridoo). Six dancers entered from the side door of the church to be joined by three who approached from the back. While the rhythm was different from the first dance its pattern was also a traditional one and the dancers also formed a group facing the Elders.

After the dancing was concluded people began to talk quietly to one another with encouraging words, presumably to ask forgiveness where need be. This began slowly, almost spontaneously, and after a while it became a general greeting ceremony. After a time Boniface called the whole community together to form a large circle and to join hands [a sign of unity] to sing the 'Our Father' in the traditional tone used at Port Keats. The ceremony then came to its logical close.

Europeans would be impressed with the economy of effort. Much of the reconciliation would have occurred naturally and briefly in what was said by individuals who greeted and received each other at the greeting part of the ceremony after the dancing was over. The ceremony provided a structure in which such mutual interchange and reconciliation could easily take place. While these personal exchanges might be private enough (who would know what was said in the informal exchanges at the greeting part of the ceremony, they were also public and had some authority behind them since they were made between people who had first approached the Elders and been received by them in the earlier portion of the ceremony. The offering of strength and support which the Elders offered in their position as Elders was crucial, then, in giving the ceremony its effect. In a sense reconciliation could not go on, or at least not go on at the same level, until they had called for such a ceremony.

Church-goers (European and Aboriginal) might notice similarities with christian patterns of reconciliation; they might even **read them into** the ceremony in ways not intended by all. As members of **any** community know, reconciliation is always an ongoing process (anger and frustration between people always re-arises), and is one which occurs at various levels. 'Reconciliation' can take the form of mere politeness, being little more than an armed truce, or it can be a bridge-building effort involving resolution of major differences and restoration of friendship.

Listening to comments made after a ceremony is one way of trying to ascertain what was in the minds of those present at it and what effect they thought it was supposed to have. No scientific assessment was attempted, but comments spontaneously offered ran the gamut of all possibilities. Most thought that the ceremony was 'helpful', which might translate as politeness and possibly a bit more. Some thought it would help them keep in with their mates. Some found a deep sense of unity with all those who were there. As one Aboriginal put it there was a feeling that, 'for a few moments there was neither white nor black'.

Notice was taken also of individuals who were **absent** from the ceremony, perhaps the fact being kept in mind for future reference. Strength and support of those with experience are constantly required to keep a community working together and to prevent it from falling into faction and strife. Most everyone talked in positive terms about the ceremony. It was a **good thing**, something to be done again.

* * * * *

PICT ANALYTICAL INDEX

When Collins-Dove planned the PICT publications, they decided to omit any analytical indices. As I had not been informed of this decision, I prepared an analytical index for my part of the series, **Ministry Among Aboriginal People**. I do not think works that make any pretence at scholarship should lack an analytical index. It makes them so much easier to use. It is a poor substitute, but in case any **Nelen Yubu** reader would like to have such an index, we include a print-out in loose leaf form.

- MJW

VIDEO REVIEW

M J WILSON msc

Introduction

In the previous number of **Nelen Yubu** (No.36) we advertised briefly two videos that had been brought to our notice. One was the recording of a presentation of the Lumko program done by Sr Elizabeth Moore fmm. She is stationed on Palm Island, where Fr Mick Peters has been using Lumko ideas in his work with the Palm Island community. Elizabeth attended the Darwin Lumko workshops over the last two weeks in June. In August she gave an overview of the program to a meeting of Wontulp-Bi-Buya tutors at Cairns. (In the **Nelen Yubu** advertisement I had wrongly situated her presentation in Townsville.) Fr David Ryan sj agreed readily to review the video. He attended the Lumko workshops himself in Darwin. They occurred at the time that he was completing an experiential half-year as tutor at Nungalinya College in Darwin.

The other video was a presentation of the Aboriginal celebration of Pentecost at Violet Valley in the East Kimberley in 1986.

* * * * *

'LUMKO AND SMALL CHRISTIAN COMMUNITIES': introduction to Lumko pastoral program presented by Sr Elizabeth Moore fmm at Tutors Workshop, Cairns, 2-4 August 1988 [90 min. VHS], also 'Adult Education Methods' [60 minutes] by Dr Robert Bos; produced and distributed by Nungalinya College, Darwin (\$20).

Review by **DAVID RYAN sj**

Elizabeth Moore gives the viewer, in 90 minutes, an insight into a style of being church.

After two weeks intensive study of Lumko theory, after several years living in a Lumko style church community on Palm Island, Queensland, she is well equipped to introduce this tool to tutors.

The Aboriginal and Islander audience have come from remote islands and settlements and will have returned to their communities with something different this time.

The students they tutor in scripture, theology and discipleship will hear about small christian communities - a way of harnessing the leadership skills, the compassion and dreams of the people of God.

Elizabeth's presentation begins with a question: 'What is your dream of Church?' The audience throughout show great interest by asking and answering questions, and so clearly value what they learn of the Lumko program.

Of what value is this presentation, you might ask, to other audiences? To any group who wishes to know (1) how the church has organised itself; (2) how it organises itself now; (3) what it would look like if it returned to some of those early ways; (4) how a group gets some of those ways started; (5) what might people need to be trained in; (6) how the Lumko manuals might help: then this video is of interest.

Discovering the facts about church history, models, small christian communities, gospel-sharing, non-dominating leadership, community ministries, awareness programs, would be expected to take several weeks. Trying some of these things out would need much longer time. Elizabeth wasn't really **doing** the program, but trying to give a group of tutors an **overview** of it. Hence it was all compressed, with little time for discovering details in the posters, discussion etc. In real life the facilitator would not dominate the presentation to anything like the extent that one might in a presentation condensed into one morning's work.

Elizabeth continues the presentation, giving Jesus' answers to 'What is your dream of Church?': 'may they all be one' (Jn 17:20-26). People's responses through the ages were, firstly to live (Acts 2-4), then divide people, and finally fragment them, leaving a building and one minister who provides all. Of recent times the minister in the Catholic Church has become more open to advice through the institution of parish councils. People have asked: 'What is the Church?', and then found tasks. Others have found support in small groups. This leads to the next area: 'What makes a small christian community?' Two models of church illustrate the need to (a) meet in houses, (b) share the gospel, (c) do some action, (d) link with the large group, and the pitfalls of not having all four ingredients.

VIDEO REVIEW

The audience responds to questions of their own communities and so the models become more clearly defined. Questions about the advantages and disadvantages of models bring home the difference in styles of leadership and the idea of a community ministering to itself.

The principle, 'We are Christians to serve others' underlying this tool, only works if the minister is an animator, not an authority. The people to be animated will be part-time ministers, but they will need training. As adults they go back to experience from which to draw lessons about what is helpful and what they are good at. Their overriding concern is, 'Can I build the community?', not, 'Can I get promoted?'

The need for awareness program now becomes apparent. A minister who is aware, lay leaders who are aware, will not animate the community unless the community is aware of the usefulness of small Christian communities in building up the Church. The three-legged stool reinforces the picture of the quality that is required.

In the last part of her presentation, Elizabeth asks the audience which model of community education would lead to the sort of community Lumko envisages. The priest choosing leaders or calling for volunteers is compared with the parish council educating the whole parish, or only those neighbourhood groups who requested it. The audience helps the viewer clarify the slight but significant differences in the four approaches.

The Revd David Thompson from Nungalinya College, Darwin, illustrates well how his sample of the written materials from South Africa give fuller treatment on leadership (**Developing Shared Ministry**), on using the weekly readings (**Christian Community and its Leaders**), on awareness programs (**God Renews the World**), on leaders' personal life (**Spiritual Growth; Spiritual Formation**), on skills (**Care of the Sick; Preaching**).

The viewer is left with appetite whetted, the basic vision clear, and a desire to go back over how 'this can come from that; and, if we do this, we need that'.

NELEN YUBU

"PENTECOST AT VIOLET VALLEY": Catholic Aboriginal communities celebrate Pentecost at Violet Valley, 1986; produced and distributed by Bro. Don Webb CFC, PO Box 154, Broome WA 6725 (50 min. VHS), \$35.

Review by **MARTIN WILSON msc**

In 1983 George Sturt, a leader of the Red Hill community near Halls Creek in the Kimberleys, suggested that the Catholic Aboriginal communities in the area celebrate Pentecost in the style of a traditional Aboriginal ceremony, that is, that it be a big celebration that people travel from near and far to take part in. In the modern world most people cannot afford to spend weeks in celebration, as Aboriginal people used to do in the old days, but the white Australian style of compressing it all into one and a half hours at the most cannot do justice to the occasion in the view of Aboriginal people.

The first Kimberley celebrations of Pentecost were held at Rockhole, which had been the site of the first Catholic mission in the East Kimberley. In 1985 the celebration shifted to Violet Valley near Turkey Creek. That occasion was written up by Sr Clare Ahern rsj and published in **Nelen Yubu** No.25, pp.17-24, under the title of "New Hope on the Pentecost Road". The following year's celebration was again at Violet Valley. This time the event was recorded on video by, presumably, the Christian Brothers from Nulungu College in Broome. The same pattern was followed as at Violet Valley the previous year, except that adults who were baptised in the 1985 ceremony were confirmed during the 1986 one. The commentary was prepared by Sr Clare Ahern. Actually much of the text of the commentary comes from her **Nelen Yubu** article written in description of the 1985 Pentecost. The commentary is spoken by the beautifully modulated voice of Esther Bevan, an Aboriginal woman from Broome.

The video covers the arrival of people on the evening of Pentecost; preparation for the Reconciliation ceremony that evening; waking up on Pentecost morning; preparation of the dancers before the Pentecost Mass; selected parts of the Mass, e.g. entrance procession and processions with gospel-book and offerings, dancing, conferring of Confirmation, Communion; the fire ceremony and assorted dancing on Pentecost night; departure next morning. The

VIDEO REVIEW

visuals have an entrancing appearance of water-colours. I do not know if this was something peculiar to the condition of my copy or an effect artfully produced by the use of filters or the simple by-play of Kimberley light and heat. Whatever the explanation might be, the result is most attractive, especially the early morning scenes as the camp of visitors starts to stir on Pentecost morning.

The dubbed commentary sound-track is pleasant and clear, but the on site sound recording is marred by the poor quality of the portable public address system used at the ceremony - which of course was employed for its usefulness and practicality in a bush setting.

The video has been edited intelligently and sensitively, and it is marvellous that people who may never have the chance to visit the Kimberleys can share in and marvel at the emergence of an indigenous Aboriginal church - rising out of the ground before our very eyes!

I have also been able to view an unedited video of the 1988 Pentecost. I would hope that this too will soon become available as it has several features of great interest, particularly the way some of the artists presented their paintings during Mass, retracing the lines with their fingers as they do with their sacred boards and giving thereby remarkably effective homilies. This video (also at Violet Valley) contains a lot more footage of dancing in the evening in which two features are worth particular note: active participation of young people, and the men's dancing with the pictures they had painted held across their shoulders.

* * * * *

SUBSCRIPTIONS NOTICE

Enclosed within the envelope that brings **Nelen Yubu** No.37 (the last for this year) to you there is a **Subscription Renewal Letter** that indicates what you might owe us in view of 1989's four issues.

Would you please send your subscriptions to the NYMU Secretary at 4/17 Jersey Ave, Leura NSW 2780.

We thank you for your support.

SECRETARY'S DESK

above the water-level. I was high up on the river bank but was hailed and persuaded to slither down the muddy slope to see what had been found. Not very impressed, I nevertheless congratulated the finder who promptly presented me with the writhing turtle. "Take it up to the truck", I was peremptorily ordered. Now, slithering up a steep, squelching bank with a snapping turtle trying for a bite at you is not my idea of a lazy fishing trip. Had I been game, the animal would have taken a flying leap down into the river. Finally, with gear loaded up and a marked absence of barramundi, we set off back to the mission to present it to some of the girls for their supper. I had to hold the protesting turtle during that long drive and became heartily sick of the advice being given by the driver as to the correct method of handling weaving reptiles. I said if he didn't drive faster he'd probably be on the receiving end of turtle gift -- my hands were aching and my temper at boiling point. That turtle had taken an instant dislike to me and was determined to attack me. Its furious eye assailed me, it lurched and struggled and took advantage of every opportunity to catch me out. It was the boss, not me. And it made threatening gestures that left me in no doubt of its intentions.

At last, the mission! The first person I saw was my friend Miriam-Rose, and I gave her an accurate rundown of the afternoon's antic, with embellishments and furious action. She thought it hilarious, laughingly calling the others to come and listen, with very little sympathy for my ordeal! Finally I got rid of the animal and the young girls went off to arrange for their supper. An hour later Father Wilson dropped by my office to tell me that the story of my turtle was being acted out, coroborree-fashion, down the road! I felt that NYMU had gone down in history -- we had featured in a coroboree! But thereafter I stuck strictly to barra fishing.

I intend to spend Christmas this year at home in the beautiful Blue Mountains, and so I take this opportunity to wish you, from my mountain eyrie, a very Happy Christmas and abundant blessings in 1989.

Secretary Keren.

BULLETIN BOARD

Fr Dan O'Donovan is in Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital, Nedlands (Perth, WA 6009) with multiple leg fractures after a car accident on the road from Fitzroy Crossing to Broome for the retreat. Will probably be there until January.

Mgr Hilton Deakin, presently Vicar General in Melbourne, is seriously ill (aneurism) in St Vincent's Hospital, Melbourne. Hilton did his anthropology field-work at Kalumburu; in 1974 did a survey of the Aboriginal apostolate for the bishops; and has been helping a Melbourne Catholic Aboriginal group get itself organised.

At the moment of writing the third International Lumko Course is being conducted in Lesotho. It is being attended by Sr Delores O'Sullivan SSpS (who will be at Daly River in 1989), Sr Clare Ahern rsj (of Mirrilingki, Turkey Creek). Also by MSC priests from Eastern Papua, Joe Ensing and Russell Andersen; and on invitation from Lumko itself, Fr Kevin Barr msc, who is also doing some retreat work in the Irish MSC diocese in Northern Transvaal. Next year's course will be attended by John Fallon msc (present pastor of Daly River) and Laurie Bissett msc.

YTU: This last semester Martin Wilson conducted two courses in Aboriginal studies: one an anthropological-sociological overview, attended by some 18 persons (only two male and only one a seminarian); the other in the Pastoral Department, on Ministry Among Aboriginal People (five participants). Several of the participants were doing studies after active work in the Aboriginal apostolate: Srs Eileen Quade rsm (after teaching in Bourke), Mary Broadley fmm (Mt Isa). In 1989 YTU plans to offer a combined study of 'Mission and Ministry in a Multi-Faith Australian Society': on Buddhism and Aboriginal religion. The Buddhism part will be presented by Peter Wilkinson svd; at this stage it is unknown who will conduct the Aboriginal part.

FROM THE SECRETARY'S DESK . . .

An unhappy shock to hear of Fr Dan O'Donovan's bad car accident in September on his way to the Priests' Retreat in Broome. Fr Dan is now in hospital near Perth with broken bones and much pain. We wish him well and he knows he has the prayers of very many of us. It seems he was fortunate to escape with his life, and for that we are deeply grateful.

Many thanks from NYMU for kindly messages and enquiries from Fr John Fallon, Daly River, who is preparing for his sabbatical next year and plans to visit many countries in the course of his studies; Fr Alan Corry, Nhulunbuy; Br Ken Gallagher, Darwin; Br Garnet Groves, Daly River; Br John Pye, Bathurst Island; Fr Arthur Braithwaite, Kensington; Sr Céline Auton, Melville Island; Miss Marie Breen, Wentworth Falls NSW; Fr F Mordaunt, Kokopo, PNG. And Fr Tony O'Brien, the Director of MSC Associates who called to see me at Leura recently when we spent some very pleasant and worthwhile hours together.

When one goes off to join the Missions in the NT, it does cross one's mind that there could be some exciting events in store, but I didn't expect to be part of quite so many exhilarating and at times even dangerous experiences. I have certainly had my share of them from grappling with barramundi on a 100lb line, to speeding through bushfires and floods, confronting crocodiles in our little boat, even getting stranded on a sandbank and left roosting there till rescued by a distant passing launch at 9.0 pm in answer to our flashing torch. Last issue I mentioned an anecdote about the finding of a turtle way down in the lower reaches of the Daly River. My friend, Miriam-Rose Ungunmerr, that talented young Aboriginal artist and writer with a delicious sense of humour, laughed to distraction when I told her about this frustrating experience, and she called a big mob of by-standers over to hear my report in pantomime as we stood on the bright green grass under a cotton tree. And what a repercussion there was to that story!

The NYMU staff had gone fishing for barramundi downriver from the mission, when one of them found a small long-necked turtle just