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EDITORIAL

NORMALLY OUR EDITOR, Father Martin Wilson, presents his quarterly Editorial here. But as we go to press he is still in New Guinea, and because the mails between our two countries leave much to be desired, his copy has not arrived for this issue. Panic has reigned for the past fortnight in our office, without producing any satisfactory results. We are like a rudderless ship!

So we can only apologise for the absence of his editorial, and for the fact that we are running a little late with our Winter issue. We trust by Spring to be back on an even keel.

Father Wilson had planned to print the second of his articles on 'Looking Back' in this issue, but at this very moment it is probably floating about somewhere over the Coral Sea or Pacific Ocean. I wish I knew where. However, contributors Sister Margaret Carmody sgs, Gerard Goldman and Fathers Dan O'Donovan, Rod Cameron osa and Peter Malone msc have come up with some interesting and helpful material for this issue.

On his behalf, I can safely say that Father Wilson sends his apologies and regards to all our subscribers -- while he is wondering how on earth *Nelen Yubu* will manage to meet its June deadline! I, too, am wondering about that.

Keren Calvert
Secretary

LISTENING TO A CULTURE

Alcohol Abuse and a Practical Christian Response

Gerard Goldman

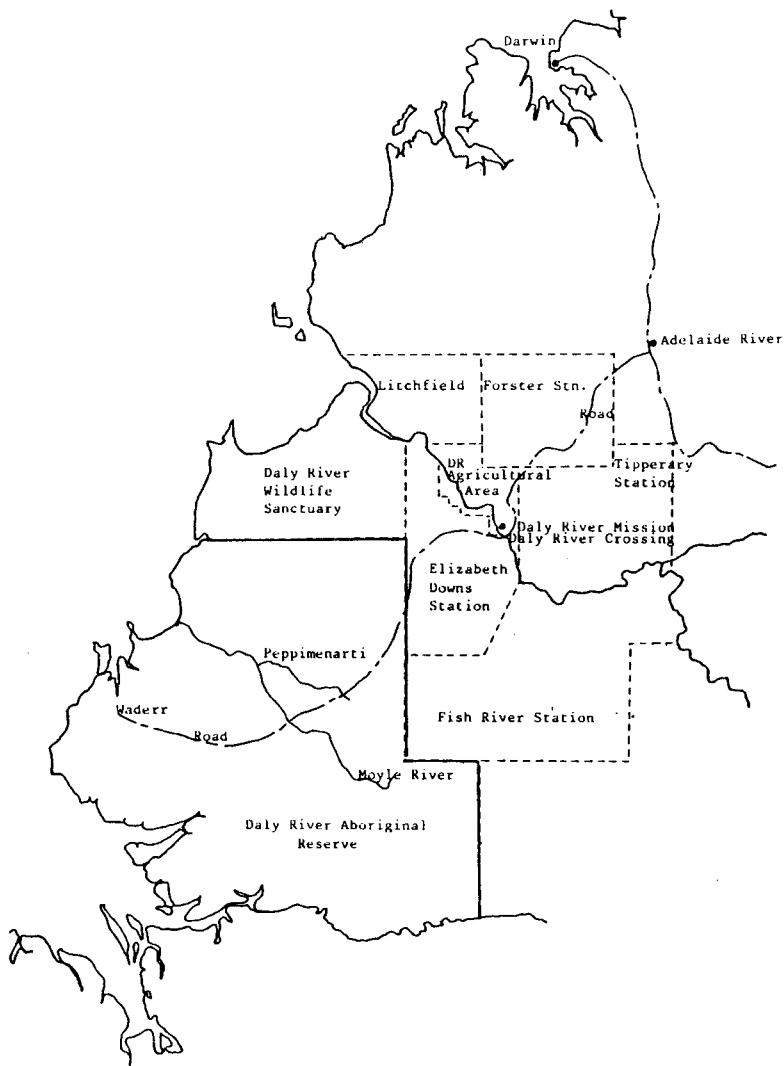
Synopsis

EXPLORING EUROPEAN AND CHINESE farmers came to Nauiyu in the early 1880's. They brought with them tea, tobacco, alcohol, opium and other goods. This had immediate detrimental effects on the tribes from the Daly River Reserve. Tribes voluntarily left their country as word swept the area of the new things that had arrived at Nauiyu. The impact of substance abuse continues to devastate the communities of Wadeye and Nauiyu. Statistics show the alarming extent of damage that is occurring through substance abuse. Cultural maintenance and the development of local theologies continues to be detrimentally undermined. The Church has increasingly in recent years, become aware of the need to confront the issue of substance abuse. The most powerless victims in this scenario are children. This essay will present how the children's program 'Now You See them, Now You Don't' has evolved out of this historical context, as a practical Christian response to the problems that children from these communities are experiencing. It developed out of listening to the people of Wadeye and Nauiyu. This program is an active and necessary component in the pre-evangelisation process of people from these communities.

This essay was prepared by Gerard Goldman as a Graduate Diploma Research Project to be presented at Union Theological Institute, Sydney. It results from several years experience with the Alcohol Awareness and Family Recovery Program in Darwin and Daly River, NT. Earlier Gerard had taught at Wadeye.

INTRODUCTION

The Daly River Reserve is located 280 km south-west of Darwin, and covers over 8000 square kilometres. Nauiyu and Wadeye are two key communities to this region. The western most community is Wadeye with Nauiyu being 100 kilometres to its east. Scattered in between these communities are significant numbers of outstations, part of what is often referred to as the "Home Lands Movement". One of them has up to one hundred and fifty inhabitants, most however between ten and forty. It is generally accepted that Wadeye's population is approximately 1400, Nauiyu's around 180.



Nauiyu was the first place where people from the Daly River region had contact with Europeans. This contact commenced in the early 1880's. In 1886, Jesuit missionaries arrived. Their time was troubled by sickness, lack of finance, and floods. They left in 1899 after their third attempt at a site was destroyed by flood. No further Church contact occurred until 1956, when the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart were invited by government and the local bishop to establish a school and health centre at Nauiyu. They have remained there.

The Missionaries of the Sacred Heart came to Wadeye in 1935. Accompanying them was the notable anthropologist W E H Stanner. The Mission was established there at an invitation from the Government partly for the purposes of pacifying warring tribes, and to stem their exodus to places like Nauiyu, Darwin and Wyndham. The provision of tea, tobacco and other European goods would have been a major contributing reason for the success of attracting the feuding tribes to the Mission. After an initial change of site, the Church has remained at Wadeye from that time.

CULTURAL BREAKDOWN

Impact of Substance

The substances that the exploring settlers brought with them to Nauiyu had immediate impact on the Aboriginal people in the region. Ironically, the main reason that the Jesuits left Palmerston (Darwin) for Nauiyu was to establish a mission free from the corrupting influence of Europeans (O'Kelly 1967:22).

Stanner (1979:46) states that vast numbers of Aborigines from areas within the Daly River Reserve migrated to Nauiyu on the arrival of settlers despite the high life-supporting quality of the land from which these tribes came. He states: 'There is no evidence of any kind that the exodus was other than entirely voluntary'.

Stanner was satisfied that the reasons for this voluntary one-way exodus was for the 'stimulants' that the settlers had. Aborigines who had lived there told him: 'Their appetites for tobacco and, to a lesser extent, for tea became so intense that neither man nor woman could bear to be without' (1979:47). Violence often arose over the division of small amounts which came by gift and trade. He states that there were other European goods that reached them but 'It was the stimulants that precipitated the exodus'. He continues:

Individuals, families and parties of friends simply went away to places where the avidly desired things could be obtained. The movement had phases and fluctuations, but it was always a one-way movement. (1979:47)

Only after arriving at Nauiyu did the demise of the people and their culture begin. This is when the disastrous effects of alcohol and opium began to cause serious cultural breakdown.

The Jesuits noticed the effects that alcohol had on the Aborigines. Pye (1975:33) notes that the Jesuits observed them as a fine, tall, tough and upstanding race of people. However, regarding alcohol: 'The natives' passion for Liquor is uncontrollable and their intoxication is a form of madness'.

After the Jesuits left the Daly, the Aborigines depended upon the European and Chinese farmers for employment and goods. Stanley (1985:9) notes:

It was usual for Aborigines to be paid in kind, generally in tobacco, food, alcohol, clothes or even opium and although wages were very low, there appeared to be a great supply of labour at the wage rates.

Stanner visited Nauiyu in 1932 and found that all farmers employed Aborigines. He remarks that the Aborigines had become very dependent on the farms and had lost some of their hunting skills. He also noted that some Aborigines had become addicted to tobacco, alcohol and opium. (Stanner 1933a, 1933b)

The impact of European settlement was not as devastating on the tribes near Wadeye. This was mostly because of its greater isolation, and their fear of the ruined tribes and others around Nauiyu who bitterly contested the right of access to European goods. Stanner (1973:12) is certain that it was the arrival of the Mission at Wadeye which helped avert the probable exodus of the tribes from that region.

It is important to note that the migration of Aborigines from this region was voluntary. It was not the result of violent secondary causes such as forced removal from land, gross neglect or epidemic diseases. It was freely chosen. The primacy of this fact is important because it is this aspect of 'free choice' that still pervades the ongoing decimation of the culture and people from Wadeye and Nauiyu.

Improved road conditions, award wages, Government Welfare Benefits, and a licensed Hotel at Nauiyu, have all contributed to the ongoing exodus of many people from these communities.

Extent of Breakdown

One can glean the extent of the decimation and breakdown from the numbers who left their country. Stanner (1979:46) writing in 1958

about the region south-west of Wadeye, states that it was virtually empty of its former inhabitants. Stanley (1985:1) writing in 1985 observes the same to be true for large sections of the Daly River Reserve:

...much of the land is unoccupied...it is difficult to get information about ownership because many traditional owners live away from their land.

Many tribes in the Daly River Reserve have completely disintegrated. Nauiyu is now composed of remnants of a number of tribes that flourished in the region. Wadeye is composed of three large tribes with remnants of others still existing. It is possible that of the 20 or so languages in the Daly River Reserve only Murinhpatha is expected to survive into the next century.

Cultural clues to the extent of breakdown show up in traditional marriage rules being openly broken as the authority and respect of the elders is lost.

Ceremonies of initiation (e.g. *Punj*) that were important to the development of young men as well as to the identity of the tribe are not being practised. Some are now forgotten. Cultural activities like hunting and gathering, ceremony, traditional dance, and visiting country are not occurring frequently. There is real concern amongst elders that their culture is being 'lost'.

Elders are not handing down important elements of the Law because they are reluctant to trust their unstable sons with the sacred information. They choose to honour the Law by dying with its secrets intact.

Health and legal statistics abound showing clear links of how alcohol abuse is affecting Wadeye and Nauiyu. Alcohol related injuries, accidents and deaths parallel crimes like theft, consumption of alcohol in restricted areas, and domestic violence under the influence of alcohol.

The main concern noted in Resource Centre reports on the homelands/outstation movements in the area is whether the adults can successfully live on their communities without having to leave for alcohol. Numerous efforts at returning to live on tribal lands have failed or stalled due to the limited availability of alcohol on these outstations.

The above is an indication of how the communities of Nauiyu and Wadeye are being devastated by alcohol and other substance abuse. As will be seen, developing a local theology within this environment is difficult and needs to come out of authentic listening to the peoples' struggle.

The Church's Response to the Breakdown

The Church's responses to the impact of substance abuse on the region had been profoundly influenced by the opinion of society. Prior to the breakthrough of Alcoholics Anonymous in 1939 in the United States, alcohol and substance abuse was seen as the result of moral deviancy and lack of self-control. Since then debate has continued between the medical concept of addiction and the behaviourists' social control model. This section will show the Church responses to the situation mirroring the social thinking of the time.

Moral Weakness

The Jesuits' approach at Nauiyu was to attend to the development of the people prior to commencing evangelisation. The following statement by Fr MacKillop in 1890 provides insight into how they may have viewed substance abuse in the tribes. He states:

Religion is primary in our attention, but in a manner secondary in our practice, because we recognise that we must first civilise the blacks before we can Christianise them... (in O'Kelly 1967:42)

Substance abuse may have been simply viewed as another example of the behaviour typical of uncivilised people. The abuse would have been expected to lessen as the missionaries worked on their moral development.

The next church presence after the Jesuits' departure in 1899 began at Wadeye in 1935. The Church's stated aims at Wadeye were to improve the people both materially and spiritually (in Wilson 1975:31). In 1933 Stanner (1954:2-3) observed that the Murinbata were 'a dying tribe'. The arrival of the mission 'came at a critical time...as the Murinbata would soon have dispersed'.

Whilst the decimation of the tribes around Nauiyu continued, the Mission at Wadeye thrived. There is no mention of large migrations to alcohol centres. However, the early Mission was not a peaceful place. Night after night there would be fighting over the new and scarce goods that the Mission had brought. Predictably, the main goods for dispute were over tobacco, tea, and sugar (Stanner 1973:11). Evangelical activity concentrated on Sunday Mass, followed by instruction in the faith which took place in the schools. The Legion of Mary was also introduced.

The Church returned to Nauiyu in 1956 when the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart set up a school and health centre. The stated aims in 1956 were: to establish health care, education and faith for Aboriginal children (in Wilson 1975:32) The Mission was primarily to

be a 'Boarding Establishment' for the young to be educated. Adults were not encouraged to live on the Mission and were encouraged to seek employment outside it.

Social Learning

A change in the missionaries' attitude towards drinking can be detected in the late 1960's. The passing of legislation in 1964, giving Aborigines unlimited drinking rights, had immediate impact on the communities. The first Northern Territory Catholic Missions Council (NT CMC), meeting in May 1969, mentions the need for the formulation of a statement on 'Wet Canteens, Club Rules, and Aboriginal Women and Drink' (Minutes, 8th Session). This suggests a belief that Aborigines would learn to control their drinking.

In the second meeting of the NT CMC, May 1971, a paper delivered on the balance that must exist between evangelisation and development in Nauiyu states:

Drink remains the most disruptive element in village life and claims as its victims in varying degrees all adult men, excepting one, and a few of the women.

Further on it is noted that 'disrespect for parents seems to be on the increase'. It was thought that by the children being 'confronted with the side effects of drinking, disgust perhaps encouraged disrespect'. Old moral thinking can still be detected, as it was noted, 'If this is the case there is hope'.

Wadeye and Nauiyu were not unique in the problems that were affecting Aboriginal communities of the time. The above concerns parallel Berndt's (1977:92) observations of the desert traditional community, Wiluna. He states:

The introduction of non-restrictive drinking rights... was to have ramifications throughout the socio-cultural system. Almost immediately, the number of arrests for drinking and associated offences accelerated... an increase in fighting, a decrease in spending on essentials such as food, and a general deterioration in ritual activity, camp appearance, and health.

The extension of Social Welfare Benefits of all categories to Aboriginal people during the Whitlam government meant an unprecedented inflow of money to the 'Mission' stations. There was an immediate increase in the abuse of alcohol.

The Church's response to these changes, was to support the implementation of 'clubs' on the communities in an attempt to create conditions suitable for controlled drinking. Presently, this is still a source of much contention in these communities.

Education

At 'MSC IN NT', a special MSC conference at Nauiyu in 1975, drink was nominated as the number one topic for discussion regarding the Nauiyu community. Alcohol was not mentioned in the Wadeye report. Spiritual, moral and intellectual development were items noted there. This suggests that there was hope that through appropriate education, the Aborigines from Wadeye would become less inclined to abuse alcohol.

With the focus in direction changing to adult education as an agent for social change, an Aboriginal Leadership Training Centre was opened at Nauiyu in 1977. It operated from a Paulo Freire model, on the need for Aborigines to reflect on what forces of oppression are exploiting and hindering their development. It is appropriate to note that alcohol was mentioned in the content of the course. Alcohol abuse was seen as primarily a symptom of an oppressed people.

Reflection was based on direct use of Scripture. Through this study of Scripture, it was hoped that a meaningful Christ would be revealed. From this, leaders would emerge with strength from a personal felt liberation. Effective leadership for Aborigines would best function at the local, personal level.

The inspiration for this Centre came from Father Leary who had completed a monumental survey on alcoholism among Aborigines around Australia in 1975. The Centre suspended operation in 1981 after some twenty groups had been through its process.

Alcoholism as a Disease

It was not until the early 1980's that the Church radically changed its position on substance abuse. The Church supported the development of self-styled Alcoholics Anonymous and Al Anon self-help groups on communities. The philosophy of Alcoholics Anonymous recognises alcoholism as a primary disease and without intervention can become chronic.

This change in direction can be seen in the NT CMC Statements of 1983. The statement on alcohol precedes any other. It requests the Bishop to appoint as soon as possible, a group who can

do as much as possible to support and encourage existing Aboriginal alcohol programs (including AA, Al Anon, Al Ateen), and to establish alcohol awareness and sensitivity programs throughout each local community.

Alcohol continued to receive priority at the MSC Provincial Chapter, 1986. The 'Aboriginal Mission Statement' accepted by the members of the Chapter placed the support of alcohol awareness and recovery ahead of 'helping Aboriginal people to think about and speak of their faith experience'. The development of Aboriginal leadership still retained the highest priority in their statement.

The Church's commitment to this radical change in direction came in 1983 with the establishment of 'Alcohol Awareness and Sobriety Centre'. This later changed its name to Alcohol Awareness & Family Recovery, (AA&FR) and is still known as this. An Alcohol Education and Awareness Institute was opened at Nauiyu in May 1987. It caters solely for traditional Aborigines. Over five hundred adults have participated in its family live-in program. AA&FR have helped to place a full-time Family Worker on substance abuse at Wadeye, with the staff from the Institute servicing the needs of the Nauiyu community.

AA&FR aimed to provide Aborigines with appropriate treatment for their problems with alcohol abuse. Programs for adult alcohol dependency and co-dependency were developed. The rationale being that substance abuse can become an addiction. The addiction to alcohol is seen as the major contributing reason for the terrible oppression being experienced in communities. Whilst this addiction exists on a large scale, very little effective evangelical work can occur.

It increasingly became obvious that the children from these communities were being profoundly affected by the substance abuse of their relations, particularly of their parents. The program 'Now You See Them, Now You Don't' (NYST,NYD) has evolved out of the need for a practical Christian response to the problems these children are experiencing.

EFFECTS OF ALCOHOL ABUSE ON CHILDREN

The alcohol abuse in Aboriginal communities has severe impact on the children. The strengths and weaknesses of the extended family in Aboriginal society in the context of alcohol abuse counter-balance. The strengths are that when problems arise, children have greater choice in seeking food, safe shelter and support. The weaknesses arise from the very nature of their relationships within the extended family: these can make them vulnerable to experiencing even more hurt, disappointment and anger. Regardless of culture, children from alcohol and substance abusing families will always be affected.

The following draws from the program, 'NYST, NYD'. Page references will be highlighted in square brackets so that one can

easily locate them in the attached appendix. This program developed in 1989/90, out of a process of research and of listening to people from communities (including Wadeye and Nauiyu) as they spoke about the effect that alcohol abuse has on children. The program was also piloted six times at the Centre at Nauiyu over the course of this period before reaching its state as here presented.

Children are affected by alcohol abuse in a myriad of different ways. The effects can be best grouped under three headings. These are: repression and distortion of emotions; the trauma of physical and emotional violence; and the gradual deterioration of identity and self-esteem.

Repression and Distortion of Emotions.

In the Foreword in 'NYST, NYD', [page v] Miriam-Rose Ungunmerr-Baumann (Principal of the school in Nauiyu), states clearly that:

...our children need to be recognised as having problems from the alcohol abuse of their family... Until we recognise that alcohol misuse of the family is causing our children problems we won't get anywhere with educating our children.

To begin to overcome these problems she states:

We need to get our children to talk about how they are feeling and how they are coping with the alcohol problems in their family and community.

This is important because children 'can go through their lives feeling shattered by all the alcohol problems around them'.

Ungunmerr has recognised that it is the children's *feelings* that have been most affected by the alcohol abuse. Studies in this area confirm her observations. Black (1981:5) a pioneer in this area observes that in families suffering from alcohol and substance abuse 'emotions are repressed and can become twisted'. Emotions are not often shared, and 'unfortunately when they are expressed, it is done in a judgmental manner placing blame on one another'. Black (1981:43) states that children from these families 'learn not to share their feelings, and, inevitably, ... deny feelings because they don't trust these feelings will be validated by family members, other relatives, or friends'.

The appendix referred to is the instruction manual for "*Now You See Them, Now You Don't*". We do not include this appendix (67 pp), but we have left the page indicators: they could prove useful to readers with a copy of the manual.--Ed.

This repression of feelings is compounded in Aboriginal children, who, from a very early age, learn to be highly skilled in hiding their feelings. Harris (1980:36) believes that this is because Aboriginal children experience independence from an early age [page 2].

Trauma of Physical and Emotional Violence.

A major contribution to the repression and distortion of emotions is the traumatic experience of emotional and/or physical violence [page 28]. Emotional violence manifests itself in betrayal, lying and blaming. Physical violence on children mostly includes hitting, belting and sexual abuse.

In traditional Aboriginal culture the bond between child to parent was considered so important that discipline was carried out through other significant members of the extended family. Alcohol abuse has caused havoc to the primacy of these bonds. Alluding to this, Ungunmerr states: 'Because of the extended family in our culture all our children are being affected.... It really hurts them if it's their mum and dad who are experiencing alcohol problems' [page v].

Gradual Deterioration of Identity and Self-esteem.

For traditional Aboriginal culture, identity comes from belonging to an extensive social network ('family'), and through ties to land (country, Law, Dreamings). These are interconnected. [page 42]

As has been described earlier, the tribes around Nauiyu were more affected by the contact situation than those around Wadeye. Due to the different contact situations, the impact on traditional modes of living has been different on each community.

Evaluation feedback on children who participated in the pilot programs indicated that with Aboriginal children there is a marked relationship between cultural identity and self-esteem. Children who came from families where there was severe violence yet strong sense of cultural identity appeared to have higher self-esteem than children from families where similar violence occurred, but breakdown in their cultural identity was greater. Thus, a major effect of alcohol abuse on children in Wadeye and Nauiyu is its contribution to the gradual break-down of their sense of cultural identity. This then impacts detrimentally on their levels of self-esteem.

Alcohol abuse that has occurred in a family's past, or continues to occur, impacts detrimentally on every sphere of development in children. This includes: the social, mental, emotional, cultural and spiritual levels. These retardations in development are unlikely to be healed unless some form of care and treatment is provided. As Black (1981:6) notes, children growing up in families with alcohol abuse *'seldom learn the combination of roles that molds healthy personalities'; instead, they can become 'locked into roles based on their*

perceptions of what they need to do to survive' [page 34].

The particular importance in addressing the needs of children in Aboriginal society cannot be over-stated. This is because children from Aboriginal families are given a degree of freedom and respect that is most uncommon in European society. The parents themselves of the damaged children were acutely aware of their children's needs in this respect and promoted their children's participation in the program more as a right belonging to the children than as a corrective process the children might have to endure like some sort of bitter medicine. The program 'Now You See Them, Now You Don't' is a practical Christian response both to the needs of these children and to their parents' hopes and expectations.

The last section of this essay will show how the program tried to evolve out of a paradigm of listening to a people's struggle. This 'listening' is a key component in any pre-evangelisation strategy that would hope to lead to the enculturation of the Gospel into people's lives, and eventually the construction of a local theology.

A PRACTICAL CHRISTIAN RESPONSE

The enculturation of the Gospels into the lives of Aborigines from Wadeye and Nauiyu remains an important goal for the Northern Territory Church. It would be fair to say that the Church has not achieved a great deal of success in this matter. One of the principal concerns has been the apparent unwillingness of the people to share openly their perceptions of the Gospel.

It has been observed at the Leadership Training Centre at Nauiyu that the Aboriginal people who demonstrated an ability and willingness to reflect honestly on what the Gospels implied for them were those who came from cattle stations, or other unlikely places such as unhealthy town situations. Aborigines from Wadeye and Nauiyu, with a few rare exceptions, appeared to lack spontaneity, freedom and even authenticity. On items such as faith sharing, they appeared to have a tendency to look towards the Religious, who were facilitating the sharing, for the answers. Remembering that the main evangelical work of the early Missions concentrated on the instruction of children in the faith, it is not unexpected that these difficulties would now arise. (cf. Leary 1979:26-30)

Inculturation of the Gospel into any people's lives takes considerable time and sensitivity. The history of the Church in Wadeye and Nauiyu has been largely to ignore the potential contribution and insights of the people. It concentrated on imparting the faith to the children through religion lessons in school. It also, in the past, condemned certain aspects of their culture and religion which were

considered 'heathen'. This is not meant to pass harsh judgment on past missionaries. *Evangelii Nuntiandi* was only produced as recently as 1975. It is vital however, that future and present missionaries are aware of the history of the people and the church they come to share life with.

With this sort of historical background the people from Wadeye and Nauiyu have a particular need to be allowed space and freedom to choose to risk sharing their insights and faith. It will take patience and skilled facilitation for the people of Wadeye and Nauiyu to come to a satisfying awareness that the Church authentically needs them to share their unique spirituality. Shreiter provides insight into the fundamental requirements for the mature development of local theology. It will be seen that active listening is vital to the dynamic process of inculturation.

Shreiter (1985:22) states that 'Local theology is a dynamic interaction among Gospel, church and culture'. It is the sensitive nature of this dynamic interaction that requires that space and time be available, as people grasp the meaning of what they are reflecting on.

Shreiter (1985:39) suggests that ideally 'the process of constructing local theologies begins with a study of the culture, rather than with possible translations of the larger church tradition into the local circumstance'. He outlines two important reasons for this. Firstly, it works towards avoiding the continuance of paternalistic history, such as mentioned above, where outsiders would make decisions on what is appropriate for a culture. Secondly, 'To maintain the desired openness and sensitivity to a local situation, the prevailing mode of evangelisation and church development should be one of finding Christ in the situation rather than concentrating on bringing Christ into the situation'.

He notes that without the above attitudes, which are based on the theology of the incarnation, 'one consistently runs the risk of introducing and maintaining Christianity as an alien body in a culture'. When this occurs, 'The Word of God never receives the opportunity to take root and bear fruit'. What often results in many instances are dual systems of belief. That is, the old system continues alongside Christianity. The two do not become integrated and compatible.

Nor can one ever be satisfied that one has listened to a culture and presumed that the inculturation of the church has succeeded. Shreiter (1985:40) observes that this would be falsely to 'presume that the culture is an unchanging and static reality'. Should this occur the church can rapidly die out 'because its theological expression and symbolic performance have not continued to listen to cultural change'. Where symbols and religious expression have been imposed from outside a culture, there must be grave doubts as to how

successfully the church has presented and allowed the living Christ to become an active part of a people's life. The need is to renew evangelical efforts by starting again from a new paradigm, where listening is seen as essential.

In his section on 'Tools For Listening To Culture', Shreiter (1985:42/3) provides three characteristics that are desirable for any cultural analysis. He states that any approach to culture must be *holistic*. This means that all parts of a culture need to be given consideration. Secondly, it is important to address the *forces that shape identity* in a culture. That is, what are the forces that give distinctiveness to a group, and, what are the processes that constitute key categories to listen for in a culture. Lastly, the problem of *social change* needs to be addressed. Accordingly, in any analysis of the Daly River Reserve substance abuse demands major consideration.

Further on he notes (1985:45) 'in listening to a culture, especially to the ills that befall a culture, one has to be able to deal with social change - not as an aberration but as part of the dynamic of a world such as ours. Change sometimes brings improvement, not just deviation from the mean'. This must be the hope that underpins the church's efforts in Wadeye and Nauiyu. The church's gradual shift in thinking and approach to substance abuse indicates a renewed effort in listening to the people's struggle. Such efforts must bear fruit.

'NYST,NYD' evolved out of listening to the concerns of the people. The project had a designated amount of time in which it had to become a publishable item. A reasonable time-table allowed consultation and research to become an integral component of the program's development. The piloting of the program was treated as an opportunity to listen to feedback, alter and change as situations and experience developed. From this process a dynamic sense of trust developed in which the Aboriginal co-workers became important and lively contributors to the process. They increasingly took opportunities to indicate what they perceived as the central needs of the program.

The development of 'NYST,NYD' attempted to remain alert to the need to listen. It was frustrating at times, with little sense of movement occurring. However, the underlying strength of the process was the ability of different people to become increasingly active participants. People gradually felt prepared to risk sharing their gifts and insights with one another. It is this experience of an outcome of listening that gives confidence and hope in the future construction of a local theology at Wadeye and Nauiyu.

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49. Brennan, sj. F. 'A One Week Glance at Aboriginal Poverty in 1988', vol.23, no. 2-3, pp.86-93.

1990:

- Stockton, E. 'Sacred Land, Sacred Story'.

- Fletcher, msc, F. 'Aboriginal Spirituality'.

- Walker, V. - in the series, ' I am an Australian Catholic of the '90s.' vol. 24, no.4.

* * * * *

WILL ALL THE FIRES FAIL?

Kiata speaks to Youth.

Will all the camp-fires fail?
Will they go out?

No, my young ones, that could never be!
All the deep world cries for their survival.
It would be easier to extinguish all the stars,
or to rob the majestic moon of its solemnity.

This night is dark,
but deepest dreams are born of darkest nights.
Already I can hear the call of dawn
I can see the cry of sunrise in your eyes.

The fires will never fail
for the spirit of youth will burn when morning comes.

Rod Cameron osa

ENABLING LEADERSHIP

Experience and Reflection of Lumko

Sr Margaret Carmody sgs

MUCH OF THE richness and challenge of this experience came from the exciting mixture of cultural and experiential background which was shared in general chatting within the group, but also with specific cultural information nights and liturgies.

The whole model of Lumko is: 'Until everyone is using the charism they have received from God, the church cannot be fully alive...' and so it is a 'working model'; it is not the funnel model of sitting and receiving information, but of being part of the ministry; of sharing the Word of God and listening to how this is to speak in my life and the life of the community.

The course looked at five models of church - a 'providing church', the 'parish council church', the 'awakening church', the 'task group church' and the 'communion of communities church'. We came to see that the model of church we are working in is the base for our pastoral efforts and attitudes...it sets the spirit of the community and how the community develops and functions...it directs the way of 'being and acting as church'.

Working with the 'communion of communities church', the training of community leaders is vital. There are four main areas on which training needs to concentrate.

Spiritual Life, Awareness and Attitudes, Skills, Information and Knowledge:

The methodology of the course was simple - learn by doing! We spent much time experiencing and rewriting the Lumko training material for our own situations and then presenting these to the whole group and being part of critiqueing of the group...this was leading us to grapple with and understand the process. Some of the

For almost five weeks from 14 August 1990 Michael Fellows and Sr Margaret Carmody attended a course at Kincumber, NSW, sharing with 45 others from many cultures, countries and 'churches', to work with the Lumko Model of Church. - Margaret does pastoral work in Thuringowa parish, Qld. (near Townsville). Michael is one of the parish leaders.

material we worked with - creating an awareness of community, the relation between the christian faith and social concerns, the building of small christian communities, the RCIA, community building and the training of ministers in particular skills.

The base of Lumko is Gospel reflection...all processes centred on the Word of God. The 'Seven Steps' method was only one area touched on in the gospel sharing. Other approaches were looked at, leading into 'Amos Programs'...social analysis...for socially involved and justice groups.

There are many things that have happened to me because of this course, or have deepened because of this time: my appreciation of the people who have challenged me to 'think and reflect'.

What is church? How do we 'be' church? Is it more than sitting at Mass each week? Is it more than going into a building? What is it?

I realised that we can become so sophisticated in presenting adult education programs, we miss the learning...the real learning of being in touch with where we are in our understanding rather than where one thinks we should be! So, to be in touch does not mean standing still; it means reflecting, listening, and growth with and within the community. There is **so much** to receive from others. One can tend to become insular in one's thinking: that we are the only ones struggling...that it is difficult because of the shortage of ordained ministers...Then one hears of parishes where there are eight different dialects spoken with no common language!!

Michael and I attended this course through the generosity of the Good Samaritan Sisters and we thank them for giving us this special opportunity.

We all have a responsibility to attempt to discern the movement of the Spirit in the Church and to head in the direction which seems to enable the Church to have a key role to play in this journey for it is their task to call forth the charism of everyone. In this way the church can become more fully a seed of the kingdom, as well as a model for society of how all may participate in the governance of their lives, through using their God-given gifts.

(ref. Anselm Prior)

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ISSUES IN COMPASS THEOLOGY REVIEW

Peter Malone msc

GLANCING THROUGH recent issues of *Nelen Yubu* I noticed some writers, especially those whose study papers were being printed, quoted from material in *Compass Theology Review*. As editor, I was pleased that articles and correspondence in *Compass* were proving helpful for references in Aboriginal studies. It occurred to me that it might be useful for readers of *Nelen Yubu* to have the material from *Compass* indexed for further references and consultation.

The earliest material I find comes from 1972.

1972:

The first article we published in the area was by Rev. Jim Downing, at that time a Congregational minister of the United Church of North Australia. References were made in the Jesuit survey of the Australian Catholic Church. In 1972 we published the first article by Pat Dodson. It is interesting to look at his views at that period in comparison with more recent statements.

1. Downing, J. 'Aboriginal Development and the Church', 1972, vol.6, no.2, pp.20-22.
2. Jesuit Survey, 'The Catholic Image', 1972, vol.6, no.2, pp.14-23 (esp. p.23).
3. Dodson, P. 'Reflections on the Aborigines and the Church', 1972, vol.6, no.2, pp.34-38.

There is nothing in *Compass* in the next five years. With the growing interest in Australian theology and doing our theology in an Australian context, there is a return to the issue in 1978.

1978:

4. Kelly, ccsr, A.J. 'Theology in an Australian Context', vol.12, no.2, pp.1-7 (esp. p.7).
5. Wilson, msc, M.; 'Aboriginal Religion', vol.12, no.2, pp.8-13.
6. Murphy, msc, D.J. 'Aborigines: Reflections on the 1978 Social Justice Statement', vol.12, no.3, pp.1-8.
7. Leary, msc, J. 'Aborigines: the rationale behind the Daly River Leadership Training Centre', vol.12, no.2, pp.31-33.

The next step was the beginning of a correspondence between Dan O'Donovan and Martin Wilson after the publication of Martin's *New, Old and Timeless*. Their interchanges have continued during the 80's in the pages of *Nelen Yubu*.

1980:

8. O'Donovan, D. 'Open Letter to the Author of *New, Old and Timeless*', vol.14, no.2, pp.32-36.
9. Wilson, msc, M. 'Reply to Fr Dan O'Donovan's Letter', vol.14, no.2, pp.36-38.
10. Malone, msc, P.J. 'Australian Images', vol.14, no.3, pp.29-30 (esp. p.29).
11. Thompson, msc, B. 'Patrick White', vol.14, no.3, pp.31-33.
12. Kelly, cssr, A.J. 'Review of M. Wilson's *New, Old and Timeless*', vol. 14, no.3, pp.40-41.
13. O'Donovan, D. 'Letter on Aboriginal Religion', vol.14, no.4, pp.35-38.

1981:

14. Wilson msc, M. 'Rejoinder: Aboriginal Religion', vol.15, no.1,p.38.
15. Howley msc A. 'Letter: Aboriginal Religion', vol.15, no.1, pp.34-37.
16. Australian Council of Churches and Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace. 'Ecumenical Programme on Aboriginal Land Rights'. Vol. 15, no.1, pp.41-42.

As reflection continued on Australian Spirituality and Theology, personal expression of experience and the establishing of processes for Discovering an Australian Theology, there was a highlighting of Aboriginal themes.

1982:

17. Ungunmerr, Miriam-Rose, 'Teaching and Being Taught', vol. 16, no.1, pp.7-10.
18. Fallon, msc, John, 'Yahweh was in this Place and I did not know', vol.16, no.1, pp.11-12.

1983:

19. Malone msc, P.J. 'Discovering an Australian Spirituality I', vol.17, no.4, pp.27-35 (esp. p.31).
20. McHardy, M. 'Notes on Developing an Australian Spirituality with Jungian Psychology as Background', vol.17, no.4, pp.36-38.
21. Malone, msc, P.J. 'Discovering an Australian Theology III', vol.18, no.4, pp.2-4.

1985:

22. Luby msc, T. 'The Ethos of Australian Popular Music. Spirit of Place. Goanna: an Assessment' vol.19, no.1, pp.27-30.
23. Kirkwood, P. 'Two Australian Poets as Theologians. Les Murray and Bruce Dawe', vol.19, no.1, pp.31-44 (esp. pp.34-35).
24. Stockton, E. 'Towards an Australian Spirituality - Some elements', vol.19, no.2, Supplement, (esp. p.6).
25. Daniel, sj, W. 'Aboriginal Land Rights and Catholic Social Teaching', vol.19, no.4, pp.7-15.

26. McCoy, sj, B. 'What Colour God?', vol.19, no.4, pp.16-19.

By the mid-80's (and with some impetus from perspectives on the 1988 Bicentennial of white settlement), theologians had begun to write with some depth on many themes, especially a focus on Aborigines.

1986:

27. Fletcher, msc, F. 'Drink from the Wells of Oz', vol.20, no.1, pp.16-22 (esp. pp.21-22).

28. Edwards, D. 'Apprentices in Faith to the Aboriginal View of the Land', vol.20, no.1, pp.23-29.

29. Leary, msc, J. 'Letter', vol.20, no.1, pp.30-31.

30. Goosen, G. 'Lonergan's Systematics in the Australian Context', vol.20, no.1, pp.32-35 (esp. pp.33-34).

31. Malone, msc, P.J. 'Discovering an Australian Spirituality V : Australian Sinfulness', vol.20, no.2, pp.21-24.

32. Leary, msc, J. 'The Daly River Centre: its Philosophy', vol.20, no.2, pp.27-33.

1987:

33. Excerpts from Pope John Paul II's Alice Springs address, vol.21, no.1. Inside back cover.

34. Reviews of 'Finding Common Ground' and 'Australian Aboriginal Religion', vol.21, no.2, pp.43-44.

With the Bicentenary and the memories of the end of 40,000 years of Aboriginal freedom, *Compass* published a double issue in 1988 offering the first words to Aboriginal writers.

1988:

35. Dodson, P. 'The Land Our Mother, the Church Our Mother', vol.22, no.1-2, pp.1-3.

36. Harris, C. 'Reflections on the Challenge to the Churches', vol.22, no.1-2, pp.4-5.

37. Gondarra, D. 'Father, You Gave Us the Dreaming', vol.22, no.1-2, pp.6-8.

38. Ungunmerr, M-R. 'Dadirri', vol.22, no.1-2, pp.9-11.

39. 1988 AICC Conference. 'Statement to Australian Churches', vol.22, no.1-1, pp.12.

Theologians continued their writing.

40. Australian Catholic Bishops. 'The Church and the Aborigines in the Bicentenary', vol.22, no.1-2, pp.15-16.

41. Stockton, E. 'Their Blackened Stump is Holy Seed', vol.22, no.1-2, pp.19-25.

42. Fletcher, msc, F. 'Culture and Social Theology Within the Australian Context', vol.22, no.3, pp.28-37.

43. Edwards, D. 'Reflections on Multicultural Australia in the Light

[continued on p.18].

Dan O'Donovan

Mōy and Mandragore

FROM THE MOON to psychotherapy is not a big step.

The world of the mystery-religions which we are examining was much caught up in the problematic of ascent to truth: out of the darkness into the light.

The human person it saw to be the strangest of earth's growths. His/her nature firmly rooted in cthonic gloom (Greek: *cthōn* - earth, ground), it is only through the pulsing energies of those roots that he can unfold to the heavens the bright blossoms of enlightened consciousness.

Root and bloom, the human composite stands between Uranos and Gaia, between Hēlios and Cthōn, between Hermēs and Circē. He/she is something of everything. Like a tree, his trunk and branches are never without the sap drawn out of the ground. However to him alone is it given, by a reverse process with the light taken in from the sun, to irradiate the dark of his earthy roots. Only when, and in the measure that he does so, can the roots themselves become salutary.

Today Nature has had much of its magic removed. No longer do people stand in awe for instance at the *potentes herbae* (potent herbs) to which the ancients addressed prayers. So it is that that old way of seeing things which was able to discern in Nature many adumbrations of what happens in the human soul, is likewise unfamiliar. The Church Fathers for their part still thought along those psychosomatic lines. *In occulto est radix*, says Augustine, *fructus videri possunt, radix videri non potest* (Enarr. in Psalmos, 51,12). (The root is in concealment: fruits can be seen, but not the root). For him the word 'root' itself spoke of mystery, even of the occult. And Gregory the Great sounded already his distant premonition of modern depth psychology: *Quid enim radicum nomine nisi latentes cogitationes accipimus, quae in occulto prodeunt, sed in ostensione operum per apertum surgunt?* (Moralia in Job, VIII, 48,81). (For, what do we understand by the noun 'root' but latent thoughts: arising in obscurity, they appear openly in visible acts.)

In this essay we shall consider two roots and the soul-healing blooms which spring from them. But since uncovering the new calls for reverence, let us start our search with the *precatio* which once the rhizotome pronounced before applying himself to his task, (Greek, rhizotomos - root-specialist; lit. root-cutter):

Nunc vos potentes omnes herbas deprecor, exoro vos maiestatemque vestram, quas parens tellus generavit et cunctis gentibus dono dedit medicinam sanitatis (I pray you now, all you power-wielding herbs, I appeal to you and to your majesty, which Mother Earth brought forth and gave as a gift to all nations for a healing medicine...).

I

Mōy, the soul-healing plant of Hermēs

First let us take that root which the gods called *Mōy*. (One popular derivation is passed on to us by Ptolemaios Hephaistion: 'Concerning the plant *Mōy* spoken of by Homer, its roots arise out of the blood of that giant who was slain on the island of Circē. It has a bright blossom because Circē's warlike helper, killer of the giant, was Hēlios himself. The battle was arduous, *mōos d'hē machē*; hence the plant's name.' (Ho *mōos* - toil, esp. the toil of a tug-of-war, a struggle, contest).

In a poem from the Anthologia Palatina (XV,12), man's spiritual combat is described in terms of the homeric myth of Odysseus and Circē:

Away, dark cave of Circē, (cries Odysseus).
Dishonour would it be to me, a child of heaven,
to feed like a beast upon your acorns!
No! I pray god [rather] for that good medicine
against all evil thoughts,
the soul-healing flower *Mōy*.

Odysseus is the human pilgrim placed somewhere between the sublime light of Hermes and the dark allurements of cthonic Circē, between heaven and hell. He is saved through that 'soul-healing flower', *Mōy*, itself symbolic: its roots coarse and rugged, its blossoms are pure and fair. By its strength man wrests himself from the nether powers; for he is a child of heaven who, by the flowering of his higher self, opens out to the sky. He can do this however - so runs the myth - only because help comes to him *theothēn*, from deity.

In discussing the allegory the people of old always had in mind Homer's own narration, known to every schoolchild:

...So spake Hermeias and gave me the healing plant which he tore from the ground, explaining its nature to me: rough is its root, fair its blossom. The gods named it *Mōy*. For mortal man it is difficult to come by. But all is possible to the gods. (Odyssey, X, 302/306).

What exactly was this *Moly* plant and where did it grow? Over the centuries, botanists and others have spun out some ingenious theories.

The unknown author of the ninth book of Theophrast's *History of Plants*, himself a rhizotome or root-specialist and concerned for the most part with popular healing-plants, set the ball rolling with an indication which was to influence greatly all subsequent research on the subject. (Ps.-Theophrast, *Hist. plant.*, IX, 15, 7). For him, the homeric *Mōy* is a real plant actually growing in the Greek countryside, above all in the Cyllenius mountain range and around Pheneos (classical centres of the cult of Hermes). Small wonder then that the god of Cyllenius should have given his Odysseus precisely this plant and not another. 'It is said,' he adds, betraying the general uncertainty, 'that this *Mōy* is similar to the one mentioned by Homer.' Its bulbous root and its leaves are like those of the *Skilla* or sea-onion. Now this is of interest since to the Greek mind the leek and onion family of plants, which today we classify under the heading *Allium*, had a heavily cthonic character and were seen as magical and therapeutic.

After Ps.-Theophrast, Pliny, the platonist Apuleius (who supplied a hand-drawing of the plant which was to survive through many a later codex), Dioscurides, Galenos - all wrote in support of his view but in texts so short on detail that botanically they are of little worth. Some more recent botanists, following Linné, have designated two sets of bulbous plants as *Allium Mōy* and *Allium magicum*. They claim that the homeric *Moly* would have been some such plant, corresponding to our *Allium victorialis* L.

A second line of interpreters, falling back on a suggestion of Dioscurides (a native of Anazarbus in Cilicia and hence probably reliable), tells us that 'people name the plant called *Mountain Rue* (German, *Bergraute*, Greek, *pēganon agrion*) also *Mōy* in Cappadocia and in Asian Galatia. Others name it *Harmala*, the Syrians *Besasa*.' (*De materia medica*, III, 46; again Galenos, XII, 940; XIII, 211e; 257; 605A).

Further, the *Mountain Rue* so designated was, for Persian migrants living in Cappadocia, a substitute for their own native

Hôm, concerning which at a later date Plutarch speaks under the title 'Mōly', as having magical effects.

In Syrian, as just indicated, it is called *Besasa* - which brings us yet deeper into the history of the ancient Mōly. The Aramaic designation of the Mountain Rue is *Beshash* and in the Syrian tradition of Galenos, who took his cue from Dioscurides, Mōly was known as *Beshasho*. This is how the plant, widely recognised for its magical powers, passed into tradition as 'Mōly'; and how all that up to that time had been attributed to the Mountain Rue, now came to be transferred to the plant of Hermes.

This plant, regarded by the ancients as so highly efficacious against the wiles of Circē, Christians simply understood in their own way as being useful against the attacks of the devil. One medieval blessing for example ran: *Benedico te, creatura rutae, ut sis exterminatio diaboli et omnium contubernialium eius* (I bless you, creature root, to be an exterminant of the devil and all his contubers).

A third way of understanding the nature and provenance of Mōly comes perhaps closest to the truth. This is the one which refuses to identify Hermes' plant with any variety known to botanists. It is, say these interpreters, a mythical plant pure and simple, and indicates very generally an antidote with magical powers; (Greek, *pharmakon esthlon*, good, or lucky, medicine: Odyssey, X,292). 'A fairy-tale plant' (Märchenpflanze), one might say with Rahner.

This is confirmed by the popular etymology we find in the Scholia Graeca to Homer: 'Mōly is a sort (*eidos*) of a plant, and derives its name from *māyein*, i.e. having the power to counter venom.' According to Suidas, Mōly is simply an 'antidote to noxious drugs'. And for Pliny: *Contra haec omnia magicasque artes erit primum illud Homericum Mōly* (as a remedy against all these and the magical arts the homeric Mōly holds first place). In particular he compares the root *Helicacabon*, stronger than opium in its kick, with Mōly: *Ab aliis Morion, ab aliis Mōly appellatum*. Finally, the *Hellebore* root, so much spoken of in antiquity by Christians and others as a cure especially for insanity, was called *Mōly*.

In a word, it is best to side with J. Berendes when he says: 'In my opinion, *Mōly* stands for no precise and identifiable plant, but rather is a general poetic expression for antidote, deriving from *māyein* - to weaken; to remove something's sting.' Its true history is not for botanists to write, but for mythologists.

As Christian interest in the 'soul-healing flower', Mōly, has never been studied, it is this which will occupy us now.

But first an aside: readers may wonder, when they come to the end of the present article, what point there was in writing it. What bearing, if any, has it on our Christian cross-cultural inquiry into traditional Aboriginal religions and their relation to the Gospel?

For one thing, it shows us yet again that the early Church's attitude to religious, mythological, even magical elements in the non-christian religions it encountered, far from being one of disdain or *a priori* rejection, was one of fairly sensitive consideration and creative management with a view to mutual gain. Later on in a concluding article to this series, we shall use the distinction Hugo Rahner has made (see *Nelen Yubu* 41 [1989] p.17) between christianity's dogmatic stand on the one hand, which was as he says 'more static', and its position in liturgy and devotion which was, rather, 'dynamic', to draw conclusions for our own engagement which may be of pastoral importance.

Secondly, it opens on to a fertile field of investigation yet to be ploughed. I have been unable to find evidence in our sources on Aboriginal traditional religion of anything closely resembling Mōy or Mandragore; but suspect that it must exist. Vedic India knows of healing plants, and addresses prayers to them. (See, e.g., the Atharva Veda, IV,17; V,4 and 5). I therefore invite an Aboriginal writer to fill out this gap for us. We know that there are many *medicinal* plants, useful and widely used for healing wounds and sicknesses; plants capable of stunning fish; sap used to induce lactation; even psycho-active plants, having possibly anaesthetic effects. (See, 'This Precious Foliage: a Study of the Aboriginal Psycho-active Drug "Pituri",' by Pamela Watson. *Oceania* Monograph, 26, University of Sydney, 1983. We shall be citing this when we come to treat of Mandragore, which has certain, accidental, similarities.) But were there, are there, *magical* plants, deriving their powers 'theothen', from deity, or its Aboriginal equivalent?

(to be continued)

* * * * *

FROM THE SECRETARY'S DESK. . .

Nelen Yubu has indeed been saddened by the death of our printer and friend, Henry Rohr of Spectrum Publications in Melbourne. His death was sudden and a great loss to all his friends. Having booked to leave Melbourne by the evening train on the day of his funeral, I was able to attend the Requiem at St Ignatius' Church, Richmond at noon. That huge church was packed out, a fitting tribute to a good and gracious man. I feel for his widow, Maria, and four young children who were all so brave at the Mass.

* * * * *

News from subscriber Dr John May of the Irish School of Ecumenics in Ireland. I quote from his letter:

"I value *Nelen Yubu* very much as a link with my 'real' interests down under, and I am patiently working towards the day when I can introduce Aboriginal and Melanesian material into my teaching here, stocking up our library in the process.

"I was able to attend the WCC Assembly in Canberra in February, and of course I was greatly heartened to see the prominence given to Aborigines and their problems. I also met a lot of people such as Djiniyini Gondarra, Arthur Malcolm, Don Carrington, Frank Brennan and

Frank Fletcher as well as many old friends from PNG and the Pacific. On the way back I spent ten days in Thailand catching up on another interest, the way Buddhists and Christians are co-operating in development there."

Thanks John, great to hear from you.

* * * * *

In April a friend and I went to Hartzler Park at Bowral for a week's Retreat of OLSH Associates. It was in a lovely setting on the Southern Highlands, with beautiful gardens and glorious weather - just like the Blue Mountains! The Sisters were most hospitable, and I again met Sister Monica, friend from Santa Teresa and Daly River missions, as well as Srs Frances, Patricia, Florian and others. It was just like a rest-cure: good meals, comfy rooms, lovely views. In fact the view from my top-floor bedroom was so beautiful that I'd wake up each morning about 4 o'clock and watch dawn break over the tops of the trees - a spectacular sight.

Sitting in the gardens one day I saw a tiny plane going busily about its flight, when my mind raced back to the little planes we took from Darwin to Bathurst and Melville Islands - and of course an episode cropped up.

It was right in the middle of the Wet one year, with mighty storms raging and boisterous seas. I'd been delayed too long in Darwin with bad weather, so when an opportunity came to hop on a charter back to Pularumpi, I grabbed it. It was a very small plane and the only other passengers were a Tiwi woman with her two young children.

Off we sailed into the dark, angry skies in teeming rain. I can't even remember which year it was, but the storm was a corker. We landed at Bathurst Is. to offload some freight then headed for Pularumpi. After takeoff the storm just seemed to pounce on us so the pilot wisely decided to head across to Snake Bay instead of trying to go direct to Garden Point. But the weather chased us there, throwing us into a sort of black tunnel of cloud as we were buffeted about, weaving and scudding every whichway.

The pilot was magnificent. Sitting in the co-pilot's seat I was listening to his description of the weather as he urgently called up the Control Tower. He told me we may have to return to Darwin because by then Bathurst was blacked out as well as Pularumpi. He kept in touch with the tower all the time, and a lot of talk went on as to our best course, while I could hear voices from other planes in the Territory coming over our radio. But suddenly the airwaves went silent and we were the only ones

left speaking as our pilot sought advice. It was a quite horrendous storm.

Finally he said to me: 'Keren, I think we'll have to go back', so I settled myself for another night in Darwin. But the Tiwi lady was getting nervous and one of the children shrieked: 'I want to get out!' while his little sister said 'I want to go to the toilet'. Still our young pilot manfully handled that tiny plane with all the expertise of a veteran. I forget our call sign, but let's say it was a fictitious 'Yankee, Zulu, Foxtrot', and the name kept flying across the airwaves as directions were given from Control.

Suddenly we banked and began to descend! The pilot had spotted a chink in the clouds right above Snake Bay airstrip, and we dived down through them like a sea eagle and slid on to the strip while the heavens held their breath.

Immediately that he reported we were safely down, voices rang around the skies again: 'Yankee, Zulu, Foxtrot is on the ground at Snake Bay.' 'They're on the ground at Snake Bay.' '...on the ground!' In a letter from my daughter in Germany she wrote: 'Mum, there were tears in my eyes as I read in your letter that Yankee, Zulu, Foxtrot was indeed on the ground at Snake Bay!'

* * * * *

NELEN YUBU

During Father Wilson's two months in PNG there have been horrendous reports of the dangers in that unhappy country. I often wondered just how safe he was, or whether we'd see him again this side of the Kingdom. It is sad to think those so-called Rascals have got such a grip on the population that curfews have to be observed in places like Port Moresby and Mt Hagen, where gates are locked and guard dogs prowl the fences between 8pm and 5am. Let us hope conditions will quickly improve so that the people will not have to live in such fear. Fortunately in our case contact was made with our Editor who phoned us several times with news and instructions so that we found he was still alive and cheerful. I don't recommend PNG telephones though! After trying for some 36 hours to ring him, I was told: "The Archbishop's phone has not been working for three weeks!" That seemed to apply to most other numbers Father Wilson had given us -- at least in the High-

lands. What to do? Is one supposed to use telepathy? Finally help arrived in the person of a kind SVD priest whose phone was working.

* * * * *

As we go to press my daughter and her husband, with their two little children, are about to fly to Darwin where they had met and married. Judy taught at the Aboriginal school at Angurugu on Groote Eylandt but I doubt they will make it out there this trip. On the way home they will visit Alice Springs to catch up with some of their old friends.

* * * * *

No other news this time. Just nice to sit by a warm fire with a good book while Winter runs its course.

Cheers!

Secretary Keren