

THE 1969
JAMES BACKHOUSE
LECTURE

**TOWARD A
MULTI-RACIAL SOCIETY**

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR: A physical scientist with a deep sense of social responsibility, Dr. A. Barrie Pittock was born in Warrnambool, Victoria, in 1938, and educated at the University of Melbourne, where he qualified for a Ph.D. in Physics in 1963.

His first involvement with Aboriginal affairs was as an undergraduate with the National Union of Australian University Students' Aboriginal Scholarships Scheme. A hitch-hiking tour of Aboriginal Settlements in New South Wales and Queensland in 1958 impressed him with the seriousness of Aboriginal poverty and of white discrimination and apathy.

Following his conscientious objection to military training in 1956, he began attending the Melbourne Meeting of Friends, where he was accepted into membership in 1959.

In 1963 he went as a Fulbright Scholar to the, United States of America, where he did research on atmospheric ozone at the National Centre for Atmospheric Research in Boulder, Colorado. While in the U.S. he spent three months full-time touring American Indian areas and visiting with former and present workers in American Indian affairs, including the late John Collier. He also spent a month in New Zealand in 1964 studying Maori affairs.

He has taken part in several work camps related to Aborigines and has represented Friends on the Victorian Christian Youth Council, the Australian Christian Youth Council, and since 1965 on the Aborigines Committee of the Victorian Council of Churches. In 1966 he became Legislative Reform Convener of the Federal Council for the Advancement of Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders, and in that capacity was active in the 1967 Referendum Campaign and the 1968 Aboriginal Land Rights Campaign. He has served on the committee of the Victorian Association for Immigration Reform since its formation in 1960, and on the Quaker Service Council of Australia since its inception in 1964.

He has written a number of articles on atmospheric physics, and on various aspects of Aboriginal affairs. He is married with two children.

The James Backhouse Lecture

This is the sixth in a series of lectures instituted by Australia Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends on the occasion of the establishment of that Yearly Meeting on January 1, 1964. This lecture was delivered in Adelaide, South Australia, on January 5, 1969, during the sessions of the Yearly Meeting.

James Backhouse was an English Friend who visited Australia from 1832 till 1838. He and his companion, George Washington Walker, travelled widely, but spent most of their time in Tasmania, then known as Van Diemen's Land. It was through this visit that Quaker Meetings were first established in Australia. James Backhouse was a botanist who published full scientific accounts of what he saw, besides encouraging Friends, and following up his deep concern for the convicts and for the welfare of the aboriginal inhabitants of the country.

Australian Friends hope that this new series of lectures will bring fresh insights into truth, often with some particular reference to the needs and aspirations of Australian Quakerism.

RICHARD G. MEREDITH, *Presiding Clerk*

Australia Yearly Meeting

Prologue

This essay is addressed primarily to a group of well-intentioned white Australians. In it I want to present a point of view, and raise questions, which most white Australians have never taken seriously. I want to do this basically because I believe most of us are deluding ourselves about race relations in this country. We see Australia and its racial history, past, present and future as only white men could see her. It is time we took a new look and tried to understand that there are other points of view which may be more realistic than our own; for the reality may require a different response than the myth.

When our British forefathers took this land they termed it "waste and unoccupied": in reality they conquered the Aboriginal people by force of arms, disease, starvation, and the destruction of Aboriginal social systems.¹ We are heirs to a colonial empire which was built largely on force and a deep and abiding belief in the superiority of the British people and their institutions.

We have tried, partly out of a sense of guilt, to ignore and forget these facts. We even advise Aborigines to "forget past injustices," ignoring both the sanctimonious overtones and the fact that the injustices continue into the present, and will probably continue into the future, for all we are doing about them.

There have been, and there are, white men who have recognised the truth and stated it clearly. Unfortunately they have been few, and have gone largely unheeded. Notable amongst them is the English Quaker, James Backhouse, after whom this lecture is named.

Backhouse visited the Australian colonies in the years 1832 to 1838, to discharge what he felt to be a "religious duty." One of his particular concerns was the state of the Aboriginal inhabitants.

Symptomatic of Backhouse's approach was the following note in the introduction to his "Narrative": "In the course of the Narrative, the term Savages is sometimes used in reference to the Aborigines of the countries visited; but it is only intended, by this term, to designate human beings, living on the wild produce of the earth and destitute of any traces of civilisation; and by no means to convey

the idea that these people are more cruel than the rest of the human race, or of inferior intellect."²

In 1837 Backhouse put in writing to the Governor of New South Wales his ideas concerning the Aborigines and what might be done to help them:

"In those parts of the Colony in which the White Population have taken possession of the lands, the Kangaroos and Emus, which were among the chief animals on which the Blacks subsisted, have been generally destroyed, and the grounds on which these animals fed is now depastured by the flocks and herds of the usurpers of the country; who have also introduced profligate habits among the Blacks, that are rapidly wasting their race, some tribes of which have already become extinct, and others are on the verge of extermination."

"It is scarcely to be supposed that in the present day any persons of reflection will be found who will attempt to justify the measures adopted by the British in taking possession of the territory of this people, who had committed no offence against our Nation; but who, being without strength to repel invaders, had their lands usurped, without any attempt at purchase by treaty or any offer of reasonable compensation, and a class of people introduced into their country, amongst whom were many . . . who . . . practised appalling cruelties upon this almost helpless race. And when any of the latter have retaliated, they have brought upon themselves the vengeance of British strength, by which beyond a doubt many of the unoffending have been destroyed, along with those who had ventured to return a small measure of these wrongs upon their white oppressors."

After making a number of practical suggestions, Backhouse continued: ". . . seeing the state to which the Blacks are reduced, and the vast pecuniary advantage derived by the Whites from the possession of their soil, the expense ought not to stand in the way of the amelioration of their condition, especially when it may be amply provided for out of the proceeds of the Government sales of the very lands which were the natural possession of the Blacks, and to which their right has only been questioned by a foe too powerful for them to contend or argue with."³

About the same time, Backhouse wrote to the chairman of the British House of Commons' Select Committee on Aboriginal Tribes, Sir Thomas Fowell Buxton, in the following terms:

"The system of colonization that has been pursued by the British Government has been upon principles that cannot be too strongly reprobated and which want radical reformation. Aborigines have had wholesale robbery of territory committed upon them by the Government, and settlers have become the receivers of this stolen property, and have borne the curse of it in the wrath of the aborigines who, sooner or later, have become exasperated at being driven off their rightful possessions."

"Though the mode of holding property differed among the aborigines of Van Diemen's Land from that used among English people, yet they had their property: each tribe was limited to its own hunting-ground; and into such hunting-grounds the island was divided; and it is said, the tenure on which the aborigines of New Holland hold their country is somewhat more specific than that formerly used by the now almost extinct race of aborigines of Van Diemen's Land."

He goes on: "Perhaps it might be for the best if, in eligible situations, the British Government would become the original purchasers (I do not mean by compelling sale, for that would be next to robbery), and would arrange for the preservation of the rights of the parties making the sale, and take steps to promote their settlement and civilisation, and would encourage missionaries to labour amongst them; and would also, on as reasonable terms as possible, dispose of the territories so purchased to settlers, maintaining likewise proper civil government at such places."⁴

The Select Committee to which Backhouse wrote, itself concluded that "the native inhabitants of any land have an incontrovertible right to their own soil,"⁵ and this is recognised in international law and practice outside Australia, which goes back to the Spanish "Laws of the Indies" of 1594.⁶

The Aborigine, and indeed we ourselves may well ask how far Australia has progressed in terms of racial justice in the 130-odd years which have passed since the days of Backhouse and the Select Committee of 1837. Regrettably, and to our individual and corporate shame, the answer, as I will show in part, is not very far. There are indeed still many white Australians, some in high places, who believe Aborigines to be of inferior intellect and ability; incapable, for instance, of running their own communities or their own cattle stations. And we still have

governments, which we have elected, which deny that Aborigines have any right to land or compensation by virtue of their rightful inheritance.

What have we done individually or corporately, as members of the Society of Friends which Backhouse was so concerned to nurture in this country, to develop and further his insights?

Like most other men of good will we have often done our best to help individuals here and there, providing scholarships or kindergartens, advice and encouragement, and these deeds are not to be dismissed out of hand. However, when it comes to the big issues which question the whole relationship between Aborigines and newcomers (as Backhouse did), and which threaten the whole framework of "policy" and the "status quo," how many of us stand committed to morality - and justice rather than order and expediency?

Racism in Australia

Let me review, briefly and inadequately, some of the main areas of concern. First we must start with definitions of some necessary terms such as "racism" and its two varieties, "individual and institutional racism."

(White) "racism" is "the conscious or unconscious belief in the inherent superiority of persons of European ancestry, which entitles all white peoples to a position of dominance and privilege."⁷

Racism in this sense is more than pride in one's own race, or even of preference in personal associations; it is essentially a question of dominance or privilege determined by racial origin.

Such racism can be directed personally from an individual of one race to an individual of another race, for instance by acts of violence or ridicule. This conscious and overt behaviour we may call "individual racism."

Contrasted to individual racism is something we may call "institutional racism." Institutional racism is not readily attributable to the views or actions of individuals, but to the operation of the established system of laws and institutions of a whole society.⁸

Individual racism still exists in Australia. In recent years I have seen for myself or else can recall newspaper reports of such incidents from every mainland State in the country. Usually it concerns the housing of Aboriginal people in white towns, or discrimination in hotels and other public facilities. Occasionally it involves violence. Such incidents are sometimes, but not always, much publicised and officially condemned.

Regrettably, however, South Australia is the only State to legislate against such acts, and responsible administrations all over Australia tend to minimise and cover up the misdeeds of their employees in this regard. Whatever the truth of particular allegations, the tendency all too often seems to be to avoid the honest and independent inquiries which alone can ensure that justice in these cases not only is done, but is also seen to be done. Real, alleged and rumoured cases of individual racism contribute a great deal to the bitterness and fear felt by many Aborigines.

Institutional racism, although it is widespread and terribly damaging to all concerned, is largely ignored, hidden, or held to be somehow justified in Australia.

Externally, Australia's euphemistically titled "restrictive immigration policy" is the outstanding example, and one which is symptomatic of widespread racist thinking in this country. Australians, it seems, can get rightly concerned about individual non-Europeans who have somehow got across an image of themselves as persons, but not about the principle and policy which leads to such cases.⁹ Australians rightly concern themselves about refugees from Hungary or Czechoslovakia, but largely ignore, for example, the Chinese refugees in Indonesia and Hong Kong.

Aborigines are the victims of many forms of institutional racism in Australia.

Wage discrimination has long been a glaring example.¹⁰ Despite recent favourable changes in some industries, lower wages are still being paid to Aborigines in the Northern Territory under the Wards Employment Ordinance, and in Queensland under the 1966 Regulations of "The Aborigines and Torres

Strait Islanders' Affairs Act of 1965."¹¹ The simple principle that there should be only one set of industrial laws for all Australians has yet to be established.

As Backhouse so clearly recognised, the denial of Aboriginal rights to their traditional land is a most basic form of institutional racism "wholesale robbery." Land is the only economic asset, apart from their physical strength, with which Aborigines could ward off poverty and degradation in the face of white settlement. It is this continuing loss, more than any other single factor, which has and is making paupers out of most Aborigines. It is not a question of a return to a hunting and food-gathering economy, but of having the economic capital with which to enter the twentieth century on equal terms with the usurpers of their country.

Limitations on the personal freedom and legal rights of Aborigines persist, to a remarkable degree, both in Queensland and the Northern Territory. In these areas Aborigines normally resident on Aboriginal Reserve are subject to the will of often paternalistic or authoritarian administrators armed with the power to arbitrarily direct and interfere in the daily life of the people in a manner which would be regarded as intolerable in white society. Laws ostensibly designed, and no doubt genuinely believed to be protective, have become instruments for the suppression of initiative and the exercise of authoritarianism.^{11 12}

Perhaps most real in terms of the everyday experience of Aborigines is discrimination in the standards of public administration in the case of Aborigines as against non-Aborigines. Unsuitable and unqualified staff, and unfilled but vital staff positions are common on Aboriginal Reserves to a degree which would cause public outcry and scandal in a white community. Similarly, local authorities commonly tolerate bad housing and sanitation in Aboriginal fringe-dwellings which would never be tolerated if non-Aborigines lived in the same situation.

Effective discrimination in the administration of justice in the courts is also common in such centres as Darwin and Alice Springs. Illiterate Aborigines, often unable to understand and speak ordinary English, let alone legal jargon, are frequently brought before courts in these centres without interpreters or legal representation. The Director of Social Welfare in the Northern Territory, commenting on protests at this state of affairs, has been quoted recently as saying by way of explanation, "It would result in an intolerable strain on Welfare Officers."¹³

Frank Stevens, an economist formerly at the Australian National University, has estimated that approximately 8,000 able-bodied Aboriginal men are unemployed or under-employed in northern Australia, and that without major changes in policy this number will not decrease in the foreseeable future.¹⁴ This represents at present approximately 50% of the Aboriginal work force in the area, a figure which would be quite intolerable if it applied to a similar white community.

Similarly, Aboriginal poverty and ill-health is so bad that were it true of a non-Aboriginal community in Australia it would bring immediate and urgent emergency relief measures into action. Dr. F. Lancaster Jones, in a demographic survey of the Northern Territory,¹⁵ found that "On any reasonable assumption (as to accuracy) the infant mortality rate amongst Aborigines remains extremely high. In Central Australia, indeed, the registered infant mortality rate was 208 per 1,000 live births, which must be among the highest infant mortality rates in the world." (p. 96). He goes on to say, "the causes of infant mortality among Aborigines in the Northern Territory are not yet under control and that no immediate decline in its incidence can be anticipated. The rapid increase in the number of Aborigines at many Government Settlements and Mission Stations has tended to foster conditions conducive to the rapid spread of diseases such as gastroenteritis, dysentery and pneumonia, all of which have caused excessive mortality among Aboriginal infants and children." (p. 97).

According to Jones' figures, 1 child in 6 dies in its first four years in the Northern Territory. Although no similar figures are published for other parts of Australia, it is clear from the similar age structure of the part-Aboriginal population¹⁶ and the extreme poverty and poor living conditions, that similar death rates must apply to the Aboriginal and part-Aboriginal population as a whole throughout Australia.

From a survey of the part-Aboriginal population of rural New South Wales by Prof. C. D. Rowley,¹⁶ it was found that 37% of Aboriginal dwellings were classified as "shacks" and that Aborigines averaged 1.6 persons per room. 51% of Aboriginal dwellings did not contain enough beds for the number of people living in them, 49% had no laundry, 46% no separate kitchen, 38% no water in the dwelling, and 41% no garbage disposal service, to mention but a few of the sad statistics.

Whatever rationalisations we can offer in these various instances of institutional racism, certain cold facts remain. One is that, whatever the reason or historical context, Aborigines today suffer many handicaps which truly make them, as a race, under-privileged citizens. A second is that were a comparable number of non-Aborigines suffering in the same way, it would be regarded as a major political issue which would threaten to bring down governments.

Despite long-standing government policies of "assimilation," we in practice still apply double standards—one for the white folks and one for the black folks.

Assimilation as Racism

We shall now turn to the most subtle form of institutional racism, and the most all-pervasive: the policy of "assimilation" itself.

Public attitudes and policies in Australia, right from the time of first settlement, have always demanded conformity to the British-Australian way of life as an unquestioned and at least implicit price which has to be paid for equal opportunity. This has had disastrous psychological and practical consequences, notably in the failure of early and even current attempts by many sincere and devoted people to educate Aborigines.

Education was, and to a large extent still is, based on ignorance and disdain for the Aboriginal way of life. Educational effort has been geared to non-Aboriginal goals, to the objective of turning Aborigines into dark-skinned Europeans, and to the alienation of the individual from his traditions and his "more backward cousins."¹⁷

This same attitude found expression in the Victorian Act of 1887, which sought to "merge into the general population all half-castes capable of earning their living," by removing them from their full-blood relatives on the reserves. Far from achieving its stated objective, this policy resulted merely in the depopulation and closing of many Aboriginal reserves (for which the land-hungry whites were

grateful) and the growth of squalid camps populated by part-Aborigines. It turned potentially productive citizens into alienated paupers.

In practice, although not in name until Prof. A. P. Elkin popularised the term in the 1940's, Australia's Aboriginal policies have always been essentially assimilationist.. Aborigines have been expected to see the self-evident truth that the European way of life is in every respect superior and more desirable than their own. This was stated most explicitly in the following statement, issued in 1961 from a meeting of Federal and State Ministers in charge of Aboriginal affairs:

"The policy of assimilation means in the view of all Australian governments that all aborigines and part-aborigines are expected eventually to attain the same manner of living as other Australians and to live as members of a single Australian community, enjoying the same rights and privileges, accepting the same responsibilities, observing the same customs and influenced by the same beliefs, hopes and loyalties as other Australians."

In order to meet criticism of this policy, the wording was changed in 1965 so that now the policy officially *seeks* (rather than *means*) that all persons of Aboriginal descent *will choose* to attain (rather than *are expected eventually to attain*) a *similar* (rather than the *same*) manner and *standard* of living. The words *observing the same customs* are omitted, and so too is reference to their being influenced by the *same beliefs*.¹⁸

The key element in this change of definition is the insertion of the idea of Aboriginal *choice*; however, it is at the level of practical implementation that we must judge the reality of this theoretical change of policy. One has only to look at the recent case of the Gurindji people at Wattie Creek in the Northern Territory to see the real problem. A "choice" is only meaningful if positive alternatives are made available. The Gurindji people clearly *chose* to develop their own community on their own land, but the Commonwealth Government just as clearly rejected this choice.

In the words of the Minister for the Interior (9 Aug. 1968):

"The Government's aim is to ensure that all of the opportunities which the Australian community offers . . . are open to every Aboriginal and that all

Aboriginals are equipped to take advantage of those opportunities *in the way which most appeals to them.*"

"Singling out the issue of land rights and pressing for areas of land to be granted to *groups of Aboriginals* in remote places *would not serve this purpose.* On the contrary, we could end up with a series of depressed *Aboriginal communities* tied to a form of sub-standard living *with a barrier* between them and the rest of the Australian community. *Separatism and segregation* of Aboriginals would create here problems now being faced in other countries." (My emphasis added, A.B.P.)

One might well ask how giving Aborigines ownership of their land would make them poorer than at present, and what new barrier the Minister imagines Aboriginal ownership of economic assets would create between the already largely segregated Aboriginal communities such as monasteries or old people's villages!

The second example is the statement by the Commonwealth Minister for Immigration, made in the House of Representatives on 24th September 1968. In it he said that was not the wish of the people, and certainly not the policy of the government, to create a multi-racial society in Australia. The purpose of Australia's immigration policy, he said, was "to **maintain the homogeneity of the Australian people.** I feel sure that the people of Australia would not wish the Government to aim at **creating a multi-racial society** and the policy of the Government certainly does not."

Not only does this attitude beg the question as to whether limited numbers of selected non-Europeans can be admitted without causing racial tensions,⁹ but it also completely overlooks the fact that **Australia already is a multi-racial society.**

To come back to the question of the reality of Aboriginal choice in the policy of "assimilation," one of the great ironies of the policy as it has operated in the past is that, while it provides no positive alternative, it cannot avoid a *negative* one. Aborigines, when faced with a given policy, can still choose either to accept and co-operate with it, or else to reject and not co-operate with it. Most Aborigines, again and again, have made the same choice, to reject and oppose the implementation of policies decided for them by white men. More than any other

factor, this has been responsible for the historic failure of Australian Aboriginal policies.

When the Meriam Survey of 1928 revealed a similar failure of assimilationist policies in the United States of America, it led to the "Indian New Deal" under John Collier.

Collier's "Indian Reorganization Act" of 1934 initiated a policy of cultural revival, with a strengthening of tribal autonomy, and an increase in the Indians' economic base, including land holdings.¹⁹

The new policy in America was based on Collier's belief that there might be, indefinitely, American citizens with beliefs and affiliations different from the majority, so long as all were equal before the law. Collier recognised that tribal affiliations, rights in tribal lands held in common, adherence to old religions, and the use of old languages might well enrich the total community, and certainly constituted no fundamental threat to other Americans. To Collier it was a simple question of human freedom and diversity: Indians had as much right to stay Indians as Jews to stay Jews, or Catholics to stay Catholics, and an equal right to associate together and run their own communal affairs.

This is not to say that Collier believed that Indians, any more than Jews or Catholics, should retain their traditional way of life unchanged by the impact of the twentieth century. Collier recognised that the Indian had to modernise, but not at the price of ceasing to be Indian:

"Assimilation, not into our culture but into modern life, and preservation and intensification of heritage are not hostile choices, excluding one another, but are interdependent through and through. It is the continuing social organism, thousands of years old and still consciously and unconsciously imbued with and consecrated to its ancient past, which must be helped to incorporate the new technologies. It is the ancient tribal, village, communal organisation which must conquer the modern world."²⁰

Despite John Collier's fervent and idealistic attitude in defence of Indian rights, his policies were soundly based in economics and the psychological framework necessary for later economic development. This is not the place to discuss cases and details-suffice to say that we Australians, both Aboriginal and

non-Aboriginal, have much to learn from the successes and failures of recent American Indian development, not least in terms of the value of ownership of economic assets such as land and mineral rights.²¹

It is perhaps an ironical twist that the very success of the development under the Indian Reorganisation Act has raised the educational and material standards of some Indian groups to the point where individual Indians from those groups are now much more readily assimilated than would have been the case without an initial strengthening of the group. Now that their group identity is no longer under such strong attack, these Indians have lowered their defensive barriers and are more open to the modernising influence of the outside world. Perhaps they also have more chance of influencing it.

The Impending Crisis

Aborigines are well aware, even if white Australians are not, that individual and institutional racism are wide-spread in this country. Wage discrimination, unemployment, poor health, poverty, and dual standards of justice and administration are everyday experiences to Aboriginal and part-Aboriginal people. Some are bitter, many drown that bitterness in alcohol, or hide it through fear and the well-learned lesson that it is best to tell the white man what he wants to hear.

Far too few Aborigines yet have the education and experience to put into English what they feel and want. Fewer still have the skill to do so in the face of opposition from politicians experienced in the arts of rhetoric and begging the question.

Nevertheless, increasingly articulate spokesmen are appearing. They often lose out on television to the fast and smooth talking representatives of Governments and vested interests. Sometimes their emotions get the better of their logic or their tact, and sometimes they are just too polite to contradict untruths. Sometimes they are accused by politicians of uttering words "put into their mouths" by sinister and mysterious agitators (how many politicians write all their own speeches?).

Despite all this, leaders are appearing. To the extent that education is succeeding it is producing better informed, more articulate and more radical leaders. It is significant that the new generation, like black people elsewhere, are thinking and talking in terms of economic and political power. In tune with the times, they are impatient for equal rights and freedom from all forms of discrimination *now*.

Modern communications, and the slow but real progress of education (including non-government education through Aboriginal advancement movements) have produced both a revolution of expectations and a revolution of identity and methodology. The Aboriginal residents of shanty dwellings, cattle stations, missions and government settlements are no longer unaware of the possibilities in the outside world. Transistor radios, and to a lesser extent books and television, have brought the whole world into these once isolated and insulated communities.

Now practically all Aborigines are coming to hear of Australia's high standard of living, of the mineral boom, and of Martin Luther King, Stokely Carmichael, and a thing called "Black Power." Further, they are finding out about New Guinea, about self-government and land rights there, and about how United Nations pressure is keeping Australia on its toes.

When the Aborigines on the cattle stations around Port Hedland went on strike, back in the late 1940's, the presence of the lone white man, Donald McLeod, was probably essential.²² Despite Frank Hardy's somewhat egocentric account,²³ I doubt if any white man was essential to the strike on Wave Hill Station in 1966.

The 89% "yes" vote on the Aboriginal question in the referendum of 1967 raised the hopes and expectations of many Aborigines, not for the first time. When Mr. Wentworth, as the new Commonwealth Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, virtually offered the Gurindji people at Wave Hill some of the land they had asked for, hopes of a new deal were raised higher still. When these hopes were dashed by Federal Cabinet shortly after, I believe that many Aborigines, and in particular many Aboriginal leaders, began to lose faith in Australian democracy.

There is little talk now amongst Aborigines of trying to change the Government's mind; the talk I hear is of defiance and of going to the United Nations. Far from being "agitators," most whites in the Aboriginal advancement movement now seem like counsellors of caution. They are among the few remaining leaders with faith in the internal processes of Australian political democracy. Aborigines are tiring of petitions and protest meetings. They want action, even if it means going outside Australia to get it.

The north-western half of Australia contains only some 370,000 people, of whom approximately one quarter are either pure Aboriginal or of Aboriginal or Islander extraction.¹⁰ According to Lancaster Jones^{15 16} the rates of increase of the Aboriginal and part-Aboriginal populations are each about 2 % per annum. At this rate these populations will double in about 20 to 25 years. This is appreciably faster than the growth rate of the non-Aboriginal population of Australia, even with our large-scale programme of (European) immigration. If the mortality rates amongst the Aboriginal and Islander populations were lowered by better public health measures and improved diet, the rate of increase of these populations would be even more dramatic. This is best illustrated by considering that about 53 % of the Aboriginal population is in the 0-15 year age group, compared to 30% of the total Australian population.

It follows that, despite our racial immigration policy, we already have a multi-racial society in northern Australia, and that Australia *will become increasingly multi-racial* into the foreseeable future. The crucial policy question then is not whether we *ought* to become a multi - racial society, but what sort of multi-racial society we want to build - one based on dominance and privilege or one based on real equality and mutual respect.

Consider then the effects of the present widespread institutional racism, and in particular the growing population of coloured Australians who are living in poverty, deprived of their only real economic asset, the land, and largely unemployed or under-employed. The problem should be obvious, for we have the classic ingredients which spell trouble in multi-racial societies elsewhere; the coincidence of economic and racial differences, growing population pressure, underemployment, legitimate grievances, and an increasing awareness of the disparity on the part of the under-privileged group.

Poverty and Black Power

Oscar Lewis, the American sociologist, has defined what he calls the "culture of poverty,"²⁴ which is a style of life adopted by people who have lived for generations in poverty. He bases his definition and description on observations among the poor in Mexico, and among Negroes and Puerto Ricans in the United States of America.

According to Lewis, "The culture of poverty is both an adaptation and a reaction of the poor to their marginal position . . . It represents an effort to cope with feelings of hopelessness and despair which develop from the realisation of the improbability of achieving success in terms of the values and goals of the larger society . . . Once the culture of poverty comes into existence it tends to perpetuate itself from generation to generation because of its effect on the children. By the time slum children are six or seven they have usually absorbed the basic attitudes and values of their sub-culture. Thereafter they are psychologically unready to take full advantage of changing conditions that may develop in their lifetime."

He goes on: "The lack of effective participation and integration of the poor in the major institutions of the larger society is one of the crucial characteristics of the culture of poverty. This . . . results from a variety of factors which may include lack of economic resources, fear, suspicion or apathy, and the development of local solutions for local problems. However, 'participation' in some of the institutions of the larger society - for example, the jails, the army and the public relief system-does not *per se* eliminate the traits of the culture of poverty. In the case of a relief system which barely keeps people alive, both the basic poverty and the sense of hopelessness are perpetuated rather than eliminated,"

". . . People in a culture of poverty produce little wealth and receive little in return. Chronic unemployment and under-employment, low wages, lack of property, lack of savings, absence of food reserves in the home and chronic shortage of cash, imprison the family and the individual in a vicious circle . . . Along with disengagement from the larger society, there is a hostility to the basic institutions of what are regarded as the dominant classes. There is hatred of the police, f, mistrust of government and of those in high positions, and a cynicism that extends to the church. This gives the culture of poverty a high potential for

protest and for being used in political movements aimed against the existing social order."

Such an analysis, based as it is essentially on observation in North America, seems almost prophetic when held up as a mirror to the Aboriginal situation. Doubtless many will think it unduly pessimistic. I do not think so. The proof lies not in northern Australia, where the process is still in its early stages, but in Victoria and New South Wales, where 150 years of effort have produced little but fringe-dwellers whom Prof. C. D. Rowley quite clearly regards as fitting into "a typical culture of poverty".¹⁶ If you can imagine 25% or more of the population living in such conditions you will begin to see my vision, or nightmare, of northern Australia a generation hence.

There is another parallel we can draw with the ghetto-dwellers of North America besides the "culture of poverty." It is the parallel between the old-style civil rights movement in the U.S., with its emphasis on finding the individual Negro a home and a job in an "integrated" neighbourhood, i.e., out of the Negro ghetto, and the policy of assimilation in Australia.

Both aim at helping the more able and adaptable individuals from the under-privileged community to get out into the "main-stream" of the dominant white society. Both have succeeded in doing so for many individuals. However, both have been defeated essentially by the same basic fact - that the under-privileged community, be it Negro ghetto or Aboriginal settlement, is growing in population faster than the "cream" of those societies can be skimmed off into the outside world.

In both cases the continuing process, in which individuals (who through good fortune or exceptional drive and ability "qualify") are removed from the under-privileged community, deprives that community of its potential leadership and ability to raise its own standards and self-esteem. Too often those who move out are completely lost to their former community either by choice or expedient necessity.

It is this, more than anything else, which makes life in a ghetto or Aboriginal settlement such a psychologically self-defeating and self-perpetuating existence. If material, educational and psychological standards are to be raised for the bulk of the increasing population in these segregated communities, this must

be done *where the people are*, in their own communities. It is only when this has been achieved that "integration" in the American sense, or "assimilation" in Australian usage, can be brought about on a large scale.

The American response to this situation, to the numerical failure of the old-style civil rights movement, has been the emergence of the "Black Power" movement.⁸

In the words of a recent World Council of Churches study document: "Black Power ideology tends to reject racial integration as an immediate goal in favour of building strength within the black ghettos and to de-emphasise inter-racial endeavours. Theorists of the movement see this development as the process of disenchantment of the races on the level of white dominance and paternalism in order to prepare both races for re-engagement at a higher level bottomed (sic) upon full equality and partnership as the fundamental condition precedent to reconciliation and eventual integration. Observers suggest that this is a movement towards abandonment of the traditional goal of cultural assimilation in the United States and an embracing of the goal of cultural pluralism."

". . . the Black Power movement, among increasing numbers of Negro youth in the United States (expresses) determination to achieve racial equality through self-determination of the black community and the rapid acquisition of political and economic power. It also seeks to throw off the heritage of a degrading self-concept, imposed by white racism, and to find a distinctive cultural identity consistent with racial pride and with mature, free manhood and womanhood. Hence, the Black Power movement calls for all-black organisations, a black-led struggle for Negro rights, and the acceptance of whites only if they are willing to work under black leadership."²⁵

In their recent book, Stokely Carmichael and Charles Hamilton say: "Integration as a goal today speaks to the problem of blackness not only in an unrealistic way but also in a despicable way. It is based on complete acceptance of the fact that in order to have a decent house or education, people must move into a white neighbourhood or send their children to a white school. This reinforces, among both black and white, the idea that 'white' is automatically superior . . . No person can be healthy, complete and mature if he must deny a part of himself; this is what 'integration' has required so far . . ."⁸

Rather curiously, in view of the sudden prominence of the concept, the idea represented by the Black Power movement is far from new. The American Indian, ever since the coming of the first white men to North America, has been struggling to maintain his own culture and "power base" in the land and tribal organisation. In this he has been remarkably successful, although until the advent of the Indian Reorganisation Act of 1934 it was a struggle against great odds.¹⁹

With increasing education and material prosperity on many Indian Reservations, the "thrust of young American Indians, especially those who are university-trained, (is) now to reassert their ethno-cultural identity as Indians. In the past, educated Indians used to be absorbed into white society, thereby depriving the Indian community of forward-looking leadership. They regard this process as anything but a wholesome integration. They resent it as a process of cultural genocide. With this general emphasis, there is also a tendency to revive the spirit of tribal nationalism with renewed pride in the unique culture and language of each tribal nation."

"The crucial issue for Amerindians is their collective survival in the face of (the) highly individualistic culture of industrial civilisation which has been causing disintegration of their basically communal culture from its foundation up. Today young, intelligent Indians are becoming increasingly militant in this struggle."²⁵

Such an analysis thus leads me to conclude that race relations in Australia are to a large extent wrongly based, with widespread injustice, and the increasing prospect of more organised, vocal and radical Aboriginal protest. With the almost daily example and growing influence of "Black Power" type movements in the U.S. and elsewhere, this situation puts Australia in a new perspective. We are already a multi-racial society. We now have to face the questions as to where we want to go from here and how we are to get there. These questions raise issues which go right to the core of our traditions and beliefs.

The Goal of Cultural Pluralism

If the goal of assimilation of large numbers of individual Aborigines into the Anglo - Australian way of life is not realistic in the short run, not acceptable

to the Aborigines, and essentially racist in its assumptions, what then ought to be our goal in race relations?

Clearly a permanent and forced segregation of the races is even less acceptable and less realistic. The races are inextricably bound together by economic inter-dependence, inter-marriage, and by the common recognition of the immorality and stupidity of enforced segregation.

The concept of a tolerant multi-racial society, one in which different races and cultures live freely together in the same country, is a middle way which deserves more attention than it has been given to date. Such a plural society would tolerate and even encourage the preservation of distinct group identities and cultures on a basis of equal opportunity, mutual tolerance, and freedom of the individual to choose his own way of life.

Whether assimilation is the inevitable end product, and the plural society merely a means to that end, is to me an academic question best left to academics and to history. Nevertheless, it is commonly argued that assimilation is the end product of social evolution and that it should therefore be recognised as such and stated as the goal of racial policy.

Such an argument is questionable primarily because it is undesirable to state *as policy* a goal which is currently unacceptable and psychologically damaging to the minority group. It presumes to impose as policy the wishes or historical judgment of one racial group upon another.

Secondly, it is questionable whether racial and cultural assimilation is inevitable in the long run. Even if it were so, one might well ask how long such a process might take, for it hardly seems realistic to state as a goal of social policy a state which might take literally hundreds of years to come about. We might well pause to consider such cultural, national and racial minorities as the Welsh-speaking people of Wales, the French-Canadians, and the various Iroquois tribes of the north-eastern United States and Canada, all of whom have survived centuries of domination.²⁶

Discussing the Maori people of New Zealand, Prof. W. R. Geddes has stated: ". . . a merging (of the Maoris and Europeans) does not appear likely for a very long time . . . complete merging of the groups (seems) too remote for policy

to be based upon the prospect. Policy, one might suggest, had better leave the matter alone . . . Emphasis on either assimilation or on Maoridom as aims of overall policy would be unfortunate because it is inconsistent with the more important concept of democracy which supports the rights of all groups within the law and of individual persons to choose their own associations."²⁷

What seems more probable than complete assimilation is a form of plural society in which group differences based on racial origin become less and less important in most daily activities, but which retain importance in certain special areas of activity.²⁸ Such group differences already exist in white society, for instance different church and political affiliations, different sporting interests, and different professional or spare-time activities. Just as people of Scots ancestry, and even many who have "adopted" Scots ancestry, can occasionally indulge in Highland dancing and feel a special interest and pride in things Scottish, so perhaps with the Aborigines in years to come.

Another argument commonly used in favour of assimilation as a goal of social policy is that the presence of pluralistic minority groups in a society seems always to harbour the danger of conflict and of the subordination of one group by another.²⁹ This is largely behind the Australian fear of groups of people who want to be different.

Given that different groups already exist, such an argument loses much of its point if it is conceded that a tolerant plural society is at least an essential prerequisite for successful assimilation. Assimilation, as opposed to segregation or genocide, is only possible in a racially and culturally tolerant society. A plural society, on the other hand, can arise in an intolerant or racist society as a result of a compromise or balance between opposing forces, and evolve into a more tolerant society. A case in point is the growth of tolerance between the Catholic and Protestant elements in Australian society.

Assimilation *as a policy which is not acceptable* to the minority group in question is more a *cause* of group conflict than a means of avoiding it.

What distinctive elements might Aborigines preserve in a plural society, and of what value are these elements?

Ultimately, this is a question for the Aborigines to answer in their own way and from their own point of view. However, we can catch glimpses of the sort of things which have seemed of value to sympathetic observers. Such elements are not merely the outward signs and symbols of a vanishing past in terms of art, music and dance, however valuable it may be to preserve these as living arts: far more important are the attitudes and ideals which sustained the Aboriginal people in the past, which are still to be found among them, and from which modern technological man may well learn.

T.G.H.Strehlow summed up these ideals as "the principles of co-operation, not subordination; of differentiation without inequality; of tolerance for the customs of other peoples in their own country; and of respect for the hunting grounds of other tribes."³⁰

The late John Collier believed fervently that the American Indians, and indeed all tribal people, have a great deal to contribute to twentieth century man. In conversation he put it this way -

"Any so-called primitive society. . . incorporates discoveries and adjustments, spiritual as well as material, (made) across thousands of years. There's the famous view of the anthropologist, Ruth Benedict, of the arc of human potential: no one society embraces the whole arc, it takes a thousand societies to embrace the whole arc of human potential. Each of these primitive societies, almost without exception, has preserved something of universal value - Universal Man."

"To pass from the general to the particular: if you read Kropotkin's great book on 'Mutual Aid' you'll find that mutual aid, intense and profound, existed in nearly all primitive societies-with all that mutual aid entails - feeling for the other person, feeling for the group."

"Again, generally speaking, the primitive group has integrated itself profoundly with the land-landscape, soil, waters, sacred places; and its feeling towards the earth is essentially religious, mystical, poetical, rhapsodical."

"Again, you'll find that nearly all primitive societies have achieved ways of bringing the child through childhood and adolescence into the full grouphood so that the whole human potential is realised and capitalised by the group. The

individual in the primitive society is fulfilled through his group. His group is his fulfilment, but his group is not just a social organism - it is man in nature, man in the spirit."

"The feeling among all settled primitives of the sacredness of the earth and man's union with earth certainly is something the world needs - and needs terribly."

"Another feature which you find in almost all primitive societies is heroism. It expects its people to endure, and to triumph over suffering, triumph over fear. Heroism may be the most important endowment - our own very self-seeking soft age doesn't value heroism very much."

"Finally I'll mention that among nearly all primitives you encounter the great importance of ritual, that is the social art of sharing deep emotion - that's what ritual is."³¹

Perhaps Collier's view is a little idealised. Nevertheless, there is sufficient truth in it to give us all pause to reflect on the values which so-called civilised man has lost. In an age of ideological conflict and nuclear deterrence, we need to value co-operation and mutual aid. In an age of growing economic inequalities between peoples and nations, we need different attitudes to the acquisition and sharing of material wealth. In an age threatened by environmental pollution on a world scale, we need a new reverence for nature and the world around us. In an age of hurrying tension, in which we are threatened by the prospect of unemployment due to automation, we need a different sense of time and a different attitude to the supposed moral virtue of labour. In an age of racial conflict, we need a new attitude to the diversity and otherness of our fellow-men.

As Frank Engel, Secretary of the Division of Mission of the Australian Council of Churches has said: ". . . the strength of Aboriginal culture is its stress on spiritual and human values and its discounting of material ones, together with its strong emphasis on human relationships and responsibility to the group. The time has come for a re-evaluation of the two cultures and a facing of the fact that while Christianity has been closely associated with European culture, that culture today is non-Christian, even anti-Christian, and that in certain respects Aboriginal culture is nearer to the spirit of Christ. Obvious examples are the gentleness of Aborigines contrasted with the aggressiveness of the European, and Aboriginal

insistence on finding the common mind of the group as against the self-assertion of individualistic European leadership."³²

Obviously modern technology poses serious problems of adaptation for so-called primitive societies. However, the rapid changes in modern technology also require changes in our society, and we may not be any better equipped to deal with them than are the Aborigines. Some of our values, as has already been suggested, may in fact be less in tune with the times.

A simple example of parallel problems of adaptation may help illustrate the point. Aborigines who settle into village life have serious public health problems due to the change from a semi-nomadic life where sanitation and garbage were not important. Similarly, we have a serious and growing problem of air and water pollution due to the rapid growth of industry and the cities. Are we better able to safeguard our environment with our individualistic materialistic values than are the Aborigines with their traditional reverence for nature? In this, as in many other things, we have little cause to feel superior.

To sum up the discussion of cultural pluralism: our goal ought not to be the unrealistic dangerous and racist one of eliminating group differences, as if they were undesirable in themselves, but rather a fostering of a growing recognition of the values and merits of diverse traditions and cultures. Group differences ought to be removed from the arena of fear, privilege and dominance and placed in the more peaceful and productive realms of creative co-existence.

There is no reason why a multi-racial society, such as the Australia of the present and the future, should not also be a tolerant one in which cultural diversity is a subject of pride, interest and mutual respect. We might even be led eventually to extend this concept to our Asian neighbours! The goal of a tolerant plural society closes no doors: it neither separates people nor extinguishes the insights and values of their diverse human traditions.

The Role of Violence

If the goal of a free and tolerant multi-racial society is to be achieved in Australia, it is clear that men of goodwill must become active. However, Australian historical attitudes and the current existence of widespread institutional

racism, coupled with the factors of population growth and distribution, pose serious problems as to how one should act. This problem is complicated further by the impact of overseas developments and in particular by the varying influence of events, and fashions in policies and methods, concerned with race relations in the United States.

Consider the question of the role of violence which white people usually associate with the Black Power movement, but which most black people regard as a minor question of tactics, at least in the American ghettos.

The Black Power idea in essence is that black people are more likely to achieve freedom and justice for themselves by working together as a group, pursuing their goals by the same processes of democratic action as any other common-interest pressure group such as returned servicemen or chambers of commerce. Up to this point Black Power is hardly controversial, and the idea, whether known by that name or not, is widely accepted amongst Aborigines who are active in their own cause.

Controversy, and our dilemma, arises over two aspects of the American movement. The first concerns the role of the "white liberal," or sympathetic non-black, in the movement, and the second concerns the use of violence. .

One way of looking at these two questions is to regard them as aspects of a more fundamental question, which is whether in the pursuit of its goals the black advancement movement should be guided more by general principles than by expediency. In a real sense this was Martin Luther King's position, based as it was on a strong Christian faith. Martin Luther King based his campaign on an inclusive Christian love, which not only moved him to work in close and open collaboration with white sympathisers but also moved him to consistently reject violence as an instrument of policy.

This is not to say that King did not go out of his way to find and promote black leadership and self-help. He realised that growing Negro self-respect and a growing sense of Negro achievement were essential to the morale and regeneration of his people, and not in the least inconsistent with love for other men.

It must also be stressed that Martin Luther King was quite ready to sacrifice "order" for "justice." He was quite ready to disobey unjust laws, and indeed regarded this as a Christian duty. He was willing even to go ahead with non-violent protests in the knowledge that these challenges to an unjust status quo would "provoke" a violent reaction.³³

The difficulty in requiring a movement, as contrasted with an individual, to be guided by certain general principles, is that large groups of people seldom have many principles in common. Thus, to ask a given racial interest group to follow a set of principles not common to other racial groups, and which are not clearly in their own interests as expedients, is to be guilty of a form of racial discrimination.

If a movement adopts or accepts violence as a legitimate form of protest or instrument of change, those of us who advocate non-violence on principle have a number of choices. We can sacrifice non-violence in order to preserve our identification with the victims of injustice, opt out of the whole struggle, continue to advocate non-violence on tactical grounds, or attempt to act as a third force advocating non-violence on both sides. This is not a simple or easy choice and we can indeed be thankful, for selfish as well as other reasons, if such a choice is not forced upon us.

Whatever our reaction to this dilemma, American Black Power ideologists have stated their position quite clearly: "One of the most disturbing things about almost all white supporters has been that they are reluctant to go into their own communities - this is where the racism exists - and work to get rid of it . . . We are speaking of those whites who see the need for basic change and have hooked up with the black liberation movement because it seemed the most promising agent of such change. Yet they often admonish black people to be non-violent. *They should preach non-violence in the white community.*"⁸

A white community which has no real compunction about using violence as an instrument of national policy, whether in Viet Nam or elsewhere, does not have the moral right to condemn others who resort to violence for the purpose of upsetting an unjust *status quo*.

Preaching non-violence in the white community is not simply a question of advocating it in the physical sense, for example in regard to Viet Nam or police

brutality, but of advocating the abolition of institutions and practices which sustain injustice. Those 1 in 6 Aboriginal children who die in their first four years of life in the Northern Territory are just as dead as if they had been killed by bullets or bayonets. Institutional racism in this country is "doing violence" to Aborigines, and to our professed values, every day.

In a recent report on "The Role of Violence in Social Change," a working group of the American Council of Churches confessed:

"The Church is ill-prepared to examine violence as an approach to social change because the tragic urban situation which faces America today can, to some extent, be blamed on the Church. Violence in our land is inherent in value structures and social processes which the Church itself undergirds and participates in as a social institution. The violence which permeates these structures and processes we shall term 'systemic violence.' Rarely does the Church repudiate such violence. On the contrary, the Church frequently sustains systemic violence with its silence, if not its benediction; with preference for order rather than for justice; and with a lack of zeal for the vindication of the victims of injustice."

"From the genocide practised upon the American Indian in our earliest days to the present disregard for the poor, the Church, which should have exceeded every institution in its righteous indignation and conscientious resistance has, in fact, continued to pronounce its blessing upon the system which produced such inhumanity. Even now the vast majority of Christians support this nation's violence in Vietnam while roundly condemning the violence of embittered black people in the urban ghettos. But how can Christians condemn 'violence in the streets' when the Church itself has not consistently condemned systemic violence in the society but has, too often, actually supported it?"

The report goes on to ask, "Can the Church simply condone violence knowing that violence begets violence, that hate multiplies hate, and that unchecked, chain-reaction violence could engulf us all? . . ."

"Christians can insist that violent reactions to systemic violence demand massive understanding and drastic remedial programmes rather than brutal reprisals . . . One criterion for judging violence is whether or not the violence seeks to preserve privilege based on injustice or to redress wrong. The former is unjustified violence. The latter can be justified. "

"Christians must make every effort to thwart, disrupt and undermine systemic violence by non-violent means. . . Detailed mobilisation of Church resources must be developed to respond to confrontation between the police-military arm of the State and subjugated, robbed and excluded populations . . . Christians should use all educational means available to them to teach American racial history, which includes the role of violence in support of racism . . . In any conflict between the government and the oppressed or between the privileged classes and the oppressed, the Church, for good or ill, must stand with the oppressed, for Jesus did say: 'Inasmuch as you did it unto the least of these, you did it unto me'. "³⁴

How do we relate the above statements, in their American context, to the problem of a multi-racial society in its Australian context?

Firstly, I believe we have to admit that institutional racism and systemic violence are strongly represented in the Australian racial scene. These have already been discussed above; if you still doubt their seriousness then I beg of you, please study them for yourself, for they cannot be lightly dismissed.

Secondly, my personal observations amongst Aborigines (mainly in the more settled areas) is that violence is currently rejected primarily on the grounds of expediency. This is not surprising in areas where Aborigines and part-Aborigines together number less than 1% of the population. I am convinced that bitterness is widespread, if not universal, but that Aborigines and part-Aborigines have learnt well that bitterness should not be shown.

Thirdly, despite all judgments to the contrary and despite arguments as to its futility, violence in the northern areas of Australia cannot be ruled out as impossible. All the ingredients for such a situation already exist - individual and institutional discrimination, the coincidence of colour and poverty, a rapidly increasing, substantial, and largely under-employed coloured population, and a growing sense of political and social awareness and frustration.

I do not believe that Aborigines are unique among men in being naturally and one hundred per cent non-violent. It is wishful thinking for either us or the administrations concerned to believe so. Thus, while we have escaped the dilemma of open racial violence in recent times, I believe the time has come for

us to act with the concern and urgency which violence might have prompted in us. If violence does come, it will be because we have failed to eliminate the systemic violence of injustice from Australian society.

It is my hope that in the years to come white Australians of goodwill will not earn the reproach which the late Dr. Martin Luther King once addressed to a similar body of Americans, when he said:

". . . I must confess that over the last few years I have been gravely disappointed with the white moderate. I have almost reached the regrettable conclusion that the Negroes' great stumbling block in the stride toward freedom is not the White Citizens' "Councillor" or the Ku Klux Klanner, but the white moderate who is more devoted to 'order' than to justice; who prefers a negative peace which is the absence of tension to a positive peace which is the presence of justice; who constantly says 'I agree with you in the goal you seek but I can't agree with your methods of direct action'; who paternalistically feels that he can set the time-table for another man's freedom; who lives by the myth of time and who constantly advises the Negro to wait until a 'more convenient season.' Shallow understanding from people of goodwill is more frustrating than absolute misunderstanding from people of ill-will. Lukewarm acceptance is much more bewildering than outright rejection."

"I had hoped that the white moderate would understand that law and order exist for the purpose of establishing justice, and that when they fail to do this they become the dangerously structured dams that block the flow of social progress. I had hoped that the white moderate would understand that the present tension in the South is merely a necessary phase of the transition from an obnoxious, negative peace, where the Negro passively accepted his unjust plight, to a substance-filled positive peace, where all men will respect the dignity and worth of human personality. Actually, we who engage in non-violent direct action are not the creators of tension. We merely bring to the surface the hidden tension that is already alive. We can bring it out in the open where it can be seen and dealt with. Like a boil that can never be cured as long as it is covered up but must be opened with all its pus-flowing ugliness to the natural medicines of air and light, injustice must likewise be exposed, with all of the tension its exposing creates, to the light of human conscience and the air of national opinion before it can be cured."³³

Epilogue

When the apostle Paul wrote to the Galatians, "There is no such thing as Jew and Greek, slave and freeman, male and female; for you are all one person in Christ Jesus"³⁵ he was not stating an anthropological fact, but testifying to the equal worth of all men in the sight of Christ. This is the basis of our belief in the infinite worth of each individual human being, irrespective of race, status or sex. It means, unequivocally, that every man has value and rights, simply by virtue of being a man; human rights do not have to be earned. There is no denying that men of different racial and cultural background are indeed different. These differences are part of our individuality, part of the spectrum of genetic and environmental differences which make each individual unique. As integral parts of the individual personality, these differences therefore must be respected for what they are, part of the infinite variety of mankind.

Like John Woolman, when explaining his reasons for travelling amongst the Indians of Pennsylvania in 1772, we ought to be able to say "Love was the first motion, and then a concern arose to spend some time with the Indians that I might feel and understand their life and the spirit they live in, if haply I might receive some instruction from them, or they be in any degree helped forward by my following the leadings of truth among them. . ."³⁶

I believe we, as Christians, realise something at least of the importance of the individual being part of a group, and that amongst the rights which men have, the right of associating freely with his fellows is important. In some measure the individual finds fulfilment in his group, for man is a social being. So it seems to me that justice towards individuals requires justice towards groups as groups.

Love is a reciprocal relationship between independent personalities, each with rights and spheres of interest. So it is with groups - a proper loving relationship between groups must be based on their rights to co-exist and influence matters in their own spheres of interest. I do not see such group existence and group power as inconsistent with a loving relationship, but rather as the proper basis for such a relationship.

Our task then is not to oppose group differences or legitimate group - power, i.e. power which does not place one group in a position of dominance or privilege with respect to another, but to welcome such diversity and reciprocity as

the basis of creative dialogue in a spirit of love. *Our task is to gain the free, non-violent, and voluntary acceptance by the white power structure of the legitimacy and value of a sharing of power with black people.*

In order to be true to this goal, and to our own values as Quakers and Christians, we need to act in love, truth and responsibility, but also with frankness and radical strength of purpose. We need to speak truth to power on race relations in a way which we have failed to do since the days of James Backhouse.

In conclusion, I would like to quote again from an American context, part of a message to Friends from the Sixth National Conference on Race Relations, held in North Carolina, July 1967.

"We are far from belittling what Friends are already doing to overcome the effects of prejudice on many fronts. We need more Friends personally involved in what is, after all, more a white than a minority problem. We need to develop more sensitivity to the subtler forms of discrimination and injustice, we need to work with church and other groups on many problems of opportunity denied the individual because of his race or colour or culture."

"But we need to be attacking these too-familiar civil rights problems in the light of a new awareness. It becomes increasingly clear that our existing social-economic-political-legal-military system - the framework within which the white establishment operates-simply cannot be patched up in such a way as to end exploitation and degradation. The changes called for-we are only partly aware of what they must be-will be so great as to constitute a social revolution. Some of the traditional values and concepts we, along with other Americans, hold most firmly-the moral necessity of labour, the nature of property rights-will have to be re-thought. We must be prepared to discover how much we ourselves, sharing in and profiting from the operation of this system, are contributing to the power which maintains the very practices we are fighting against."

"We do have faith that there is a way for love instead of hate, for inclusiveness rather than exclusiveness, for brotherhood instead of apartheid, to prevail in the end as the spirit of our land. But we shall be able to bring this about only through commitment to a vision of a different social order-a society in which power and responsibility are shared willingly, in which our special privileges are

surrendered, in which every man, in all the magnificent variety which God has bestowed, is fully accepted as equal."

"To such leadings, to such commitment, we ask God to open our minds and hearts."³⁷

Author's Note

Recent developments in Commonwealth policy, some since this essay was written, viz., the payment of full award wages to Aborigines employed by the Commonwealth, and the institution of capital loans for "viable Aboriginal enterprises," give cause for increased optimism.

It should be clear, however, that these changes do not go far in meeting the serious situation which I have outlined.

Further, one must bear in mind that changes in policy and legislation are extremely difficult to implement if they continue to be interpreted and administered by field staff whose whole working life has been devoted to contrary policies.

Authoritarian and paternalistic attitudes die hard, and it should not be assumed that theoretical changes in policy and attitudes in Canberra necessarily lead to significant changes in practice where the Aborigines are.

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- [26] Edmund Wilson, *Apologies to the Iroquois* (W. H. Allen, London, 1960); Nathan Glazer and Daniel Moynihan, *Beyond the Melting Pot* (M.L.T. Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1963); and Charles Wagley and Marvin Harris, *Minorities in the New World* (Columbia Uni. Press, New York, 1964).
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- [30] T. G. H. Strehlow, *The Sustaining Ideals of Australian Aboriginal Societies* (Aboriginal Advancement League Inc., Adelaide 1962).
- [31] From a taped interview by the author with John Collier at Ranchos de Taos, New Mexico, December 1963.
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- [33] Martin Luther King, Jr., *Letter from Birmingham City Jail* (American Friends' Service Committee, Philadelphia, 1963).
- [34] U.S. Conference on Church and Society, *The Role of Violence in Social Change, Social Action/Social Progress*, Jan.-Feb. 1968.
- [35] The New English Bible, Galatians 3, 26-28 (Oxford U.P., Oxford, 1961).
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- [37] *Black Power, White Power, Shared Power*, Study Guide on Race Relations (Housmans Booksop, London, 1967).