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Christianity, Domination and Resistance in Colonial Social Relations

The Case of Doomadgee, Northwest Queensland

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Introduction

This paper addresses the complex question of the significance of Christian ideology for the consciousness and social action of residents at Doomadgee, an Aboriginal Settlement in far northwest Queensland. In particular, the discussion is about whether Christianity has operated historically to legitimate the domination of Aboriginal society, or provided a basis for forms of Aboriginal resistance. To pose the consideration of Christianity in this way is to locate its primary sociological significance within the operation of power relations.

Studies of colonial (and post-colonial) social relations have increasingly addressed the role of Christianity in these terms, although Australian cases have been given little attention. A recent paper treating the South African setting (Comaroff and Comaroff 1986) introduces from the outset, a distinction useful in my own data; the Comaroffs define two interrelated dimensions of "mission agency in the colonial process":

> One is the capacity to act in the domain normally defined as "the political," the arena of concrete, institutionalized power relations. The other is the ability to exert power over the common-sense meanings and routine activities diffused in the everyday world. (Comaroff and Comaroff 1986:2)

These authors find that in the former arena of pragmatic politics, missionary activity was variable and indeterminate, and that "the key to the historical role of the missionary" (p. 17) instead lies in the latter hegemonic capacity to incorporate "human subjects into the 'natural', taken-for-granted forms of economy and society" (p. 2). Their argument is that this occurred through the drawing of the colonised into a dialogue that cast them as citizens in a world of rational individualism. Key propositions in this dialogue were that spiritual salvation is attainable through arduous and methodical self-construction, e.g. by submitting the physical body to sober constraint, and putting time to work in the interests of moral and material accumulation. While the appeal of the specifically "religious" Christian doctrines and activities typically varied throughout the southern African populations being considered, the authors argue that the broader "conversation" with the mission engendered "conversion" in the sense of a subtle internalisation of the categories and values of the missionaries' culture.

The language of Christian ideals is also portrayed as having served eventually as an idiom for protest about the injustices experienced by the colonised in South Africa, although the Comaroffs argue that this idiom of resistance rests on the rhetoric of liberal democracy and individual equality; i.e. it also rests on aspects of ideology central to the introduced "culture of the mission" (pp. 16f.). They view this as further evidence of the triumph of the "culture of the mission". However, we must ask whether this fact makes the idiom any less an ideology of resistance, at least to the more overt recognised forms of colonial domination.

To put the question more generally, how are processes of ideological resistance to be recognised? Certain cases are presented quite unambiguously. For example, Hall (1985) treats the historical response to Christianity by slaves of African descent in the nineteenth century Jamaican setting. He points out how Christian eschatological and messianic ideas fused with African religion and the slave experience:

> Afro-Christianity survived and flourished so to speak, in Dissent's 'official' shadow. It provided a powerful and sanctioned religious framework and language within which black men began to develop accounts and explanations in quasi-Christian religious terms of their 'peculiar' situation, to enunciate their experience of slavery as well as to mobilise, politically, around the growing movement for slave emancipation. (1985:280-1)

Genovese's (1975) masterful account of Christianity among North American slaves also depicts the creative formulation of ideological resistance. The slaves:

> forged weapons of defense, most important of which was a religion that taught them to love and value one another, to take a critical view of their masters, and to reject the ideological rationales for their own enslavement. (p. 6)

Yet at the same time as Christianity "carried a message of foreboding to the master class and of resistance to the enslaved", it taught submission to slavery (p. 165). This submission entailed a necessary and realistic acceptance of the "hegemony of the oppressor", so that Black Christianity enabled the slaves to "do battle against the

slaveholders' ideology, but [only] defensively within the system it opposed" (p. 284). Thus, more so than Hall, Genovese makes clear that Black slave Christianity engendered overt accommodation to slavery and to the ruling class paternalism central to it, and yet it simultaneously became the basis for a form of resistance which enabled the construction of a collective spiritual life. For Genovese, the resistance implicit within Black Christianity was the fact that it gave cohesion and strength to a social class threatened by disintegration and demoralization (pp. 597-8).

These themes of both resistance and submission on the part of the colonised are evident from a careful reading of some of the studies we have of Christianity within the Australian context. Firstly, Berndt's (1962) case study presents an Aboriginal reaction to the colonial experience on Elcho Island in northeast Arnhem Land, after approximately sixteen years of continuous Methodist missionary presence. Although there had been increasing influences from the wider Australian society since the 1920s, these people had remained strongly oriented towards their own religious traditions (1962:28). However, Berndt describes what he terms an "adjustment movement" occurring in the late 1950s and early 1960s, which sought to "blend Christianity with their own religion" (p. 82). By showing previously restricted sacred items in an organised public fashion, the leaders of the movement sought to offer something of very high value, and thereby obtain the valuable things they sought from the wider Australian society. They desired a new economic independence, and aimed to elicit from Australian society, knowledge through education, economic security, employment, and more control over their affairs (p. 89). The Mission administration was the "dominant influence" in secular as well as religious affairs, and was the principal channel through which new ideas were diffused (p. 30). Yet in embracing certain aspects of Christianity, they did not see themselves as oppressed, nor should they be viewed as having been longing for a form of deliverance (p. 87). Nevertheless, there was an awareness of their relationship to the wider society being one of "subordination-superordination". Berndt characterises the independence sought by this Aboriginal movement as political, and as regarded as linked closely to religion (p. 82).

We can conclude that the Elcho Islanders were seeking to achieve a form of resistance to pauperisation, and hence to the colonial social relationship, while attracted by European material wealth. Given the Arnhem Landers' conviction about the value of their own religious traditions, and their partial political use of aspects of Christianity, it is difficult to regard Christianity in this setting as legitimating European domination, either through engendering acceptance of non-Aboriginal control over overt political decisions, or through broader hegemonic influence over Aboriginal consciousness and cultural institutions.

During the same period, Calley (1964) studied the Bandjalang Aboriginal population in northeast New South Wales, which had been enmeshed within a colonial social relationship since at least the 1860s. While predominantly of mixed Aboriginal/non-Aboriginal descent, they had retained some knowledge of the local Aboriginal dialect, and of traditional religious beliefs, mythology, folklore and social organisation (p. 48). In 1956, the Bandjalang were living on Aboriginal stations and reserves and were quite isolated from other Aboriginal groups, as well as from non-Aboriginal people. Nearly all Bandjalang considered themselves to be Christians.

While they had experienced during earlier times the evangelising forays of the fundamentalist Protestant United Aborigines' Mission (U.A.M.), from the early

1950s onwards the Bandjalang had largely discarded the U.A.M. and embraced Pentecostalism. Calley (p. 51) points out that this was due partly to there being similarities between Pentecostalism and the traditional religion, e.g. a great emphasis on degrees of initiation into the religious life, and on the fact that individuals could use mystical/magical powers for both aggressive and healing purposes. Calley (pp. 52-3) describes considerable syncretism between Pentecostalist Christianity and traditional mythology. But also important was the fact that Pentecostalism gave the Bandjalang an alternative to the system of values operating throughout the wider society. For certain Biblical passages were seen to morally condemn the facts of Aborigines' poor material circumstances, and the general situation of their suffering in the face of what the Bandjalang could regard as the morally corrupt European Australian society.

Indeed, Aborigines were able to regard themselves as "specially chosen of God and therefore, in a way, superior to white people" (p. 57). Moreover, the Pentecostal sect presented opportunities for men to achieve local status and authority and make decisions without reference to Whites in positions of formal administrative authority. Hence, Bandjalang men found in Pentecostalism "a new social solidarity as well as a new self-respect" (p. 56). It was apparently even possible for Pentecostalist Aborigines to challenge the authority of Whites, suggesting that the latter were minions of Satan and in need of moral uplifting, and thus to express sentiments of hostility and rejection towards the non-Aboriginal community. Calley defines the situation of the Bandjalang as representing "cultural assimilation" in that they had accepted certain Christian beliefs, but not "social assimilation" for they had deliberately retained social separation from the wider society. To what extent they had reproduced within their separate domain, day-to-day living practices and common-sense meanings substantially their own, and hence resisted complete ideological incorporation into the broader Australian society, remains unclear from Calley's data. But what is clear from this case is the use of aspects of Christian doctrine to ideologically resist what can be termed the racist ideology and discriminatory practices of the wider Australian society. As in the Arnhem Land case, Christianity among the Bandjalang could certainly not be presented as an ideology legitimating overt forms of domination in the arena of pragmatic politics.

Tonkinson's (1974) study of Jigalong, a remote Western Desert community, is a clear case of ideological resistance, but unlike the Bandjalang case, this was resistance against Christianity itself, on the basis of widespread commitment to traditional religion. While not preoccupied with the question of having been dispossessed or exploited by Whites (1974:112), the Jigalong people would not tolerate interference in their traditional religious practices (p. 111); their "Law" was the basis for a defensive strategy against the ethnocentric dimensions of the colonial social relationship. The Aboriginal and missionary "sub-cultures" were "antithetical" (p. 118), and syncretism was regarded as impossible by both the missionaries (p. 121) and the Aborigines.

The resistance of the Jigalong Aborigines to Christianity contrasts markedly with those not far to the north at Fitzroy Crossing, who in the early sixties engaged in what Kolig (1981:23-4) terms "one mad frenzy of trying to uproot the old ways"; they disposed of their entire hoard of sacred objects by selling them at low prices to interested Europeans, or giving them away to other Aboriginal communities. Kolig describes a subsequent long-running distrust between Christian Aborigines and

those who remained strongly tradition-oriented, the former initially having become "even more fanatic and intolerant toward their 'heathen brethren' than the white missionaries themselves" (p. 23), until their intolerance softened just prior to his time of writing (1981). The Fitzroy Crossing case does not appear to indicate the legitimation of colonial political domination through Christianity, nor the use of it in formulating ideological resistance. At a later point in his discussion, Kolig presents Christianity as having played a moderate part in destroying commitment to traditional religion, and as having led to agnosticism (rather than Christian commitment) among many of those descended from the indigenous people of this area (p. 36); however, his data do indicate that Christianity has exercised considerable hegemonic control over Aborigines' thinking at various times.

Finally, we have the fascinating case of the Torres Strait Islanders, of Melanesian rather than Aboriginal cultural background, but encapsulated within Australian society as have been Aborigines. Early in his study, Beckett (1987:11) identifies their "custom" as having "fortified their cultural and political unity" (p. 11); he draws parallels with the way such peoples as highlanders of Papua New Guinea and New World slaves have historically had the capacity to reserve "an essential part of themselves outside the relations of production and consumption, which constituted the dominant order, and to defend this domain against encroachment" (p. 10). In part, this defence is conceived by Beckett as against hegemonic control over the common-sense meanings and routine activities of everyday life.

Yet the Islanders' custom results from a colonial history stretching back in the case of some islands to the 1840s (p. 32). And this is a case of considerable successful indoctrination by missionaries and government teachers, who inculcated the ideals of spiritual and material progress to the extent that Islanders came to celebrate the anniversary of the coming of the London Missionary Society (L.M.S.) as the time of the bringing of the light (the Gospel) which ended the darkness (the heathen pre-Christian situation of the Islanders). They have regarded themselves as forever indebted to White people for this "gift beyond price" (p. 94). From the 1930s, local courts made up of Islanders upheld a code of By-laws derived mainly from the L.M.S., which included offences such as fornication, adultery, message carrying and domestic squabbling (p. 56). During the same period, Islanders jealously fought over the privileges of cleaning and decorating the church, and organising celebrations (p. 57). In an early summary point, Beckett (p. 24) says that the achievement of the L.M.S. was to persuade the Islanders to accept not just the Gospel but the whole colonial experience. This meant accepting European authority, and hence Christianity in this case can be regarded as having served to legitimate colonial domination in major respects. At the same time, in the long run Islanders have creatively constructed Island custom, in part by drawing on elements of Christianity; and this custom can be viewed as entailing a domain of resistance at the level of routine worldview and practices.

Doomadgee: A Study of Christianity and Colonial Domination[1]

Doomadgee presents a clear case of close association between European secular authority and Christianity. Unlike the South African case as presented by the Comaroffs, the key to the historical agency of the Brethren missionaries at Doomadgee is tied directly to their authoritarian role in the arena of concrete institutionalised

power relations. After presenting an account of this role, I will make clear that there has always been only a small core of Aboriginal Christians at Doomadgee. Some data indicate that this core has enjoyed material advantages in comparison to non-Christian Aborigines, and that Christian Aborigines have been incorporated disproportionately within the authoritarian Settlement administrative apparatus in comparison to non-Christians. Furthermore, it has typically been the Christian Aborigines who have actively accorded legitimacy to that administrative apparatus, although my research shows that the hegemonic influence of the missionaries has also been more widespread throughout the general Aboriginal population. This has occurred partly through religious syncretism, partly through a general reaction to the paternalism of the missionaries, and partly through Aborigines' broad relationship to Australian society having been mediated by the "culture of the mission". The study shows that Doomadgee is not a case where Christianity has been co-opted for purposes of resistance in anything resembling the manner of its adoption in such cases as those of New World slaves or the Bandjalang Aborigines of northern New South Wales.

Missionary Intervention and the Development of Administrative Authoritarianism

The few missionaries of Brethren and other similar fundamentalist backgrounds who established a base at Burketown in early 1931, and then a small Mission some 110 km to the west on the coastal Bayley Point Reserve by 1933, found an Aboriginal population living in extremely bad material conditions. Their initial attitude is presented consistently by many contemporary missionaries and Aborigines alike, as having entailed compassion for the health of Aboriginal children in particular, a small number of whom they cared for in their Mission home. However, the missionaries' founding attitude is best presented in the words of the woman who first went to Burketown with her husband, "seeking a place where the Lord was not known among the dark folk of our land" (Akehurst n.d.:1). The "town camp" was about a mile from the town across a plain that was "a sea of mud in the wet and a barren, cracked earth place in the dry" (n.d.:3, 8). Colds were very prevalent (p. 19) as was venereal disease (pp. 37, 71) and there were cases of leprosy (p. 71). Akehurst (pers. comm., n.d.) has noted retrospectively that:

> When we came to Burketown ...there was no one to care for the physical well being of the poor wretched Aborigines we found. True the local protector was kindly disposed toward them and faithfully dispensed Government rations and saw that they went to hospital if they were ill but that did nothing for the state in which they lived poor in every way, smothered in dirt, sores and flies in the heat and no one to *care* in any way. What else could we do but care for their bodies as well as their souls. [Then follow two relevant Biblical quotations.]

This description is certainly premised on a strongly held ethnocentrism; e.g. Akehurst also speaks of the missionaries' desire to remove the children from the "depraved condition" of the people in the camps, and into "the pure, clean

Mrs. D. Read, one of the early missionaries, bathing a child at "Old Doomadgee', among a group of other Aboriginal children and adults. Two of the missionaries' small children are standing among the group, under the supervision of two Aboriginal teenage girls. (Circa 1933, courtesy Mrs. D. Akehurst.)

atmosphere of a Christian home" (Akehurst 1933:176). Nevertheless, photographs taken by the early missionaries bear out the presence of the contagious disease "yaws" in particular, among those camped at Burketown.

The general point is that the situation confronting the missionaries was a pattern of Aboriginal/non-Aboriginal relations which had been based on certain forms of European domination produced from the time that pastoral invasion had begun in a well established fashion in 1874. Elsewhere (Trigger 1985:133-57), I have written of what contemporary Aborigines term "Wild Time", a period continuing in some areas up until 1910, and which saw much violence between local Aborigines and Europeans. Until the turn of the century the Europeans were assisted by Queensland Native Police as their subordinate allies. Aboriginal society suffered great material and social dislocation during "Wild Time".

By the early 1930s most Aborigines appear to have been congregated, at least for substantial periods of the seasonal cycle, at cattle stations, the Police depot at Turn Off Lagoon on the Nicholson River, and Burketown. They had become vitally dependent on European "rations" and incorporated into the pastoral industry as a cheap labour source. Colonial social relations were largely constituted by Aboriginal relationships to non-Aboriginal employers and government officials. The former desired Aboriginal labour as cheaply as possible, while the latter attempted to regulate labour relations according to the official ideology and law of the state,

which was committed to the "protection" of Aborigines through paternalist supervision and control of many aspects of their lives.

Neither employers nor local officials appear to have approved of the increasing role of the missionaries in managing Aboriginal labour relations which occurred after the Mission was moved to its present site on the Nicholson River in late 1936. Right from their arrival the missionaries had been ostracised by hostile Whites in Burketown and the general district; they were "branded ascetics" (Akehurst n.d.:25) partly because they did not drink alcohol nor participate in such events as the annual race meetings, and Akehurst (n.d.:9-10) also surmises that "the white folk, especially the women ...seem to have decided as we devote ourselves to the care of the natives that we are very much beneath them". M. Read, who was the Superintendent and Protector from the time of the establishment of the new site to 1951, has explained (T91)[2] how the missionaries became even more unpopular with many station people because he sought to have the rates of pay for Aboriginal pastoral workers raised whenever their employment Agreements had to be renewed[3]: "They set themselves against us actually but over the years we won their respect". Some station people were also apparently unimpressed with and embarrassed by the missionaries' moral disapproval of the circumstances that had led to the presence of mixed descent children on the stations.

Data available from a survey in 1949 (Davis 19.9.1949) indicate that Aboriginal workers whose Agreements were controlled from Doomadgee were being paid substantially higher wage rates than those whose Agreements were arranged by the Burketown Protector. It was partly for this reason that an increasing number of Aboriginal men sought to have their employment Agreements handled from Doomadgee. The numbers had initially increased gradually: in 1938 the Aboriginal population was 138, and it remained less than 200 until 1947; but after that the population increased rapidly from 152 in 1946 to 357 in 1956 and 519 in 1965 (Long 1970:49). During the period of my fieldwork, the Aboriginal population increased from an official figure of 885 in 1978 (DAIA 1978:26) to 1083 in 1983 (DAIA 1983:46).[4] The number of non-Aboriginal staff remained quite small until 1975, varying between 5 and 8 during the late 1930s and the 1940s, increasing to between 6 and 13 during the 1950s[5], and while no data have been available for the 1960s, by October 1975 the number of staff had increased to 18 (DAA n.d.:6) though it is unclear whether there were several extra spouses and children then. After 1975, the number of staff increased rapidly due to the expansion of school and certain health facilities, e.g. in May 1979 there were 34 adults plus 14 children (DAA n.d.:6), in 1980 there were 52 non-Aboriginal staff, and during 1982 the total appears to have varied between 60 and 70 (although one source [Murray 1982:1] has estimated it at approximately 80).

Accounts from senior Mission staff indicate that only members of Brethren Assemblies were accepted as staff at Doomadgee. If there have been occasional exceptions to this rule, such people appear to have been committed Christians of other fundamentalist faiths, mostly Baptists. Baptism by total immersion and being spiritually "born again" has been a prerequisite.[6] The first change in this situation was in 1982, when several teachers with non-fundamentalist Christian backgrounds joined the school staff, and in 1983 the staffing of the school was completely taken over by the Department of Education. From 1983 the Mission also ceased to control all other staffing and the Queensland Department of Aboriginal and Islanders

Advancement (DAIA) took over this role. However, a number of Brethren staff remained for at least a few years.

The period of the 1970s and 1980s has been one of great change at Doomadgee. In terms of administration by the Mission, Brethren Assemblies (i.e. church focused congregations) are organisationally independent of one another (Van Sommers 1966:29-30). There is no over-arching administrative body. Individuals have, over the years, received "commendation" from their home Assemblies to go as missionaries to Doomadgee. The home Assembly has thereby given them religious authorisation and undertaken to support them financially when, and to the extent that, it has been thought possible by the Church Elders. All staff at Doomadgee appear to have been formally unpaid until 1975, although irregular amounts of money, rent-free furnished accommodation with electricity supplied, and some food have been received by various staff members at different times, depending on their arrangements with their home Assemblies and the decisions of the Elders of the Doomadgee Assembly itself. After 1975, all teachers were paid employees of the Department of Education (Murray 1982:11); in 1982, there were 18 teachers employed in this way (Murray 1982:3), plus at least four nurses (several of whom were employed on normal award wages by government departments), and 24 "voluntary workers" (DAIA 1982:32).

During my fieldwork period, regardless of whether people had come to "voluntary" or paid jobs, they believed that they had come to do "God's work"; those not receiving regular wages could, from their viewpoint, certainly indicate a very tangible sense in which their well-being was in "God's hands". Several staff said that they expected to leave Doomadgee on the same basis as they came — when God told them it was his will for them to leave. People who have grown up in certain Brethren Assemblies have usually been hearing about Doomadgee from a young age through such media as newsletters, personal letters from relatives and friends there and other literature. One young missionary related how she had always felt from a young age that she would go to work at Doomadgee. Thus, the missionary staff has consisted of people with very firm commitments to what they have perceived as their evangelical task.

In Brethren Assemblies, no formal order of clergy is established (Van Sommers 1966:30). Nevertheless, "...those who are gifted by God for the public ministry of the Word are gladly recognized,..." (Douglas 1974:789). Thus, "Elders" of the Church generally hold considerable authority in relation to instruction and guidance on religious matters within the Assembly community. The person occupying the position of Superintendent (later termed Manager) at Doomadgee has always been a Church Elder. After the establishment of the Settlement at its present site, the Mission organisation became legally responsible for managing and controlling the Reserve area around the Settlement, and the Superintendent of the Mission was also Protector of Aborigines.[7] This position made him responsible for ensuring that local By-laws and Regulations were enforced. The Regulations in particular gave great authority to the Superintendent (and through him to delegated staff). Among the 1945 Regulations (Queensland Government Gazette [QGG], 1945:1063-74), for example, were: every Aboriginal shall obey all his lawful orders (No. 18), and observe habits of orderliness and cleanliness to his satisfaction (No. 19); he may direct Aborigines to work up to 32 hours per week without pay at tasks deemed by him necessary for the reserve's maintenance and development (No. 28); he may control the movements of Aborigines on reserves (No. 30); he may, with the

approval of the Director, open and peruse any letters or mail matter addressed to or written by Aboriginals of the reserve (No. 32). While certain of such Regulations were modified in, or absent from, the Regulations of 1966 (QGG 1966:2105-34) and/or 1972 (QGG 1972:1457-79), others were retained, and aspects of the legal authority held by the Reserve Manager during the period of my fieldwork (1978-83) have been considered as still in breach of various international human rights conventions (Nettheim 1981:139-52).

The operation of administrative authoritarianism at Doomadgee has been a contentious issue over the years. From the missionary perspective, they have been, in a paternalistic sense, the "complete caretakers of the people from babyhood to old age" (Doomadgee 1953:6). But in 1950, a government report (Director of Tuberculosis 9.5.1950:4) described the Doomadgee Aborigines in comparison to other north Queensland communities, as "the cleanest, the best fed and the best housed" but also as "the most severely restrained". It focused particularly on the dormitory system, terming it a prison in the case of young women, and "indistinguishable from slavery". In reply, the Superintendent (Read 14.6.1950) justified the restrictions on "young girls" (although the government report had found many in the female dormitory to "range up to 24 years of age") in terms of the Aborigines' low moral level in the past:

> It takes time to overcome the influence of past years filled more completely with evil contacts than with good dinners. Our aim has been to lift the natives up morally and socially by all possible means, and to slacken off necessary restrictive control as it is found the folk can rightly use and not abuse freedom.

Dormitories for both boys and "girls" apparently continued to operate until the late 1960s (Long 1970:152).

In 1972, a Commonwealth Senator (Keefe 1972:680-1) accused the Doomadgee administration of "inhuman conduct". He alleged that in 1972 a girl was punished for wearing a mini-skirt, and also referred to an incident in 1960 when 12 girls "all around the age of 14 years" ran away from the dormitory because they "could no longer suffer the discipline". When caught, they were "subjected to physical beating by their parents under the supervision of the superintendent" and several of them had their hair shaved off. Contemporary Aboriginal residents confirmed aspects of the Senator's allegations. He also referred to a person not being allowed to bring a car onto the Reserve, and this is now said to have been one of the main restrictions causing resentment among Aboriginal residents during the early 1970s, as was the requirement that people wishing to marry had to inform the Manager. Archival sources[8] indicate a petition sent to the Director of the DAIA in 1971, complaining about the Mission's policy against motor vehicles.

It was a constant complaint from mothers throughout the 1960s (with at least one woman putting her complaint in writing to a number of government officials, politicians, etc.) which finally resulted in the Mission discontinuing the dormitories. Some of the old people committed to the continuity of aspects of traditional religious life recognise the dormitories as partly responsible for the dislocation of young people from their "law": " ....this young generation, they bin 'long dormitory — that's why they got lost" (T16). And indeed, the missionaries have consistently opposed all aspects of traditional religion.

Thus, the historical role of the missionaries has been intertwined inextricably with their location in the secular administrative structures and political economy of the region. The Manager during my fieldwork period had been appointed in 1958 (DAA n.d.:2), having already been at Doomadgee since 1951. Not until 1975 did he formally relinquish control over any aspect of administration, when the affairs of the school were partially taken over by the Department of Education. The school Principal (also a Church Elder) occupied the only office of authority comparable to the Manager, and he had also been at Doomadgee for many years, having first arrived in 1957 (Murray 1982:10). In 1978, the Manager's personal authority over Mission policy and financial matters, and over such issues as staff welfare was (in formal terms at least) further reduced through the formation of a "Management Committee" consisting of him and his wife, and four other staff (including the school Principal). Elsewhere (Trigger 1985:252-66), I have defined two major factions among the staff during my fieldwork period, and these were led by the Manager and the Principal respectively. Finally, these two men were the only Doomadgee residents on a Brisbane-based "Doomadgee Mission Committee", apparently formed in the early 1970s, and consisting of men from various Assemblies. This Committee had little influence over missionary administration at Doomadgee until 1983, when it apparently directed the Manager to resign. No Aborigines have ever been members of either the local "Management Committee" or the "Doomadgee Mission Committee".

Assessing the Success of the Evangelical Enterprise

Throughout written sources containing missionary accounts, there are many references to the gradual rate of Mission success in engendering Aboriginal conversion to Christian Brethren faith and beliefs. In 1970, the Manager (Hockey 1970:3) offered written comment:

> The joys and disappointments of the spiritual side of the work have been many and varied over the years. As in every phase of their life, stability is lacking. From time to time there have been those who would appear subjects of becoming towers of strength in the Assembly, then, alas, the evil one comes in and they are set aside. However, there always seem to be the ones and twos to encourage and to these we commit the things that we have heard that they may teach others also (2 Tim. 2:2). Approximately 150 have been baptised over the years, but few have maintained a consistent testimony. There are an average of 30-40 who gather to His Name each week to remember Him in the breaking of the bread and drinking of the cup.

Twelve years later (in 1982), the overall number of people (then living) who had been baptised had increased to approximately 260, but the number "in fellowship" at that time had remained at 30-40. Being "in fellowship" was explained by both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Christians as the person living an authentic Christian life, which normally entails attendance at Church Meetings (religious services). The prior stages of becoming a Christian are that the person is "saved", and this involves their approaching a Church Elder and making a "profession of faith". During most

of my fieldwork there were five Church Elders: two Aborigines and three non-Aborigines; towards the end of the study period a third Aboriginal Church Elder was appointed. After being "saved", the person is baptised by means of total immersion, largely it seems at the discretion of the Elders. The person then continues "in fellowship" as long as they do not fail to live an authentic Christian life, and if they do so fail they are commonly described as having had a "downfall". The person would then be publicly named at a Christian Meeting and must wait some time until the Church Eldership allows him or her to be "re-dedicated", thus allowing the person to "take bread and wine at the Lord's table" (i.e. participate in what is referred to within mainstream Christian denominations as the rite of Communion).

However, many are said to only "return to the Lord's table" after experiencing a life-crisis such as the death (or perhaps near-death) of a close relative, or a serious illness or accident (*cf.* Calley's distinction in the case of the Bandjalang [1958:300-10] between "crisis" or "contingent" converts, and "permanent" converts). The most common form of sin constituting a downfall was seen to be drunkenness and associated violence and sexual promiscuity. Indeed, drunkenness was posed by Christians (both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal) as the inevitable alternative to Christianity. The instrumental significance of Christianity in enabling people to resist the temptation of alcohol, has been an important factor for those becoming "saved" during the last decade or so when alcohol has become much more commonly consumed.

There have been at least two "revivals" at Doomadgee, where larger numbers of Aborigines have come into "fellowship". One is described for 1953 (Doomadgee 1953:3-4), when the very full weekly routine of Christian activities are said to have been consistently attended by a substantial number of Aboriginal residents. Another "revival" event occurred in late 1980; (see *Australian Missionary Tidings*, January, 1981, for a depiction of the large scale involvement of Aboriginal residents, from the viewpoint of the Manager and his wife). However, such periods of involvement of a larger number of Aborigines "in fellowship" have typically lasted only a short time. From various accounts of the 1980 "revival", it appears that about 200 people attended Meetings regularly for around ten weeks. By March 1981, the "revival" had finished, i.e. the numbers had returned to normal. A major factor in stimulating this "revival" participation in Christian practices was the distribution of a booklet (Stanton 1980) warning in graphic fashion about the "coming holocaust", to be directed by a Satanic figure known as the "Antichrist". This coming fate is described in the booklet as involving horrific suffering and death for those who have not been "born again", and at one point the author suggests that this "great tribulation" (referred to in the Bible [Matthew 24:3]) may well begin in 1982. No doubt fear of such a holocaust played a considerable part in so many people seeking salvation for a short time, through baptism and attendance at Christian Meetings.

Thus, the Doomadgee case presents us with a small core of people only, participating actively in Christian practices. The membership of the core has changed over the years, with some people moving in and out of "fellowship" a number of times. While in Christian "fellowship", most Aborigines have accepted that "Blackfella law" must be rejected. The most senior Aboriginal Church Elder explained his opposition to male initiation ceremonies on the grounds that although Jesus was himself circumcised, "since our people took it over ...they've added things to it that wasn't ...right in God's law" (T57). In 1978, a group of Christian

Aboriginal Councillors (who formed the majority of the Council at that time), having discussed the matter with the Manager, directed the organisers of an initiation ceremony that they were not allowed to hold the ceremony anywhere on the Doomadgee Reserve. Two of these men[9] went so far as to assert that "Ganggalida people" (their own "tribe", as they put it at the time) had never had male circumcision as part of the "law", though it is doubtful whether they put this assertion directly to the old "Blackfella law" experts. They pointed out that their own fathers, like themselves, had not been initiated in this (or any other) way, and that the ceremony was based on fear, that people were coerced into participating, and that if the ceremony were to be held at a good waterhole, people would subsequently be precluded from fishing and hunting there because of the resulting ritual importance of the area. Their latter concern indicated that they did not regard the ceremony as unimportant or to be scoffed at in any way; if anything they regarded it as dangerous in some spiritual sense. From the viewpoint of the "law" experts, the younger Councillors simply did not "know law". Some resistance against the ban was mooted, but did not eventuate.

The tension between the divergent Christian and non-Christian Aboriginal worldviews provided rich ethnographic data during my fieldwork. At times it surfaced in quite heated verbal exchanges. For example, a Christian man angrily abused two women who were preparing a group of young girls for participation in secular traditional dancing which at that stage was being held from time to time. He directed his two daughters to leave the group. This man was also discussed on later occasions as having gone to tell certain of the missionary staff that various rituals associated with the deaths of Aboriginal residents were about to be (or had already been) performed. He was said to have sought missionary assistance in having such activities stopped. For their part, non-Christians were quick to accuse avowedly Christian Aborigines of hypocrisy, on occasions when the two categories of people became embroiled in major disputes. For example, consider the accusation by a non-Christian woman against her Christian opponents during one conflict: "You all Christian, you tell liar [lies] yet you all go to Church!". On another occasion, a woman was berating the general state of affairs at Doomadgee, after her daughter had been involved in a fight; she addressed the following comment to the listening public, but it was directed particularly at the Christian family with whom her daughter had been in conflict: "I don't go to [Christian] Meeting, like those people with double mind". The non-Christian accusation has thus been that Christian Aborigines do not themselves live according to the behavioural standards that they preach. Several people made the point to me on different occasions that they were not Christians, yet they were "better behaved" than most of those who were. Of course, tension also arose when Christian Aborigines did hold strongly to their professed ideals; one woman returned home one evening after leaving for the "gambling school" and explained the reason why: " ....[a recent convert] bin baulking them — 'cause he preacher man now, they waiting for him to go away [before commencing gambling activities]".

A further source of tension between Christian and non-Christian Aborigines has been the widely held view among the latter that Christians disproportionately derive material benefits from the administration. Indeed, certain data support this contention. Tables 1 and 2 cross tabulate information given by the senior Aboriginal Church Elder about individuals' Church attendance in late 1980, with the type of

house they were living in. The best estimate derived from these figures is that those attending Christian Meetings regularly, were just over four times as likely to be living in the newer European-style houses as were those not attending regularly; while this estimate is just over three times as likely when comparing those attending both regularly and irregularly with other residents. The new houses were built between 1972 and 1976 (DAA n.d.:9), and from most accounts the Manager had considerable influence in apportioning them to new occupants. However, if certain people have been favoured in the distribution of the highly sought after new housing, it is unlikely to have been solely on the basis of being "in fellowship". Table 3 shows a tendency for those attending Church Meetings regularly to be also somewhat more likely to be employed at the Settlement; those with jobs would thereby be regarded by the Manager as more likely to be able to reliably meet the higher rental payments on the newer houses.[10]

Christian Aborigines have also been disproportionately represented among those who have become incorporated within the Mission administrative apparatus. The school Principal on one occasion told me that the school Parents' and Citizens' Association meetings were attended predominantly by "the Church people". But more importantly, of fourteen people recorded as having occupied the office of Councillor for some time during the research period, ten were avowed Christians "in fellowship". Given the small number of adult Aborigines "in fellowship" at any one time, this figure illustrates a strong tendency for Christian Aborigines to become Councillors in comparison to other Aboriginal residents. Councillors received certain minimal material benefits.[11]

However, to conclude that Aborigines became Christians simply for material gain would be overly simplistic. Their own statements of faith and belief can not be disregarded, although the question of why some people have embraced these beliefs at particular stages in their lives would seem to require careful investigation. The critical question in this paper concerns the general consequences for the colonial power relationship, of the kind of social consciousness commensurate with Christian commitment. And the data show that Christian Aborigines disproportionately accord legitimacy to the apparatus of non-Aboriginal administration.

Christian Consciousness and Political Accommodation

Apart from its reliance on the law of the state as an incontrovertible basis for Mission authority, the Doomadgee administration has always avowed a Christian basis in seeking to legitimate its operation among Aborigines. The local version of Brethren practices and morality has been presented to Aboriginal residents as appropriately infused into all aspects of the administrative affairs of the Settlement. So, for example, standard practice was to open and close Council meetings with brief prayers, tobacco was not sold in the store[12], and a By-law prohibiting couples living in *de facto* marriage relationships appears to have been in force during my fieldwork period.[13]

Those Aborigines who have accorded legitimacy to the administration have similarly couched their support in terms of the correctness of Christian beliefs and practices. A selection of data indicating this attribution of legitimacy can be drawn from a tape recording made at a Public Meeting held in early 1978 (T62), to discuss whether the Queensland legislation concerning Aborigines should be abolished, as

this was a contentious issue in State politics at the time. Of eight speakers recorded on the tape, all but one argued for no change in the legislation, and all these people were "in fellowship" at the time. Comments included: support for the missionaries because they had originally been good enough to establish the Mission (with one speaker making the more general point that if White people had not discovered Australia, Aborigines would not have benefited by getting "educated"); support for the way the missionaries had shown love for Aborigines over the years; and references to the fact that non-Christian White people commonly cheat Aborigines in financial dealings, and that the protection of the Mission was necessary until Aborigines at Doomadgee were ready for the great responsibility of being more independent. One example given of the lack of Aboriginal readiness for a more independent administrative role, was that without the missionaries there would be nobody to organise funerals and burial proceedings.[14]

In exhorting people at the 1978 meeting to speak their mind, the Council Chairman said: "I might be in authority but I'm not speaking strictly or anything like that" (T62). The "authority" of the office of Council Chairman has been stressed by senior missionary staff (particularly the Manager), as has the Christian correctness of the general notions of "authority" and "responsibility". These concepts have been portrayed as the appropriate basis of administrative processes. At a public meeting in 1980, the Manager explained for the edification of Aboriginal listeners how a number of then current events reflected God's work, and these included the recent visit of the Commonwealth Minister for Aboriginal Affairs. Towards the end of his speech, the Manager returned to his familiar theme of the Christian basis of appropriate secular authority:

> And so we give Him the thanks tonight, for the Federal Minister. We're told in the word of God, to pray for those in authority. We're to pray for men in authority that they might be given wisdom, so that we might live a quiet and peaceful life in all Godliness and honesty. (T64)

At another public meeting during the same year, the new Council Chairman voiced his concerns about people "living together" without being married, and again his "responsibility" stemming from his secular administrative position and his "responsibility" as a Christian "in fellowship" were fused:

> I only say this here tonight because it's [being married] an honouring thing, and I feel responsible and I'm guilty before God, upholding somebody else responsibility about living [in a sexual relationship] and not getting married ...because there is a By-law here in this community saying it can't continue to happen. I might do something about it. (T71)

The speeches of this Chairman at public meetings often appeared deliberately tailored to fit the Manager's expectation of an appropriate (and therefore demonstrably Christian) leader; the Manager was usually present at such meetings.

The senior Aboriginal Church Elder, in his speech at the 1978 meeting to discuss the Queensland legislation, referred to a Biblical basis for Aboriginal subordination to European administrative authority:

> You know when Noah had three sons, he had Shem, Ham and Japheth...one of them was a Black man, one...was a White man and one...was a Yellow man. And you know, because the Black man saw the shame of his father, God gave this command, he said: "From this time on... ", because the White man corrected this young dark man, God said: "From this time on,...for all throughout life on earth, the dark man [will] come under the White man". And ...men are trying to change this today, they're trying to break the word of God...(T62)

When I discussed this same issue with this man three and a half years later in 1980, he again gave the fundamentalist interpretation about the curse on Noah's son as the ancestor of dark-skinned peoples (T75); (see Buckland 1929:189 and Pettingill 1971:338-9 for elaboration of this interpretation). Points that can be noted from our discussion include: the emic notion that Noah was White; the fact that the Church Elder consistently maintained his interpretation of the relevant passage of Genesis in the face of my repeated questioning; and his agreement with me that most non-Aboriginal staff at Doomadgee at the time appeared not to share his interpretation. Indeed, he also suggested that "Black and White" should be "equal", and used the analogy of the harmonious music that can be produced on a piano accordion by playing both black and white keys; in fact this same analogy had been used by the Manager in his speech at the earlier 1978 public meeting. The Aboriginal Church Elder appears to have meant that cooperative complementary action among Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people is desirable, apart from the Biblical indication of the appropriateness of European staff having historically taken a tutelary role in relation to Aborigines.

Nevertheless, Christian consciousness was by no means completely devoid of sentiments of opposition towards the more authoritarian aspects of the administration. The senior Church Elder himself (e.g. T72), and several Christian Councillors, would at times complain about various actions by senior missionary staff in particular, and such statements were commonly associated with administrative matters concerning the speakers' personal circumstances at the time. However, the opposition among non-Christians was much greater; there was much less political accommodation implicit within the consciousness and social action of non-Christians. Yet there was also a passive tolerance of Christianity itself.

I can only summarise briefly what at times became a veritable torrent of complaint. It would be said of the senior staff that they had "been here too long", and exercised too much power over the lives of Aboriginal residents. On occasions people would voice disapproval of the way they conceived that the Manager and Office staff were handling their financial affairs; e.g. by accusing the administration of either "stealing half the wages", or being insufficiently motivated to properly present a person's case to bureaucrats making decisions about the distribution of social welfare benefits. Some comments indicated mistrust of what was seen as the Manager's handling of rent monies paid by nearly all Aboriginal families. Other resentment was focused on the Manager and his wife "stickybeaking" in the Village, and on the Church generally interfering in residents' private affairs, often in order to indicate moral disapproval about events occurring in the Village. At times, individuals would complain about the intrusiveness of preaching with a loud-speaker in the Village at Open Air Evangelical Meetings on Sunday nights; or about the opposition to "Blackfella law" on the part of the missionaries.

However, all of this complaint and opposition has remained subsumed within a general lack of a complete or active rejection of Christianity, among non-Christians as well as Christians. Certainly, Aborigines have never aggressively and totally rejected Christianity in a way similar to the Brethren rejection of "Blackfella law". Two factors relevant to a widespread Aboriginal passive toleration of Christianity are, firstly, a degree of religious syncretism which has occurred throughout the Aboriginal population (not just among Christian Aborigines) and, secondly, the Aboriginal reaction to missionary paternalism.

Despite their acceptance of the commitment to reject "Blackfella law", Christian Aborigines would sometimes indicate in unelicited discourse a mixing of concepts from Christianity and traditional religious knowledge. For example, one woman spoke of a certain area as "holy country" because of its totemic properties. For their part, non-Christians indicated syncretism by speaking of the important role of "law-carriers" in both religious traditions, and of how spirits were similarly believed in strongly within both "laws". Aboriginal belief in sorcery had its counterpart within Christian doctrine, namely, the Brethren stress on the Devil as the ever-present agency which ultimately causes all evil in the world. The constant missionary references to how the Devil works in devious ways to generate the downfall of Christians, was related easily by Aborigines to the dangerous spiritual forces believed to operate according to "Blackfella law". Furthermore, while I can not present the data here, traditional beliefs concerning death and its aftermath appeared in some accounts to be commensurate with the figures of God and Jesus as determining the fate of disembodied spirits after death. Several people spoke of how the role of Satan was equivalent to the role of Crow, who in traditional belief also plays a role in determining the fate of spirits.

Secondly, toleration of Christianity can be linked to a widespread passive Aboriginal approval of the missionaries' benevolent paternalism. For one of the effects of this paternalism has been that the missionaries have been perceived quite widely as useful agents of protection, mediating the relationship with the broader non-Aboriginal society. From the viewpoint of the Manager's wife,[15] this has led to a "bond of love over the years that nobody will break". It is probably better termed a bond of familiarity. In earlier times, the Manager is said to have been referred to as "father boss", and as one person remarked, the Manager and his wife were: "...the biggest part of the grandfather for these people", i.e., virtually like grandparents. Some older people have exhibited an accommodative openness towards staff by attributing to some of them subsection affiliation, although no staff have ever understood the subsection system. Similarly, one of the Manager's sons was apparently given an Aboriginal language name when a baby, which was the name of an old Aboriginal man, and the Manager himself was known familiarly by a nickname derived from an animal he was said to look like, in one of the normal ways that nicknames are apportioned to Aboriginal people. Indeed, even some of those people (of all ages) who have been opposed to the Manager quite bitterly at times, appear to have felt sorry for him in the circumstances of his departure in 1983; comments included the observations that he had been treated unfairly by the Church's insistence that he resign, and that he had "kept the place together" for a long time and it would "bust apart" without his paternal controlling administrative presence.

Conclusion: Christianity, Domination and Resistance

Christianity has not been appropriated at Doomadgee for purposes of resistance, in any way similar to the Bandjalang idiom of protest against colonial authority in northern New South Wales. There have been complaints about aspects of missionary staff behaviour not measuring up to the Christian standards that they themselves preach, but these have been made predominantly by non-Christians, not by those embracing Christianity. To the extent that complaint about the administrative apparatus has constituted ideological resistance against the colonial social relationship, this process has not rested on the co-option of Christian moral ideals.

Nor has it rested on continuity of practice of traditional religious life as in the case described for Jigalong in the Western Desert. The missionaries have been largely successful in historically banning the holding of formal ceremonial occasions. The last major ceremony to be held at Doomadgee was a male initiation ritual which occurred around 1953, despite threats from the Superintendent to have it forcibly stopped with the assistance of the local Burketown Police Sergeant. Only a small proportion of residents have continued over the years to participate in the ceremonial life carried on at Borroloola and other locations to the west. Nevertheless, certain routine ritualised practices associated with death, healing, and sorcery have been continued, albeit within an Aboriginal domain kept socially separate from the administrative domain (Trigger 1986).

Unlike the Torres Strait case, Christianity has not been blended into the customary life of the Aboriginal domain. The Aboriginal domain at Doomadgee could be said to have enabled the fortification of a degree of cultural and political unity among the colonised, as in the Torres Strait case, and also the reproduction over generations of a collective spiritual life and a strong sense of Aboriginal worth, as in the cases described for New World slaves. However, these achievements in the face of colonialism have rested on aspects of Aboriginal traditions and the common Aboriginal experience of a powerless location in the political economy of the region, not on the integrative possibilities offered within Christianity. Indeed, Christian doctrine and practices have been widely regarded as key elements in a deep-seated European ethnocentrism, against which the Aboriginal domain has been a defense.

Far from being a basis for resistance, Aboriginal conversion to Christianity at Doomadgee has entailed parallel and commensurate political accommodation to non-Aboriginal administrative authority. This is especially evident among the comparatively small group of those "in fellowship" at any one time, some of whom have moved in and out of "fellowship" through successive "downfalls" and "rededications". These people have conceived of the practices of non-Aboriginal authority as intricately entwined with the practice of Christian doctrine, and as they quite avidly embrace the latter it becomes very difficult to reject the former. One major aspect of this process has been that commitment to a Christian world-view and social identity has involved an attitude of public alignment with the Church Elders, and two of the three European Church Elders (the Manager and School Principal) have been simultaneously in key positions of secular administrative authority. Thus, in the case of converts, Christianity has partly operated as a powerful legitimating ideology for non-Aboriginal authority.

To this extent, it is plausible to argue that Christianity has operated hegemonically, in that it has led a small number of Aboriginal residents to attribute legitimacy to a system of authoritarian administrative control which has been

antipathetic to their broad interests as members of a colonised minority within Australian society. I have presented data which indicate that Christian Aborigines have derived proportionally greater material benefits from the administrative process, and that they have themselves been incorporated into the administrative apparatus to a greater extent than others. In one sense then, the system has not worked against their short-term interests at all. Yet these minimal gains have not enabled Christian Aborigines to avoid the more general process of pauperisation. Furthermore, the active collaboration of many Christian Aborigines has assisted European missionary authority in its dominant role over the majority non-Christian Aboriginal population.

While the majority of non-Christian Aborigines have not actively supported missionary authority, they have passively tolerated Christianity itself. Some have nostalgic memories of times when they have themselves been "in fellowship". Furthermore, missionary paternalism has led to a fusion between a significant degree of toleration of Christian doctrine, and passive accommodation to missionary secular authority. Paternalism has linked Aborigines and missionaries as individuals in relationships of familiarity, thereby helping to legitimate relations of superordination and subordination (*cf.* Genovese 1975:5-6). As well, I have described some syncretism between certain Christian and traditional beliefs, with many residents regarding some of the key issues addressed by Christianity as fundamentally important, death and its aftermath being prime among these. The high proportion of people participating in baptism (with its powerful symbolism of being "born again") at some point in their lives, attests to this fact. This widespread tolerance for certain aspects of the Christian worldview has not engendered the kind of legitimation of missionary administrative authority found among those "in fellowship". However, it has moderated the degree of active rejection of that authority, and this prompts the generalisation that the missionaries have engendered greater acceptance of their administrative role by virtue of their consistently religious worldview, than they would have if their administrative practice had been purely secular in character.

Finally, like the Christian Aborigines, those not "in fellowship" have no doubt historically embraced from the wider Australian culture, many aspects of "the taken-for-granted forms of economy and society", as the process has been described for the South African case. These have been imparted in the context of the Aboriginal location within the pastoral industry as wage labourers, and as welfare clients of the state bureaucracy.

The missionary capacity to mediate these aspects of the colonisers' culture, has derived not from the nature of Christian ideas themselves, but from the legally sanctioned position of the missionaries within the political economy of the region. The Doomadgee case indicates that Christian doctrine in itself does not constitute dominant ideology; Christianity has clearly had different political significance in different colonial contexts, both within Australia and elsewhere. Christianity at Doomadgee has certainly been critical in processes of ideological incorporation and resistance, but adequate assessment of these processes must recognise them as embedded within the broader patterns of social action constituting the colonial social relationship.

Notes

1 The data in this paper derive from research conducted predominantly from 1978 to 1983. Wherever the ethnographic present tense is used, it refers to this period.

2 Wherever data is referenced to tapes recorded during the research, the tape number is placed after the letter "T" within parentheses.

3 Queensland legislation concerning Aborigines (from the passing of the first Act in 1897) required that a written "Agreement" had to be completed if an Aboriginal person was to be employed. Protectors were expected to oversee and witness these, and there was some flexibility in fixing the wage rates. The Agreements had to be renewed annually, and the 1945 Regulations instructed Protectors to claim higher rates than the prescribed minimums "when satisfied the ability of the aboriginal warrants such higher payment" (QGG 1945:1073).

4 However, it has been suggested that the official figures over-estimate by up to 20%, the number actually resident at the Settlement at any one time (DAA n.d.:5).

5 See *Australian Missionary Tidings* magazine for the months during 1939, and Annual Reports of Queensland Department of Native Affairs for the years 1940-1960.

6 There have been accounts of one or two Christian staff of other denominations undergoing baptism by total immersion soon after arriving at Doomadgee.

7 Missionaries could be appointed Protectors and/or Superintendents of reserves under Sections 6 and 7 of the 1897 Queensland legislation concerning Aborigines, and under *The Aboriginals Preservation and Protection Acts* 1939 to 1946 (Section 9) reserves could be placed under the management and control of a religious organisation.

8 Copy in author's possession.

9 These were in fact the only two people who sequentially occupied the office of Council Chairman during the research period.

10 In 1979, the weekly rent on the 20 government funded European-style houses was approximately $10 to $12, and on 67 older Mission-owned dwellings was $3 (DAA n.d.:10). Note that Table 3 excludes those in employment on pastoral stations on the assumption that the Manager and Office staff had comparatively less control over the allocation of station jobs.

11 Councillors apparently received a small nominal "fee" (allowed under Section 56 [20] of the *Aborigines Act* of 1971), and the Chairman's fee was marginally higher than that of others. An irregular benefit was the option to travel to Brisbane, Mt. Isa and occasionally other places for official meetings, although not all Councillors found such travel attractive. Councillors did not appear to have regular access to Council vehicles for their personal use, although some benefits accrued to the Chairman in this regard, particularly concerning his routine week-day transport needs within the Settlement.

12 Missionary opposition to use of tobacco (and alcohol) was based on their interpretation of the Biblical passage (1 Corinthians 6:19-20) which directs that "your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost", and these substances were believed to defile the body.

13 The set of standard Council By-laws that have apparently applied to all Queensland reserves (having been originally formulated by the DAIA), do not contain any specific reference to living in a *de facto* marriage relationship (see Commissioner for Community Relations 1977:102-111). However, accounts from various residents indicated that such behaviour had been banned over the years; a government bureaucrat implied to me that a specific By-law about this subject was passed by the Council (under the supervision of the Manager) during 1980, (and see the comment in the quotation from the Council Chairman below [p. 23]).

14 After the Manager's departure in 1983, there appeared to be an increase in the degree of control exercised by certain Aboriginal Christians at funerals.

15 She gave this view in an A.B.C. television current affairs programme screened in 1982 (*Nationwide*, screened 20.7.1982; copy held at University of Queensland Audiovisual Library, "Aboriginal tape 17").

Appendix: Tables

Table 1
Regular attendance at Christian meetings by house-type
(in late 1980)
(Column Percentages, Chi square = 38.95, $p < .001$)

House type	Attending regularly (N = 34)	Not attending regularly (N = 272)
New	20 (59%)	39 (14%)
Old	14 (41%)	233 (86%)

Table 2
Attendance (regular and irregular) at Christian meetings by house-type
(in late 1980)
(Column Percentages, Chi square = 31.75, $p < .001$)

House type	Attendance (regular and irregular) (N = 67)	Not attending (N = 239)
New	29 (43%)	30 (13%)
Old	38 (57%)	209 (87%)

Table 3
Regular Attendance at Christian Meetings by employment in late 1980
(excluding station employment)
(Column Percentages, Chi square = 8.27, $p < .01$)

Employment	Attending regularly (N = 32)	Not attending regularly (N = 269)
Employed	19 (59%)	90 (33.5%)
Unemployed	13 (41%)	179 (66.5%)

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