

# Aboriginal pastor attacks Govt

The Federal and State Governments were the most immoral agencies directly influencing Aborigines, an Aboriginal member of the Australian Board of Missions, Pastor Frank Roberts, said yesterday.

Many Aborigines saw official policies as genocidal, he said.

The policy of assimilation and the high Aboriginal infant mortality rate meant the gradual disappearance of the Aborigines and their culture.

Pastor Roberts was speaking at the Central Methodist Mission at the Lyceum Theatre on "The Future of Australia — the Aborigines' View."

Pastor Roberts said the relationships between Aborigines and white society had deteriorated during the past 10 years because Europeans monopolised Australia and allowed the Aborigines no control over their own destiny.

Anthropologists had estimated the Aboriginal settlement of Australia to have begun some 30,000 years ago.

Europeans had been here only 200 years but refused the Aborigines' claim to their lands, he said.

Referring to the recent statement by the Prime Minister, Mr McMahon of Government policy on Aborigines, Pastor Roberts said Arnhem Land would become a victim of the materialism of European culture.

The Federal and State Governments must realise there were moral values involved in the Aboriginal land rights question.

"Mr McMahon and his Government have inflicted a grave injustice on the people of Arnhem Land," he said.

Attitudes of racial superiority were present in all segments of the white population, including the "so-called Christian Churches."

He said Aborigines

## 'POLICIES SEEN AS GENOCIDE'



Pastor Roberts

hoped that Europeans embraced their cause before the writing went on the wall: "Too little, too late."

After his speech, Pastor Roberts said the Prime Minister's statement last week had been greeted with bitterness and despondency in Aboriginal communities.

They felt the conditions involving the economic viability of projects and the terms of leases were a deliberate catch of the McMahon Government.

The South Australian Government was the only one which recognised Aboriginal land rights and the Federal Government could easily have used the same system, he said.

Pastor Roberts said the NSW Government would be approached to set up an electorate to represent Aborigines in Parliament, similar to the Maori electorates in New Zealand.

Another speaker on the program, Mr Michael Anderson, who was involved in the setting up of the "Aboriginal Embassy" opposite Parliament House in Canberra, said the Aboriginal culture regarded nature as a form of religion.

"If I were to go out and destroy St Mary's Cathedral I would be put in prison," he said.

"But Arnhem Land is being destroyed. They are destroying the Aboriginal people's religion because that religion is nature," Mr Anderson said.

Black Power in Australia was the Aboriginal people getting together to select their own people to govern Aboriginal affairs, he said.

"If we fail to do this within the next year we face continued subjection to a white society that has no intention of giving up willingly or easily, its position of priority and authority," Mr Anderson said.

Black Australians had nothing to lose by refusing to meet the white man on the white man's terms.

He said the militants believed it was far better to stand up and speak forcefully and truthfully.