

## Studies of Religion

## Section I (continued)

## Part B — Foundation Study 1

10 marks

## Attempt Question 11

Answer the question in the spaces provided.

Marks

## Question 11 (10 marks)

- (a) Explain how Aboriginal beliefs about the land contributed to the Land Rights Movement. 4

...The Land Rights Movement was greatly affected by Aboriginal beliefs about their connection to the land.

As early as 1880, Aborigines boycotted National Celebrations in an attempt to gain land rights. The Movement gained momentum in the 1960's with the Wave Hill Strike and in 1972, the Aborigines' 'Tent Embassy' was erected in the hope to emphasize their connection to the land and their denial of land rights.

In 1992, Eddie Mabo, an inhabitant of the Murray Islands took the Queensland government to court over land rights. For the first time in Australian history the legal fiction of 'terra nullius' was abolished and although Aborigines were not given any land, the government accepted that a spiritual connection to the land existed.

In 1993, the Native Title Act was passed which came into effect on the 1st of January 1994. It stated that Native Title was a credible claim however Aborigines needed to prove their connection to the land, which was difficult as they had no foundational texts or buildings.

Question 11 continues on page 6

In 1996, the Wik and Thayorre people claimed that Native Title was not granted on Pastoral Leases and therefore, their connection with the land was suppressed. The ruling stated that Native Title could coexist with Pastoral Leases ~~but~~ however when inconsistencies arose, the Aborigines must yield.

243SOR In 1998, John Howard devised his '10 Point Plan' which confirmed the Wik decision, making way for the Native Title Amendment Act of 1998. The Act ~~also~~ extinguished Native Title on Pastoral Leases and other 'Crown' land.

## Question 11 (continued)

- (b) Explain how some Aboriginal people have integrated Christianity with Aboriginal spirituality. Use one or more specific Aboriginal beliefs in your answer. 6

Aboriginal people have gradually grown to accept aspects of Christianity, as Christians have Aboriginal spirituality, and integrated the two faiths.

Aboriginal spirituality is centered around the notion of the Dreaming. The Dreaming explains the beginning of creation, of the land and human existence. This belief in the Dreaming being the source of creation has been integrated with the Christian story of creation in Genesis. Christian stories have been interpreted by incorporating Aboriginal beliefs and Aboriginal ceremonies often demonstrate this.

Aboriginal art and ceremonies are fundamental to their religion. It is evident that Aboriginals have incorporated aspects of Christianity into art forms, such as the Christian cross being evident in art such as dot painting. Aboriginal art expresses their integrated beliefs and their beliefs in the Dreaming.

Kinship plays a significant role in Aboriginal spirituality. The totem that one is given at birth or before identifies one's kinship line and the totem stays with that person for life. Aboriginals have integrated their belief in kinship and also the Christian belief in the importance of love and family and therefore continue to embrace this concept of kinship.

The ordination of Aboriginal Christian Priests also demonstrates Aboriginal integration of Christianity<sup>and Aboriginal spirituality</sup>. Offer the Parishes headed by Aboriginals - use Aboriginal ceremonies and practices in their unique expression of Christianity.