

White Christ Black Cross

The emergence of a Black church

Noel Loos

Noel Loos frames the churches' missionary outreach to Aboriginal people within the reality of frontier violence, government control, segregation and neglect.

Aboriginal people on the missions responded to white Christianity as part of their enforced cultural change and within the missions' changing circumstances. As missionary control diminished, Aboriginal people responded more overtly and autonomously: some regarding Christianity as irrelevant, others adopting it in culturally satisfying ways.

Through the Australian Board of Missions (ABM), the Church of England sought to convert Aboriginal people into a Europeanised compliant sub-caste. The separation of children from their families was the first step.

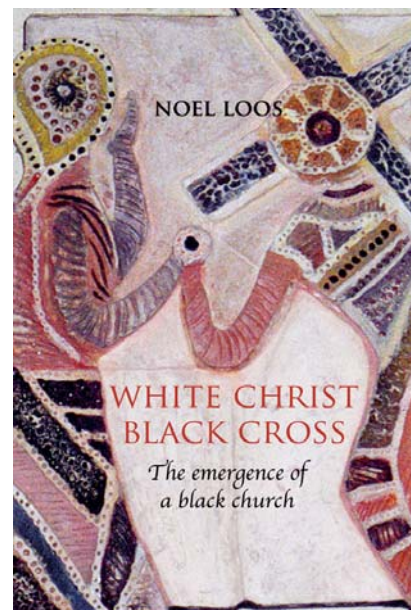
Increasingly the ABM found itself embroiled in emerging broader social issues and changing government policies, requiring it to rethink its policies. Loos believes its support of Ernest Gribble's exposure of the 1926 Forrest River massacres set off the current 'history wars'.

Nowadays, Yarrabah, one of the old mission communities, has become a centre of Christian revival, expressing an Aboriginal understanding and spirituality.

Noel Loos has published widely on Indigenous history and politics. His last book was a biography of his friend, *Edward Koiki Mabo: His life and struggle for land rights*.

SELLING POINTS

- First history of the Anglican church and missionaries in relation to Aboriginal people
- Stresses the link between dispossession and missionary activities.
- Rejects the Windschuttle revisionism of the history wars
- Meticulous research, deriving from 30 years' research using extensive secondary sources and personal observations
- Includes the views of the Indigenous and non-Indigenous people involved.
- Author has strong connections within the church community.



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