

ABORIGINES PART OF NATION

Aboriginal Senator Neville Bonner today urged his people to accept their rights as Australians, not wait for them, and for white people to accept Aborigines as equal Australians.

Senator Bonner was speaking at a rally at Roma Street Forum organised by Aboriginal Christians as part of National Aboriginal Week.

About 200 people, most of them non Aborigines, listened for nearly an hour as a number of Aboriginal speakers spoke on the need for more integration between Aborigines and the rest of Australian society.

Senator Bonner told the gathering "My message to you is hold out that hand of friendship.

"And to Aborigines take that hand of friendship."

Senator Bonner said white people and Aborigines were all primarily Australians.

"We want to be accepted in the community as part and parcel of the Australian theme," he said.

Pastor David Kirk, president of the Aboriginal Evangelistic Fellowship and a well-known Aboriginal leader told the gathering Aborigines

wanted to be treated in a Christian manner.

"All Aborigines are not like those you see and find in Manhattan Park," he said.

"I can go and point out white people there who are just as degenerate as those black people."

He said many Aborigines, especially in northern parts of Australia, could not understand the white people who came among them and the way they treated them.

"I have to tell these people that all white people are not Christians."

Pastor Kirk said when Captain Cook arrived in Australia more than 200 years ago it was esti-

mated there were more than 300,000 Aborigines living here.

Today he said Aborigines were only minority group in the Australian nation which comprised 62 different national groups.

Of these, he said, Aborigines made up less than one percent.

Pastor Kirk said that Aborigines were becoming more and more noticeable in the community today.

He said there were 27 Aborigines studying in Australian universities.

Others like Evonne Goolagong, Tony Munding and Albert Namatjira were amount those who were making, or had made their mark in Australia's history.

Brisbane Telegraph 13th July 1973