

CHANGING TIMES IN OUR LAND

A Discussion Paper

prepared for

The Arctic Peoples' Conference

Copenhagen, November, 1973

October, 1973

Reverend A. Tagoona
Christian Arctic Fellowship
Baker, Lake, N.W.T.

A man who does not have a white man's education, but is a hunter, thinks of animals. They are his most important concern and it is the animals that make him a man. In the past, strong men who did not hunt were considered womanish. Today, a man says to himself: "I am living like a woman now for I do not hunt anymore". Even the women are cross with their husbands because they think they stay home too much. The women are not alone in their disappointment. The husbands are disappointed and cross too because they think their wives are trying to live like men. They hold jobs outside the home and do not stay home as much as their men would wish.

I remember the old hunters. Nowadays I see the soapstone carvers standing on the rooftops, looking through the telescope to the distant horizon, just as the hunters used to sit on the high hills and look for caribou and other animals. I see men sitting for long periods outside their houses looking as though they are thinking about their activities in the old days. Their minds are turned to the past for the future is so uncertain and they cannot think of it. If they were asked which life is better, the present or the past, they would say: "There is white man's food and we are not hungry, but we are not happier than we were".

A man who was once a proud hunter is now a carver of soapstone and in the summer time, while he is carving, he sits outside his house where he can see into the distance. He wants to live there as his own boss. This is not to say that all men think that way. The hunters who depended on the animals were content. When the Government started to supply housing, might it not have been better to help with housing

