

Aboriginal, Indian problems 'similar'

SYDNEY: Australian Aboriginals and American Indians face similar problems, according to the Reverend Dr Roe Lewis, a fullblood Indian employed as an Indian affairs adviser to the United Presbyterian Church of the USA.

"Health, education, land rights, uranium — we believe the American experience could help the Aborigines in their struggle", he said on Friday.

With his colleague, the Reverend Howard Smith, they have spent the past month visiting Aboriginal communities in

Arnhem Land, the Kimberleys, and outback settlements of the Uniting Church Australian Inland Mission.

Dr Lewis said the major differences between the two races was that American Indians held sovereign treaty rights which State laws could not abrogate.

These rights might seem generous, but in practice had been largely ignored.

Whether or not tribal councils could prevent uranium mining was uncertain, and might ultimately be tested in court.