



TEAR AUSTRALIA

RECONCILIATION RESOURCE KIT

Format: Available on the TEAR website as downloadable pdfs
(without map and poster)

Kit containing CD, map and poster: \$10

“Where do we start?” is the cry of many churches wanting to build good relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

This is a kit for churches and groups on the journey toward reconciliation. It does not have all the answers. It is not an encyclopedia of knowledge but aims to be the beginning point of the learning journey.

The kit helps you start by working out where your church or group is on the reconciliation journey. It then gives you a range of ideas and activities to select from that will help you move towards a better understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander issues and peoples.



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Blue Wall: This image is from a community mural at Yarrabah State School, Far North Queensland, and is used with permission.



ABOUT THIS KIT

"If you have come to help me you are wasting your time. But if you have come because your liberation is tied up with mine, then let us work together."

Lilla Watson, an Australian Aboriginal woman working for justice for her people, said this to a group of Christians. This resonant thought lies behind the planning for this kit of resources. Many Christians are only too aware of the many factors that have led to the 17-year life expectancy gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. All of us want to take steps toward bridging the gap. TEAR hopes that this kit may be a small part of that process, believing that the integrity of our Christian witness and our growth as an Australian church is tied up with that of Indigenous Australians.

The purpose of the kit is to support churches and Christian groups seeking to grow in love and engagement with Indigenous¹ peoples in Australia. It is focused on non-Indigenous churches and groups on the understanding that non-Indigenous people must take the first step. Some groups may have Indigenous people and children among them. Getting to know each other better is a good place to start.

This kit helps us to *know* about Indigenous peoples but also reminds us that we need to *feel* with them in order to truly know. While it may be more comfortable to stand at a distance and analyse a situation, transforming growth happens when Indigenous and non-Indigenous people come together and share experiences. This will take time, as the San Remo church experience shows.² The challenge for us, as we develop our own activities, is how to build trusting relationships between the communities, rather than just learning *about* each other.

The kit will take us into uncomfortable places as we learn about the effects of years of government and church-sanctioned policies which have damaged Indigenous communities and thus compromised their contribution to our society. This kit cannot help but be political. TEAR makes no apology for that. The gospel calls us both to repentance and to prophecy.

We recognise that churches and groups are at different stages in their appreciation of Indigenous issues. Some have been active for some time while for others, this may be the first time they have actively considered these things. This kit encourages you to use appropriate resources to take your group/church through various stages of growth, aiming to reach the stage where you are able to form your own plan for reconciliation.³

¹ "Indigenous" is the term which covers both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. It is usually written with a capital "I".

² See "The Process of Aboriginal Reconciliation. A Local Example" by Digby Hannah, *Zadok Perspectives* No 39. Included in the kit.

³ "Reconciliation Action Plan" is a tool to help organisations to build positive relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples. Reconciliation Australia has applied for trademark protection for this term. TEAR Australia encourages groups and churches to make a reconciliation plan. Some may wish to proceed, with assistance from Reconciliation Australia, to work on a formal Reconciliation Action Plan.



Stage One: The kit deliberately begins with prayer and includes prayers of different types, and suggestions for prayer activities. With churches and groups new to Indigenous issues, this is the best, or perhaps the only, place to start. We encourage you to make this a priority in your plan, praying for opportunities to build relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples.

Stage Two: The next stage encourages you to explore the Indigenous history of your area. Be aware of some sensitivities here. Some areas are subject to contested land title claims, so it may not be easy to identify your traditional owners. Some ideas for starting the process are included under Stage Two. At this point some Bible readings with reflective questions are included to help people to make connections between the Bible and the land of Australia.

Stage Three: suggests deepening appreciation of Indigenous issues throughout all levels or sections of the church. It may be the right time to invite an Indigenous person, or people, to join you in some appropriate setting if they are not already part of your group. Be aware that many Indigenous people are in demand and this may not be possible. It is appropriate to pay that person an honorarium for their time. This is also the stage to make individual response plans. We suggest a response framed around three things: praying, giving, learning.

Stage Four: encourages your group/church to reach upwards and outwards into the community, developing your own plan for reconciliation and joining Indigenous brothers and sisters in advocacy within your denomination and in the wider community. Some information on how to do this is included. Biblical understanding is encouraged through continuing Bible study.

Stage Five: is being available to help other groups/churches to move through the five stages.

Some things to do first:

1. Talk with your group/church leadership about your interest and alert them to this kit. Some will want to be involved in planning while others will be happy for you to take a lead.
2. Keep TEAR informed of how you are progressing. Email barbara@tear.org.au



A KIT FOR CHURCHES AND GROUPS ON INDIGENOUS ISSUES

This kit recognises that churches in Australia are at many different stages in their appreciation of Indigenous issues. While many have a strong understanding of Indigenous issues and the implications for Christian life in Australia, many have not. The aim of this plan is to begin where churches and groups are, and encourage their growth into deeper understanding. In doing so, the aim is to bridge the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australia. It aims to move people through stages of appreciation and contact which will build churches/groups' capacity to relate with Indigenous Australians.

The kit assumes the existence of a person, or small group of persons, within the church/group willing to take the lead in the growth process.

*** Items marked with an asterisk are included in the kit.**

STAGE	GROWTH ACTIVITIES	RESOURCES PROVIDED OR SUGGESTED
<p>1. Indigenous issues rarely mentioned in church/group activities, either private or public. There may even be some hostility to Indigenous people.</p>	<p>Prayer: Regular prayer, both liturgical and informal, will begin a process of growing awareness of Indigenous issues. It will set up a model of hearing, and listening to, Indigenous voices.</p> <p>Opportunities to watch and discuss films on Indigenous issues.</p> <p>Opportunities to sit and listen to Indigenous voices, e.g. through clips on the ABC Mission Voices website.</p>	<p>Introductory Information Sheet for the person leading the process. *</p> <p>Start-Up Sheet to fill in.*</p> <p>Examples of set prayers.*</p> <p>Suggestions of interactive prayer activities.*</p> <p>Indigenous worship songs in English, Kriol and other languages are available from Christian Indigenous Media Resources cimr@ozemail.com.au www.cimr.asn.au</p> <p>List of movies and books for adults and children.*</p> <p>This ABC website contains short sound clips of Indigenous people reflecting on their experiences in Victorian mission stations: www.abc.net.au/missionvoices Click on the mission names in the left hand column and hear short poems and anecdotes. Encourage hearers to put themselves in the shoes of the speakers. Role-play some of the stories.</p>



STAGE	GROWTH ACTIVITIES	RESOURCES PROVIDED OR SUGGESTED
<p>2. There are a couple of concerned people and the occasional informal discussion of Indigenous matters. There are occasional public prayers prompted by an event, e.g. "Sorry Day".</p>	<p>Sustained prayer. Begin to explore the Indigenous heritage of the local area and find ways of linking it to congregational activities, e.g. have a church picnic in a park or cultural centre with an Indigenous heritage. Explore the traditional land ownership of your area. Who owned it? Where are those people now? Begin to reflect on Bible perspectives on land, inclusion etc, through use of Bible readings and questions. Explore whether you already have links with Indigenous people through existing ministries in your area, e.g. through RE teaching in local schools, prison visiting, hospital visiting. Bring these stories back to your church/group for prayer. Find out if there is an Indigenous church in your area. Consider planning a picnic or service bringing communities together.</p>	<p>Prayer resources as above.*</p> <p>Aboriginal Australia Map used with permission and available from Aboriginal Studies Press: www.aiatsis.gov.au/asp</p> <p>Note the various Land Councils and Native Title representative groups. Maps available from them.</p> <p>Fact Sheets available from www.australiancollaboration.com.au</p> <p>Exploring Indigenous culture. Information sheets for each state.*</p> <p>See also www.aiatsis.gov.au/</p> <p>Information about Indigenous languages. (See www.dnathan.com/VL/index.htm) The website of the Aboriginal Resource and Development Services: www.ards.com.au also has resources especially relating to Yolgnu Language and culture.</p> <p>Set of Bible readings and reflective questions for use in services or groups.*</p> <p>An example of a service outline.*</p>
<p>3. There are links between the church/group and Indigenous people. For instance, they may be supporting an Indigenous project through TEAR, World Vision, Oxfam. They may have links with a Christian worker in remote Australia or support theological education through</p>	<p>Arrange for an Indigenous person to come and speak in some appropriate setting. Make sure that Indigenous appreciation is happening through every level of the church/group, e.g. expressed in youth, children's activities, women's and men's groups, home groups. Start a scrap-book of newspaper articles on Indigenous issues. Discuss and pray. Find a way of recognising traditional owners of the land on which church/group property is located, e.g. making a wall-plaque acknowledging traditional owners (not just early</p>	<p>Prayer resources as above.*</p> <p>Bible Study 1. "Naboth's Vineyard" *</p> <p>Website links to resources such as Land Title offices and Native Title Responsible Bodies (NTRBs). www.ntrb.net (Note that many land title claims are contested)</p> <p>List of books for adults and children.*</p> <p>Read Indigenous newspapers such as National Indigenous Times</p>



STAGE	GROWTH ACTIVITIES	RESOURCES PROVIDED OR SUGGESTED
<p>Nungalinga College. There are regular informed prayers for specific issues and people.</p>	<p>benefactors); begin services by acknowledging the traditional owners of the land. Deepen theological reflection by some sustained Bible studies. Develop home-group or individual “response plans” based on “pray, give, speak up” model.</p>	<p>(www.nit.com.au) and the Koori Mail (www.koorimail.com). Example of a “Response Plan”: St Augustine’s, San Remo, Victoria.*</p>
<p>4. The church/group knows Indigenous people and hears from Indigenous speakers. Members of the church/group have visited or worked in remote or urban Indigenous communities. There is a reaching out to local Indigenous people. There are regular informed prayers. Sermons/talks regularly reference Indigenous matters.</p>	<p>Now that the church/group has a mature understanding of the issues, explore ways of reaching upwards and outwards into the community. This should include recommendations to the denominational leadership, raising awareness in the wider community through public events, involvement in school RE classes. The local municipality often has an Indigenous Policy. Find out about this and work out ways to help them implement it. Encourage advocacy. See the Information sheet provided for ideas. Consider supporting Indigenous Christian ministry groups which struggle for support, e.g. Aboriginal Evangelical Fellowship: www.aef.org.au or the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Christian Alliance (NATSICA) www.ncca.org.au/natsiec Work toward formalising above activities into a written plan. Continue to deepen Biblical understanding.</p>	<p>Prayer materials as above.* Ideas sheet on advocacy with Indigenous peoples.* Make Indigenous Poverty History brochure is available from NATSIECC: www.ncca.org.au/departments/natsiec Reconciliation Australia “Reconciliation Action Plan” tool kit (For those who wish to proceed with developing a full RA Plan in concert with Reconciliation Australia http://www.reconciliation.org.au/i-cms.jsp?page=256)</p>
<p>5. The church/group is actively implementing its own reconciliation plan.</p>	<p>This church/group has its own reconciliation plan and is able to help others to develop their own.</p>	



INTERACTIVE PRAYER IDEAS

1. Sorry Stones

Stones are given to all as a point of reflection, whilst barriers to Indigenous people are spoken of or images shown.

- Stones represent the physical, spiritual and emotional barriers that have been placed in front of Indigenous people in this country and prevent them from knowing the fullness of life.
- People are asked to reflect on how all non-Indigenous Australians have benefited from our 'pushing aside' of Indigenous people.
- Prayers are then given by placing the stones on the ground and forming the word Sorry.
- Prayer exercise is a symbolic time of reflection and commitment to work for truth, pulling down barriers - see Luke 4 (Nazareth manifesto).

2. Scars on the Landscape

Non-Indigenous Australians have, over the past 200 years, scarred and damaged the physical and human landscape of this country. Our ignorance, prejudice and practices have taken many areas of our country to destruction, pushing it beyond the edge, creating enormous scars on the landscape. As God's people, we are called to bring about his restoration, to both the natural and human landscape. This exercise seeks to help us engage with the land and Indigenous issues, by promoting the place of restoration at the centre of our work for health and reconciliation as a nation.

- Find a place to plant local Indigenous grasses or shrubs - contact local council or Landcare groups - in your church grounds, or in a keen group-member's yard.
- Have a working bee, or a tree-planting day, or give everyone in the group or congregation some seeds to plant in seedling trays as part of your worship time.
- Prayer: at the beginning of your planting time, pray for the restoration of the landscape and for all those who dwell in it.



3. Band-Aid

- Read up on the Close the Gap Indigenous health literature, which speaks of the huge gap in health statistics between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians.
- This prayer exercise involves cutting out a life-sized human figure like those marked out following a traffic accident. The figure can be cut out of masonite or stiff card etc. The figure represents Indigenous health.
- Show some Close the Gap statistics on PowerPoint, together with images and music - or you could write up some statistics on posters and display them around the room.
- Invite the participants to write one of the statistics on a coloured 'band-aid' and then stick it on the figure.
- Write a prayer on a different coloured band-aid. The prayer can highlight both personal and structural issues of health. Stick these on the figure as well.



PRAYERS

Reconciliation

Lord God, bring us together as one,
Reconciled with you and with each other.

You made us in your likeness.
You gave us your Son, Jesus Christ.

He has given us forgiveness from sin.

Lord God, bring us together as one,
Different in culture, but given new life in Jesus Christ:

Together as your body, your church, your people.
Lord God, bring us together as one,
Reconciled, healed, forgiven,

Sharing you with others as you have called us to do.
In Jesus Christ, let us be together as one.

© *Prayer by Bishop Arthur Malcolm taken from APBA.*



Prayer for the Journey of Healing

Almighty and loving God, you who created all people in your image,

Lead us to seek your compassion as we listen to the stories of our past.

You gave your only Son, Jesus, who died and rose again so that sins will be forgiven.

We place before you the pain and anguish of dispossession of land, language, lore, culture and family kinship that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have experienced.

We live in faith that all people will rise from the depths of despair and hopelessness.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families have endured the pain and loss of loved ones, through the separation of children from their families.

We are sorry and ask Your forgiveness.

Touch the hearts of the broken, homeless and inflicted and heal their spirits.

In your mercy and compassion walk with us as we continue our journey of healing to create a future that is just and equitable.

Lord, you are our hope.

Amen

*By the National and Torres Strait Islander Ecumenical Commission
(www.ncca.org.au/natsiec).used with permission*



POEMS

Indigenous Australians

God of all ancient peoples,
Lord of all tribes,
show those of us who are
more recent arrivals
in this Great South Land
how best we can support Indigenous
Australians
to live with dignity,
and to make their rich contribution
to our growing nation.

Thank you for those in government,
and in the church community
who are really listening
and responding with true wisdom
to their cries for justice.
Thank you for rights restored,
for apologies made,
for emerging Indigenous leaders,
poets, priests, campaigners and
visionaries.

We pray with anguished soul
for the descendents of peoples
disinherited long ago,
for those broken spirits
who gather without aim or hope
in parks and lanes and dusty streets.

We pray for children without a
childhood;
For women without security;
For men without respect.

Lord, we just don't know
what we can do –
except perhaps to admit to them
that we are burdened to belong
to the race that dispossessed them.

Lord, hear our cry;
We long to undo
the many wrongs,
as far as that is possible.
But how do we start, Lord?
Where do we start?
Lord, hear our cry!

*By Bruce Prewer (adapted)
Used with permission*



Jesus Wept

I found him sobbing,
Jesus, the one called Christ,
sitting on a stone ledge
in the large empty space
under a sloping overhang
at Burrunguy.

He did not heed me,
Jesus, the one called Christ,
but kept staring at the walls,
fingering grinding holes,
brooding over the vacancy
at Burrunguy.

He knew as a brother,
Jesus, the one called Christ,
the inner meaning of this place
where once camp fires glowed
for thousands of years
at Burrunguy.

Never again, he knew,
Jesus, the one called Christ,
never again the fires and soft chatter,
food love and laughter,
nor the songs of Namarrkurn
at Burrunguy.

I left him weeping,
Jesus the one called Christ,
unable to watch with him
beyond a while in such grief--
or with such fierce love--
at Burranguy.

*By Bruce Prewer
Used with permission*



ENGAGING BIBLICAL TRUTH THROUGH INDIGENOUS PERSPECTIVES

A personal reflection by Neil Hockey

This reflection is difficult to write. I began with the title “Reading the Bible with Indigenous eyes” and immediately recognized this is not my place as a person who is not of Aboriginal descent. What I have experienced is almost a lifetime (in phases) of interaction and sharing of life and work with Aboriginal friends from around Australia. I’m on a journey of realizing a deeper perspective through those friendships.

The Bible has become for me not so much a source of propositions or ideas about life and God. Rather, the great diversity of stories, histories, poems and other records are a means of engaging with the power, truth, justice, light, forgiveness and love of Christ. But again, this Christ is not the distant or harsh God associated with church in the minds of many Aussies. He is one who walked and lived the land and all of creation, living and breathing its history, stories, genealogies, social and political intrigues, partying with the oppressed and oppressors alike, but with an obvious bias to friendship with the exploited. Yet he upheld their causes in an indirect but powerful way, by calling and working with them to build a new community based on relationships that fulfilled the Law of their ancestors. So in the person of Jesus there is also the fulfillment of so much that came before, from the *Tanakh* or Old

Testament. Reading my Bible, I feel more of a resonance these days than ever before with themes such as:

1. Land and Language – they are intertwined. Everything comes from the land.

Check out all the references to land, earth or place, starting from Genesis. Especially look at the covenants with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Deuteronomy, Psalms and many of the prophetic writings are full of references to the people’s relationships to the land. The names of particular places often have to do with people’s experiences at those places, what they saw, heard or felt. Prosperity and peace in the land was directly related to how the people treated the land and how they related to each other socially, politically and economically. Are these principles universal? Are there lessons to be learnt for how we are to live on and with the land in Australia today? What will be the long-term consequences of Australia becoming a quarry for the globally-driven resources boom?

(See Geoffrey Lilburne’s “A Sense of Place”)

2. Wholistic Law – a gift of the Creator, it takes in everything in life.

The role and function of Aboriginal Law can be compared to those of the *Torah* in the Old Testament. Check out the resources available on the website of

Aboriginal Resource and Development Services – www.ards.com.au, including the book authored by Richard Trudgen *Why Warriors Lie Down and Die*.



3. Peace as Shalom, and a need to lament destruction and loss.

The Shalom of the Kingdom of God is globally applicable. It has big-picture dimensions. Yet shalom as a concept, takes in the smallest details as well as the complexity of life of family networks living in close dependence on the land. The level of devastation and loss, the destruction and dispersal that has taken place in Australia over the past two centuries has been catastrophic for the nations living here when white-fellas arrived. Yes, there are some stories of good progress as well, some stories of harmonious co-existence, indeed of collaboration. Such examples need to be replicated many times over. However for many, not only has the loss been colossal, but the experience of invasion and exploitation of land, of one's social and spiritual being, continues today, even in semi-rural areas close to cities where "development" continues at a faster pace than ever before. How, where and when can we stand more in solidarity with Aboriginal brothers and sisters, learning to lament this ongoing destruction in order to know how we should take action and live together? (Once again, see ARDS resources, amongst many others.)

4. Family relationships, extended kinship and identity – discovering our own as well.

The more I learn about and participate very minimally in the strength and beauty of kinship networks, the more I realize how much we have lost as newcomers to this country. We have lost by leaving our own places overseas and we have lost by participating in the

destruction here. Yet the grace of the gospel is once again to be found in working to support the restoration of other's and to discover our own identities as well.

5. Customs and ceremonies in culture. This is a huge area of challenge for immigrant Christians in Australia, to sit in dialogue with Indigenous believers, listening to their perspectives, re-reading scripture for ourselves in the light of their accounts, and supporting them in their search for theological integrity. The book "Rainbow Spirit Theology" for example (Harper Collins, 1997) has caused a significant response and reaction from Western churches in Australia. It is one among many publications. The challenge for us all is to sit and learn from each other, with our feet placed firmly in the context of our own places of life and work.



PSALM 23 (ABORIGINAL STYLE)

By Rev. Ron Williams

My big fella boss up in the sky is like the father emu.
He will always look after me and take me to green grass,
And lead me to where the water holes are full and fresh all the time.

He leads me away from the thick scrub
and helps me keep safe from the hunters, dingoes and eagles.

At night time when I'm very lonely and sad,
I will not be afraid, for my Father covers me with His feathers like a father emu.
His spear and shield will always protect me.

My big fella boss always gives me a good feed in the middle of my enemies.
In hot times he makes me sit down in a cool shade and rest.

He gives me plenty of love and care all of my life through.
Then I will live with my big fella boss like a father emu,
that cares for his chickens in good country full of peace and safety,

Forevermore and evermore.

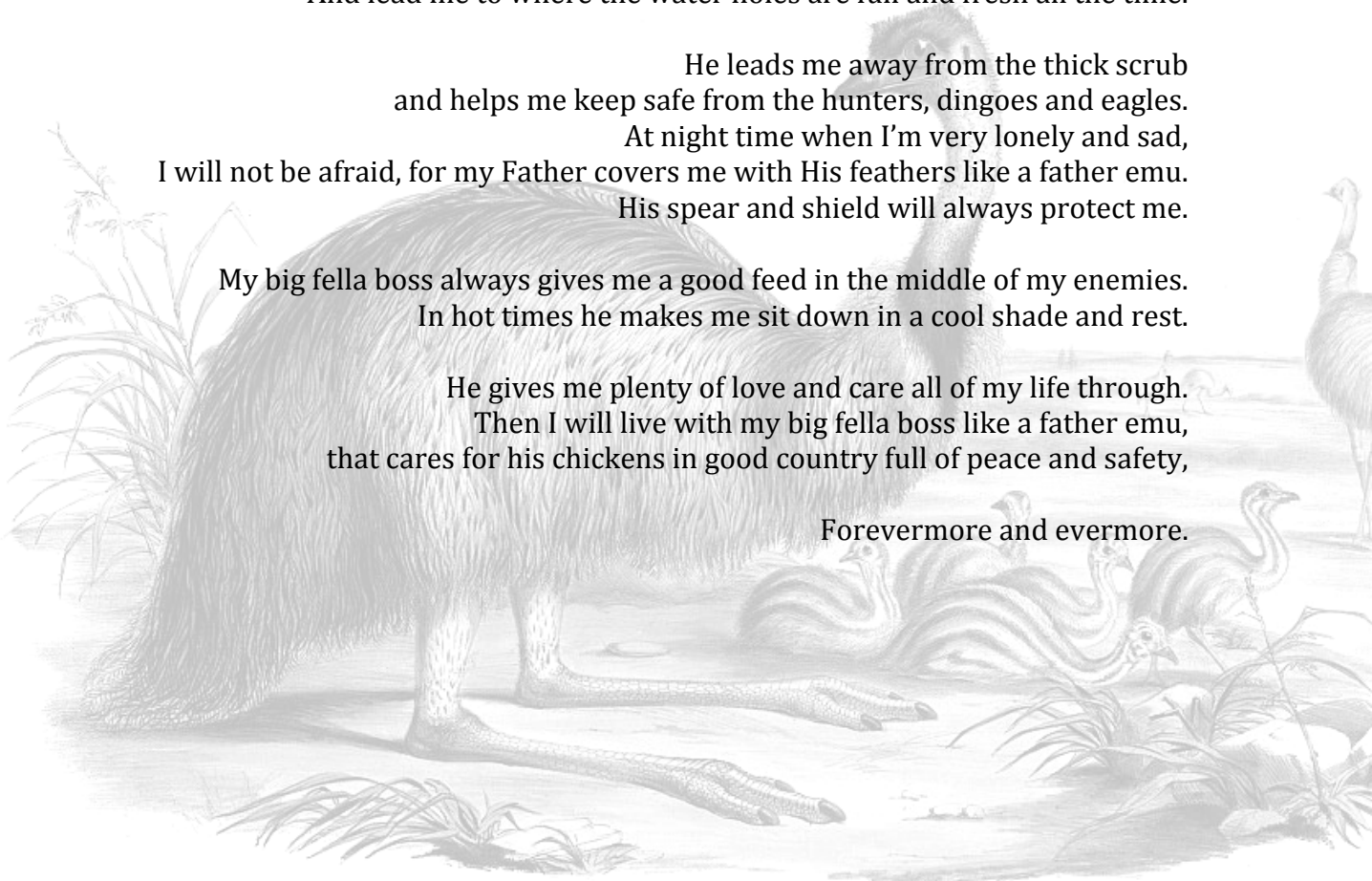


Illustration: Emma Turner, used by permission of the artist.

PROLOGUE: NICKY L. BLENDEL

Illustration: J. Muller, 1999



RECONCILIATION LITURGY

*Developed by the Rev. Sally Apokis
Holy Trinity Anglican Church, 2008
Port Melbourne VIC*

Gathering Prayer for Unity in the Trinity

**God the Father, God the Son
and God the Holy Spirit
By the Reconciling power of your love,
you call us into the Unity of Grace.
Through our many differences:**

Differences of gender
Differences of age
Differences of nationalities
Differences of states
Differences of professions
Differences of Christian expression

**We gather in your name:
Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
Amen.**

Dhurga Lord's Prayer

Baba-yin Miriwar-ya, mardan-ung gabun.
Our Father in Heaven, your name is holy.
Baba, walu-ni gurrad-yin-da
Father, you come to our land.
Ngarr-imbung garuwangan-ung gurrad-yin-ya
We will hear your dream in our land,

Garuwanga ngarra-na Mriwar-ya
The dream they hear in Heaven.
Ngumala-yu-ni ngaiwan-da danga-yin naway.
Please give to us our food today.
Warnadan-imbun garnina-gadhan,
We will let go other's sins,

Wurndung uabunja-mbarraga ngaiwan-da.
When they do them to us.
Baba, munjibi-ngamba-yaminga
Father, don't let us go down
Burdu-da garnina-dam.
To the track to sin.
Wunji-ni ngaiwanga Gunjigarnina-nga
Protect us from the Evil One.

Garganga-ni gurrad, garganga-ni bulwul,
You hold the land, you hold the power,
Garganga-ni biningula.

You hold the light.

Naway ma buraja ma buraja. Yagunadha
Today and tomorrow and tomorrow. Amen.

Dhurga Language, Mogo Community NSW

2 Corinthians 5:16-20

So from now on we regard no-one from a worldly point of view.
Though we once regarded Christ in this way, we do so no longer.
Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he or she is a new creation;
the old has gone, the new has come!

All this is from God,
who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that is God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ,
not counting people's sins against them.
And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation.

Isaiah 49:8-16a

This is what the LORD says:
"In the time of my favour I will answer you,
and in the day of salvation I will help you;
I will keep you and will make you
to be a covenant for the people,
to restore the land
and to reassign its desolate inheritances,
to say to the captives, 'Come out,'
and to those in darkness, 'Be free!'
"They will feed beside the roads
and find pasture on every barren hill.

They will neither hunger nor thirst,
nor will the desert heat or the sun beat upon them.

He who has compassion on them will guide them

and lead them beside springs of water.
I will turn all my mountains into roads,
and my highways will be raised up.

See, they will come from afar –
some from the north, some from the west,
some from the region of Aswan."



Shout for joy, O heavens;
rejoice, O earth;
burst into song, O mountains!
For the LORD comforts his people

and will have compassion on his afflicted ones.
But Zion said, "The LORD has forsaken me,
the Lord has forgotten me."

"Can a mother forget the baby at her breast
and have no compassion on the
child she has borne?
Though she may forget,
I will not forget you!
See, I have engraved you on the palms of my
hands."

Let us confess our sins with our hands

Merciful God,
We have clenched our hands in anger
to threaten and to hurt.
We have clutched with our hands
to keep and to hold selfishly.
We have pointed our finger
to accuse and belittle.
We have held our hands idly
when there is work to be done.

We have lifted our hands to hide our eyes
and shut out sorrow, suffering and need.
We have closed our ears
to cries of help with our hands.
We have hidden our hands when we could have
reached out to our brothers and sisters
in love.
We repent and are sorry for all our sins,
Father, forgive us,
Strengthen us to love and live through Jesus
Christ.
Let us extend our free hands to
our neighbour in love.

Reconciliation Prayer

Dear God,
We who have come from every land give thanks
for our country Australia.
This earth that feeds us,
The shores that bind us,

The skies that envelop our freedom,

We give our thanks and praise.

Let us look back with courage;
See the truth and speak it.
Let us look around with compassion;
See the cost and share it.
Let us look forward with hope;
See what can be and create it.
Amen!

Song

For you,
deep stillness of the silent inland;
For you,
deep blue of the desert skies;
For you,
flame red of the rocks and stones;
For you
sweet water from hidden springs.

From the edges seek the heartlands,
And when you're burnt
by the journey,
May the cool winds
of the hovering Spirit
Soothe and replenish you.
In the name of Christ
In the name of Christ
In the name of Christ.

c. Julie Perrin and Robin Mann 1992

Light a candle to remind us to continue in our
ministry of reconciliation



READINGS AND REFLECTIONS

Psalm 72.1-3

Endow the King with your justice, O God,
The royal son with your righteousness.
He will judge your people in righteousness, your
afflicted ones with justice.
The mountains will bring prosperity to the
people,
The hills the fruit of righteousness.
He will defend the afflicted among the people
and save the children of the needy.

Theme:

National rulers are to express the justice and righteousness of God.

1. In three short verses, the ruler is exhorted twice to be on the side of the "afflicted ones". How well does the Australian government do that for Indigenous peoples?
2. Has prosperity and fruitfulness occurred evenly to all?
3. How can we encourage and support our rulers in governing justly?

Psalm 15

Lord, who may dwell in your sanctuary?
Who may live on your holy hill?
He whose walk is blameless and who does what
is righteous,
Who speaks the truth from his heart
And has no slander on his tongue,
Who does his neighbour no wrong
And who casts no slur on his fellowman,
Who despises a vile man
But honours those who fear the Lord
Who keeps his oath even when it hurts
Who lends his money without usury
And does not accept a bribe against the
innocent.
He who does these things shall never be shaken.

Theme:

Living together as fellow citizens of the land, in a way which honours each other, is the key to living closely with God.

1. From the Psalm, list the ways people can dishonour one another.
2. Are there ways these have been practised against Australia's Indigenous peoples?

Psalm 133

How good and pleasant it is when brothers live
together in unity!
It is like precious oil poured on the head,
Running down on the beard,
Down upon the collar of his robes.
It is as if the dew of Hermon were falling on
Mount Zion.
For there the Lord bestows his blessing,
Even life forevermore.

Theme:

Unity is better than a resources boom

1. Why is unity among people so precious to God?
2. In what ways has our unity with Indigenous peoples been compromised?
3. How can we build that unity?
4. How important is unity to us?

Galatians 3.26-29

...for in Christ Jesus you are all children of God
through faith. As many of you as were baptized
into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.
There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no
longer slave or free,
there is no longer male and female; for all of you
are one in Christ Jesus. And if you belong to
Christ, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs
according to the promise.

Theme:

Love across all boundaries

1. In the ancient world the division between slave and free, Jew and Gentile, man and woman were profound and affected the whole structure of societies. The division between Indigenous and non-Indigenous in Australia is less structural but still present. How do you see it in your area of life?
2. As fellow heirs, Indigenous and non-Indigenous Christians are together heirs of the promise. How can we better express that common heritage?



BIBLE STUDY

Andrew Broadbent

A New *Shalom* for Australia

“The Creator Spirit is crying because the deep spiritual bonds with the land and its people have been broken. The land is crying because it is slowly dying without the bond of spiritual life. The people are crying because they long for a restoration of that deep spiritual bond with the Creator Spirit and the land.”¹

The deep connectedness to the land, often expressed by indigenous Australians, is something many of us find difficult to comprehend, much less understand. And yet, as these quotes from a group of Aboriginal Christians known as “The Rainbow Spirit Elders” makes clear, it is a very real bond and its shattering has had very real consequences.

Our elders had a sacred responsibility as the caretakers of this land and its resources. Because they could no longer exercise this care, they lost their purpose in life. The core beliefs of our people were rejected. The self-esteem of our people was destroyed. And the spirit of our people was crushed.²

Relating to such a deep spiritual connection to the land would not have been difficult for the Israelites of the Old Testament (OT). Access to land was tied closely to the idea of

shalom, a Jewish concept usually translated by the word “peace.”

However, *shalom* is not just about an absence of conflict or trouble. It’s a relational concept that incorporates living at peace with God, self, those around and nature.³ That’s why so often in the OT God admonished those who denied others fair access to the land, either through their over-acquisitiveness (Isaiah 5:8) or by selling the righteous and poor into feudal slavery (Amos 2:6). Without fair access to the Promised Land, *shalom* for many Jews remained an impossible dream.

For many Indigenous Australians, the possibility of *shalom* is unattainable whilst they are dispossessed from their land.

The story of Naboth’s vineyard is often used by Aboriginal Christians as a parallel to their own experience.

Read 1 Kings 21:1-19

Discuss

- What are the similarities Indigenous Australians might see between this story and theirs?
- Ahab and Jezebel committed a number of crimes. How did they make these crimes appear legal and just?
- How did Jezebel convince others that Naboth should die?



- What lies were told about indigenous Australians by the people who took their land?

Past Sins

For the work of reconciliation in Christ to be effective, the Christian churches in Australia need to acknowledge the crimes committed against Aboriginal people, their culture and their land, seek reconciliation, and work with Aboriginal people in their struggles for justice. ⁴

The “Sorry” question in relation to Indigenous Australians stirs the passions of many a talkback radio caller, with a common response being; “I’ve got nothing to be sorry for – I wasn’t even around!” However, it’s important for us to know that there is a biblical precedent when it comes to repentance for the sins of past generations.

Read Nehemiah 9:32-37

Discuss

- Whose sins are the people in this passage acknowledging?
- How is national repentance different from personal repentance?

National repentance does not mean that we all hurt Aborigines personally, but it does acknowledge the sins of past generations.

- If we refuse to acknowledge the *sins* of past generations and their impact upon the present, should we then claim the *achievements* of past generations as part of our national story? (eg, pioneers, ANZACS, Bradman etc.)
- Are there ways in which we personally *have* benefitted from the dispossession of Indigenous Australians? What should our response to this be?
- Are there ways in which we personally have failed Indigenous Australians? (Read Lyn Jackson’s editorial in *Target Magazine*, 2008-1, (www.tear.org.au/resources/target/2008-1) for example). Have we said “Sorry” for those?

Future Hope

We do not understand the Gospel in a narrow sense, which focuses exclusively on rescuing souls from personal sin and arranging their transfer to heaven. Christ came to redeem lives, communities and, ultimately, all creation from all the forces of evil at work in the world. ⁵

Read Romans 8:19-23

- What does this say about our future hope and God’s plan for the land?

This passage means a great deal to the Rainbow Spirit Elders because it speaks of restoration and healing for a broken land and people. The birth pangs Paul speaks of in Romans are the precursor to new life.

God’s love and renewal come to us in the midst of our suffering and the suffering of



our land, and then brings the whole creation to a new liberation in Christ.⁶

Theologian Tom Wright says there is a new world waiting to be born and that we, as followers of Christ, are called to be midwives!⁷ We are a part of the process (one that will ultimately be completed by God) and, in this context, that new world must involve reconciliation with our indigenous brothers and sisters and the birthing of new opportunities for them.

Discuss

- How can Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians be reconciled?
- What might some of these new opportunities look like?
- What can you, as a group, do to bring this to pass?

Spend some time praying together, for Indigenous Christians and their struggle, and for yourselves, as you seek to be part of a new *shalom* for Australia.

⁷ N.T. Wright, *The Challenge of Jesus*. InterVarsity Press: Downers Grove, 1999. p 168.

¹The Rainbow Spirit Elders, *Rainbow Spirit Theology: Towards an Australian Aboriginal Theology*. Harper Collins: Blackburn, 1997. pp 42

² *ibid.* pp 3.

³ Wolterstorff, N. *Until Justice and Peace Embrace*. William B. Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1983. pp 69-72.

⁴ The Rainbow Spirit Elders, *Rainbow Spirit Theology*: pp 73.

⁵ *ibid.* pp 23.

⁶ *ibid.* pp 93.



IDEAS FOR ADVOCACY WITH INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

Why Advocate for Justice?

Advocacy is about speaking up against injustice to address the root causes that keep people in poverty and deny them their rights. We can support the voices of Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples by learning more ourselves, listening to and learning from them, and then speaking up with them to others in our communities and work places, to decision makers at all levels of government and to others who hold resources and power.

Advocacy is also an important part of the community development process, empowering Indigenous people and communities to be able to speak up for themselves and be heard.

In a democracy like Australia, being able to speak up without persecution is a privilege - and a responsibility. Ordinary people can make a real difference by making their voice heard for justice.

What does the Bible have to say about speaking up against injustice?

Addressing structural injustice is not a new idea. In the Bible it is an integral part of being the people of God:

- We are called to hold our leaders to account to act justly – Proverbs 31:8-9 gives us a clear directive: *“Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute. Speak up and judge fairly; defend the rights of the poor and needy.”*

God, through the prophet Isaiah, denounces worship and religious

rituals that take place without addressing the social injustices amongst the community. In Isaiah 58 there is exploitation of workers, homelessness, poverty, hunger and displacement. God reframes worship and “fasting” as the very acts which address these injustices: to *“loose the chains of injustice”* and *“spend yourself on behalf of the hungry.”*

Similar themes are repeated throughout many of the Old Testament prophets: See Amos 5, Micah 6, Jeremiah 22.

In Jesus’ first statement as he began his ministry, he read out a prophecy from Isaiah – outlining his priority to bring good news and freedom to the poor and oppressed: “The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favour.” (Luke 4: 18-19, NIV) As followers of Jesus, we too are required to work to challenge oppression and injustice – this is part of the good news of the Gospel.

Does Advocacy Work?

Does it really make a difference when we speak up? And are Indigenous communities being heard? Here is one story of effective advocacy of an Indigenous community accessing information about funding for their community and speaking up for themselves:



Information is Power: Paper Tracker

The Anangu Lands Paper Tracker gathers information on government commitments to remote Aboriginal communities in South Australia. This information is then used to make sure governments honour their existing commitments or, alternatively, explain why things have stalled or will no longer happen. Here is one example: In 2006, the Federal Government announced that it would spend \$1.5 million building a swimming pool in Watarru, a small community on the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (APY) Lands. Unlike arrangements established in other APY communities, the Watarru community was asked to raise the funding for the pool's ongoing operating costs (possibly through a fuel sales levy). These costs were expected to be around \$150,000 per year. For a small, poor community of about 50 people, it was an impossible situation. In May 2008, the community advised the Federal Government "that it was unable to manage or maintain" the proposed pool. The following month, the Government formally decided that "construction of the pool would not proceed" and that a portion of the original funding would be redirected to an art centre in a nearby community. The Paper Tracker has been reporting on this issue for over two years. Its efforts are helping Aboriginal people understand what is and isn't happening so that they can make informed decisions for themselves.

(www.papertracker.com.au)

Some Key Justice Issues

Closing the Gap

In February 2008, the Prime Minister of Australia (Hon Kevin Rudd MP) announced a number of targets

designed to close the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians and improve life expectancy, educational outcomes, and employment opportunities.

The targets aim to:

- halve the gap in literacy, numeracy and employment outcomes and opportunities within a decade;
- halve the gap in infant mortality rates within a decade; and
- close the 17-year gap in overall life expectancy within a generation.

The Prime Minister has stressed that his government will not insist on a one-size-fits-all approach to closing the gap on Indigenous disadvantage. Instead, it will support "flexible, tailored, local approaches to achieve commonly agreed national objectives".

To find out more, see www.closesthegap.org.au

Human Rights

The gap in life expectancy and other poor statistical indicators of many Indigenous communities are mere manifestations of the reality that is lived out in the every day struggles of Indigenous peoples; a struggle that is beyond the experience of many of us who advocate with them. Thus, we do not just advocate for an improvement in statistics but we seek real changes in the lives of people, that they may live lives of justice, peace, hope, creativity, freedom and purpose. These qualities of fulfilled humanity are only possible where peoples' rights are upheld. In fact, the indicators of disadvantage are often symptoms of underlying injustices that Indigenous peoples face daily and are



best measured by the violations of rights which arise from the humanity and history of Australia's Indigenous peoples.

The rights of Indigenous peoples

These include basic human rights such as the right to equality, freedom from discrimination, freedom of expression, fair trial, protection under the law, own property, and participate equally in the nation's government. Because Indigenous peoples exist as disenfranchised peoples (or nations) within the Australian nation, their history and unique circumstances demand rights that might otherwise be ignored by the majority. These include the Indigenous peoples' rights to maintain their own culture, language and institutions (be they legal, religious, social, cultural or economic). This includes the recognition of a system of Aboriginal law that still operates in many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. These rights are important because many Indigenous peoples' language and legal, cultural, social and political systems are the social glue that maintains their communities and their identity. Mainstream mechanisms that resist or cut across these rights undermine Indigenous communities' abilities to maintain peace and social cohesion.

Another example of important Indigenous rights are those that relate to self-determination, the right to "freely determine" their own development and the "right to autonomy or self-government in matters relating to their internal and local affairs". These rights relate to peoples' control over their own lives and sense of purpose in determining their own aspirations and vocations in their community. Control or mastery over a person's own life is a

major determinate of health and the ability to participate actively in family life, education and the economy. Conversely, violating such rights can lead to high levels of stress and demoralisation.

Needs such as employment (vocation), health care, education, and development are often the focus of government and the media as they relate directly to the statistical indicators. However, attempting to enforce these needs in neglect of, or in spite of, peoples' rights actually increases disadvantage. The UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) reminds us that equal access to health care, education, employment and development should allow for Indigenous peoples' local control of these social services, and be in keeping with community needs and aspirations.

TEAR endorses the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, noting especially their entitlement to human rights, equality and self-determination.

See

www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/en/declaration.html TEAR's advocacy work aspires to be consistent with this declaration.

Political Representation:

TEAR Australia commits to working with Christian Indigenous bodies to ensure that national structures, statutes and rights that empower Aboriginal people are either created or reaffirmed by the Federal Parliament of Australia in consultation with Indigenous communities and individuals across the country. These include the establishment of a legitimate national representative body, the pursuit of a treaty to address historic



injustices and the consolidation of Native Title.

The Northern Territory Intervention:

In early June 2009, the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Ecumenical Commission (NATSIEC) hosted a forum of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Church leaders to discuss the Northern Territory Emergency Response (NTER), also known as the Intervention. The aim of the Forum was to develop a common voice from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Church bodies and to develop a common platform for action. The key areas of concern were the lack of proper negotiation (as opposed to consultation) with Aboriginal people in the Northern Territory and the lack of voice given to many community people. An additional area of concern was the discriminatory nature of the Intervention. The forum issued a statement in response to the Intervention. See www.ncca.org.au/departments/natsiec/advocacy/issues/172 and to sign up to NATSIEC's monthly news, email grussell@ncca.org.au

Advocacy Ideas – speak up!

There are many avenues for action to speak up for justice – here are a few ideas to get started. You can also sign up to receive TEAR's monthly Changemakers campaign news by emailing advocacy@tear.org.au

National Issues

Australians for Native Title and Reconciliation (ANTaR) is a non-Indigenous national advocacy organisation dedicated specifically to the rights - and overcoming the disadvantage - of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people through lobbying, public campaigns and advocacy.

ANTaR campaigns nationally on key issues such as Close the Gap, reducing Aboriginal incarceration, eliminating violence and abuse, constitutional change, racism and others.

Check out their website at www.antar.org.au

The Close the Gap campaign is a coalition of 40+ groups concerned with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health. A secretariat tracks, lobbies and reports on government performance in closing the 17-year life expectancy gap. Oxfam runs the grass-roots side of the campaign, and there are plenty of options for action. Check out:

<http://www.closesthegap.com.au/action.php>

State and Local Issues

You can speak up with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in your state or local area. Paper Tracker is an initiative by UnitingCare Wesley in South Australia that tracks and records on a website all government promises relevant to the people of the APY lands in central Australia. It then tracks the follow-up of these promises and gives people valuable information about their rights and entitlements. See www.papertracker.com.au Keep an eye on www.tear.org.au/common-wealth/advocacy to find out about other local advocacy initiatives you can support, or contact advocacy@tear.org.au if you are aware of an initiative in your local area so we can let others know too.

Your Local MP

Write to your local Member of Parliament to ask them what the Federal Government is doing to “close the gap”



within your local electorate, and what they are doing to ensure they are engaging with and listening to Indigenous people in your electorate. Your letter will remind them of the importance of this work – don't underestimate the impact your voice has as a constituent in your MP's electorate! Hand-written letters are the most powerful way of getting your message across. Use the sample letter below to write to your MP.

Sample letter to your MP

Who is my MP? See www.aec.gov.au/eseach to find out who your MP is. See www.aph.gov.au/house/members/index.htm to find out their contact details and further information.

Dear [insert MPs name]

I am a constituent in your electorate and I am concerned about justice for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

I am writing to let you know of my strong support for the Federal Government's commitment to "close the gap" on Indigenous disadvantage.

Please send me some detailed information on the specific activities and programs that have been established to close the gap within our electorate, including the amount of funding that has been allocated for this work in the current financial year.

I would also be pleased to receive some information on any steps you have taken to engage with local Indigenous people and/or their representative organisations in relation to the Close the Gap campaign.

Yours sincerely



PLACES TO GO, THINGS TO DO, PEOPLE TO MEET

The following list is by no means exhaustive. Some deft web searching or a visit to your local library, historical society or tourist information centre may uncover more local sources of information, places of interest, or cultural contacts.

MELBOURNE AND VIC

“Mission Voices”

An interactive website telling the stories of six Aboriginal mission stations and reserves in Victoria. An excellent source of readable information about the history of government and church interactions with Indigenous peoples in Victoria. Also has educational tools for children to use.

Web: www.abc.net.au/missionvoices

Koorie Heritage Trust Cultural Centre Melbourne

Centre includes:

- Galleries for emerging and established Koorie artists
- A Permanent Exhibition tracing the history of Koorie people
- Guided cultural tours for people of all ages

295 King Street (cnr Lt Lonsdale St)

Melbourne Victoria 3000

Tel: +61 3 8622 2600

Email: info@korieheritagetrust.com

Website: www.korieheritagetrust.com

Bunjilaka

The Aboriginal Cultural Centre at Melbourne Museum

Web: <http://infozone.museum.vic.gov.au/Bunjilaka/>

Sir Douglas and Lady Gladys Nicholls

Pastor Sir Douglas and Lady Gladys Nicholls were two of Australia’s most prominent Indigenous leaders and traditional owners. They played an instrumental part in the 1967 referendum movement in providing comfort and assistance to many people who were homeless, in need of help or who were disenfranchised. Their work touched the lives of many, particularly in the Fitzroy and Northcote area.

City Tours and Walks

City of Melbourne website lists a number of tours and walks either run by Indigenous groups, or by tour operators.

Web: www.melbourne.vic.gov.au and go to “Walks and Tours”



Ian Potter Gallery Indigenous Collection

This collection encompasses work from traditional and contemporary Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists. Displays change regularly, and represent most of the art-producing communities across Australia.

NGV Australia

Federation Square

Corner of Russell and

Flinders Streets, Melbourne.

Telephone 03 8620 2222

Web: www.ngv.vic.gov.au/indigenous

Royal Botanic Gardens, Melbourne

Guided walks are available, exploring the botanical heritage of the Boonerwung and Woiwurrung people.

Web: www.rbg.vic.gov.au/rbg_melbourne/visitorinfo

Narana Centre in Geelong

Narana welcomes the visitor into an Aboriginal place. A gallery/retail area displays a wide range of Aboriginal arts and crafts. Visitors can hear a Didgeridoo performance, stories of some of Dreamtime paintings. Entry is free. Presentations can be booked at a moderate price.

Web: www.narana.com.au

Brambuk Culture Centre in Halls Gap

Open daily | 9am - 5pm | Free Entry

Display and shop, Gariwerd Dreaming Theatre. Rock Art Tours (there are fees for this).

Web: www.brambuk.com.au

Worn Gundidj Visitor Centre Tower Hill

Cultural displays and authentic Aboriginal products at the Visitor Centre managed by Worn Gundidj Aboriginal Co-operative.

Web: www.worngundidj.org.au

The Dharnya Centre

This centre is an education complex and visitor centre built with the co-operation of the local Aboriginal (Yorta Yorta) community. It houses displays about the history and culture of the Aboriginal and European communities living in the district, as well as information about the forest, its inhabitants and the river. The complex also provides accommodation for groups of up to 56 people. Open daily (except Christmas Day and Good Friday) 10am-5pm.

Web: www.murrayriver.com.au/barmah



SYDNEY, NSW AND ACT

Sorry Day Events

Each year on Sorry Day (May 26th) there are a number of events. At the Museum of Contemporary Art at Circular Quay there is usually an evening when members of the Stolen Generations share their stories, and Indigenous musicians perform. It is very moving and worthwhile experience.

The Australian Museum in Sydney

There's an excellent Indigenous exhibition at the Museum, but if you can't get there, you can view it online! The Museum website offers great information about Indigenous Australia. Of particular interest is a set of Dreamtime stories told by Indigenous people. The website also has information for teachers and children.

6 College Street Sydney (opposite Hyde Park)

Phone: (02) 9320 6000

Has a good indigenous exhibition.

Web: www.austmus.gov.au

Bangarra Dance Theatre

Bangarra Dance Theatre combines traditional Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history and culture with international contemporary dance influences to create a unique dance experience.

Web: www.bangarra.com.au

NSW Art Gallery

The Aboriginal collection can be found on the third level in the Yiribana gallery. This display reflects the long history of traditional art across the continent, and contemporary practice and innovation in all media. The website gives you the opportunity to browse the collection.

Art Gallery Road, The Domain, Sydney

Web: www.artgallery.nsw.gov.au/collection/browse.page.do?coll=aboriginal

Sydney Botanical Gardens

All three sites managed by the Botanic Gardens Trust (Royal Botanic Gardens and Domain, Mount Annan Botanic Garden and Mount Tomah Botanic Garden) have gardens and installations with an Indigenous theme. These include:

- Cadi Jam Ora: First Encounters, an award-winning garden display that interprets the Aboriginal cultural heritage of the Royal Botanic Gardens;
- Stolen Generations Memorial at the Mount Annan Botanic Garden;
- Bruit Loop Garden at Mount Annan Botanic Garden, where you can see and taste native fruits in season.



- Darug Connections at the Mount Tomah Botanic Garden, celebrating the past, present and future Darug associations with Mount Tomah and other Aboriginal places in the region.

Educational programs, tours and self-guided walks are available.
Royal Botanic Gardens & Domain, Mrs Macquaries Road Sydney
Phone: (02) 9231 8111

Mount Annan Botanic Garden, Mount Annan Drive, Mount Annan NSW
Phone: (02) 4648 2477

Mount Tomah Botanic Garden, Bells Line of Road via Bilpin, NSW
Phone: (02) 4567 2154
Web: www.rbg Syd.nsw.gov.au

Bushwalks and Aboriginal Sites

The Department of Environment and Climate Change has a very helpful website which lists quite a number of places of significance and has information about many aspects of Indigenous life in NSW.

Web: www.environment.nsw.gov.au/nswcultureheritage/AboriginalPeopleAndCulturalLife

Many of NSW's 750 National Parks have guided walks which focus on Indigenous culture. For example, at the Royal National Park, an Aboriginal Discovery Ranger will show you how the Dharawal people used to live with this ancient land. You can also arrange a guided tour of the rock engravings at Jibbon Point, near Bundeena.

Web: www.environment.nsw.gov.au/NationalParks

La Perouse

Every weekend you can watch boomerang-throwing demonstrations and join some of the Aboriginal people of the region and learn of the Indigenous significance of the area. Experience and Aboriginal guided tour during the week operating from Yarra Bay House.

Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS).

The Institute houses a huge collection of books, documents, audio-visual materials and ephemera. It also hosts events, seminars, workshops and conferences. The website contains lots of information

Lawson Cres, Acton, ACT

Web: www.aiatsis.gov.au



BRISBANE AND QLD

Musgrave Park Cultural Centre

A cultural centre hosting the heritage of the Aboriginal people of south-east Queensland. Cultural programs include hands-on experiences, basket weaving tutorials, bush tucker tasting, corroboree dance demos.

Jagera Arts Centre, 121 Cordelia Street, South Brisbane

Phone: (07) 3846 5700.

Web: www.musgraveparkculturalcentre.org.au

Mount Cootha Botanical Gardens

The self-guided Indigenous Plant Trail is worth investigating.

Phone: (07) 3403 2535

Web: www.brisbane.qld.gov.au/BCC:BOTANICG:14750381:pc=PC_1346

kuril dhagun – Indigenous Knowledge Centre

Located on Level One of the State Library, *kuril dhagun* provides lots of opportunities to learn about Queensland's Indigenous Culture. Films, storytelling, interactive displays, listening to and learning from Elders, and lots more.

Web: www.slq.qld.gov.au/info/ind/kurildhagun

Aboriginal Art/Cultural Trails, Brisbane Area

Brisbane City Council maintains a number of art and culture trails in the extended city area. These include:

Boondall Wetlands Aboriginal Art Trail

Mt Coot-tha Aboriginal Art Trail

Peace Park, Nashville

Web: www.brisbane.qld.gov.au/BCC:BASE:755602880:pc=PC_334

Australian Aboriginal Workshops

Here you can learn about traditional art and culture while making your own "artefact". Workshops are run by traditional Aboriginal artists who explain the processes and assist you in creating your own didgeridoo, boomerang, emu caller or painting.

376 George Street, Brisbane

Web: www.tribaltravel.com.au/Default.aspx?tabid=176

Queensland Art Gallery: Gallery of Modern Art

Houses items from Australia's Indigenous artists across a range of media, including textiles, sculpture, ceramics, prints, painting, photography and emergent media.

Queensland Art Gallery, Stanley Place, Southbank, Brisbane

Web: www.qag.qld.gov.au



Dreamtime Cultural Centre, Rockhampton

This award-winning attraction is built on Darambal tribal land, and was built in consultation with local Aboriginal Elders. The “traditional” area includes gunyahs, scarred trees, a lagoon with traditional foods, a stone axe factory and a bora ring. There is also a Torres Strait Islander area. Guided and self-guided tours are available.

Located 6km north of Rockhampton, along the Bruce Highway.

Web: www.dreamtimecentre.com.au

Townsville Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Centre

The Centre showcases Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history, culture, traditions and heritage, hosts events and presents daily performances of dance, music storytelling and educational opportunities.

Reef HQ Complex, Townsville City Centre

Phone: (07) 4772 7679

Tjapukai Aboriginal Culture Park, Cairns

Tjapukai showcases the culture of the rainforest people of Tropical North Queensland. Situated on 25 acres of land owned by the Tjapukai people, the Park is a theatrical interpretation of Aboriginal culture from the beginning of time into the future. Seven separate arenas allow visitors to experience every facet of the rainforest people’s culture – from the provocative History Theatre to the inspiring Creation Theatre, the original Dance Theatre and the interactive Camp Village, where visitors can learn didgeridoo playing and boomerang throwing.

Kamerunga Road, Smithfield (north of Cairns)

Web: www.tjapukai.com.au

Rainforest Nature Park, Kuranda, Far North Queensland

Part of the Park, the Pamagirri Aboriginal Experience, offers examples of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander huts and shelters, original artefacts, and demonstrations of boomerang and spear throwing. The Pamagirri Dancers perform traditional dances.

Kennedy Highway, Kuranda, Far North Queensland

Phone: (07) 4093 9033

Web: www.rainforest.com.au



PERTH AND WA

Success Hill Reserve

A great place for a picnic, Success Hill Reserve is located in Seventh Avenue, Bassendean on the western side of the Swan River. This place is where Stirling and his party first made contact with the Aborigines of the area. Success Hill was an important sacred site for the local Aborigines. It was believed that a snake-like spirit of the Dreaming lived in a nearby cave.

Web: www.bassendean.wa.gov.au/6_recreation/parks

Museum of Western Australia

Katta Djinoong – First Peoples of Western Australia is on the First Floor, Beaufort Street Building. Visitors to the gallery will gain a greater understanding of and insight into the lives and aspirations of Aboriginal people.

Web: www.museum.wa.gov.au/oursites/perth/exhibitions/katta

Aboriginal Art Gallery

The gallery exhibits the works of Aboriginal Artists from Western Australia and the Northern Territory. The Aboriginal performers, who work in the gallery, talk about culture, artefacts, bush food and medicine from the Nyoongar area.

Fraser Avenue, Kings Park

Web: www.aboriginalgallery.com.au

Yirra Yaakin Aboriginal Corporation

Yirra Yaakin assists the nurturing of Aboriginal community development on a Statewide basis. Yirra Yaakin has inspired an active and diverse range of artistic, educational and developmental projects, such as youth arts residencies in the Pilbara, dance workshops in Kwinana, performances at National Festivals, world premiers of plays by leading Aboriginal writers, mediation programs in partnership with the Education Department, a music recording program and the formation of Australia's first Aboriginal Choir.

Web: www.yirrayaakin.asn.au



Kojonup Visitor Centre

The Centre houses a multifaceted display of artefacts, stories, interactive displays, exhibits, pictures, and entertaining hands-on devices. It tells in a vital, vivid, human and sometimes confronting manner the Kojonup story and the influences, cultural, economic and geographic, that formed the Kojonup of today. It demonstrates the significance of Noongar and Wadjela cultures in the district, and exists as a graphic illustration of the evolution of a multitude of similar communities across Australia. The impact of government policies and other cultures on the local Aboriginal way of life is acknowledged, while at the same time a forceful demonstration of the reconciliation process is clearly presented.

143 Albany Highway, Kojonup

Web: www.kojonupvisitors.com/en/The+Kodja+Place

Bringing them Home Committee

This is made up of Indigenous and non-Indigenous people and meets monthly with the aim of ensuring the many recommendations from the *Bringing Them Home Report* are implemented.

Email: andrew@tear.org.au

Churches

Aboriginal Evangelical Fellowship Church

4 Penrith Place, Balga

Phone: (08) 9440 1736

Coolbellup Uniting Church

4 Malvolio Rd, Cookbellup

Phone: (08) 9314 2412

Mt Zion Aboriginal and Islander Church

Sommers St, Belmont

Phone: (08) 9478 1924

Aboriginal Catholic Ministry and Council

5 Baker Avenue, Perth

Phone: (08) 9328 7529



ADELAIDE AND SA

Significant Sites/Cultural Activities:

Tandanya National Aboriginal Cultural Institute

Tandanya exhibits the work of emerging and established Indigenous artists. There are cultural performances, and guided tours on Thursdays.

253 Grenfell Street, Adelaide
Phone: (08) 8224 3200
Web: www.tandanya.com.au

Living Kurna Cultural Centre

The Living Kurna Cultural Centre offers the opportunity to learn about Kurna culture through a heritage display, arts and cultural workshops, guided tours and events.

Corner of Sturt, Marion and South Roads, Bedford Park
Phone: (08) 8357 5900
Web: www.marion.sa.gov.au/site/page.cfm?u=513

Adelaide Aboriginal Cultural Walking Tours

Free tour by Kurna guide. Trace the footsteps of 40,000 years of Aboriginal culture in the heart of Adelaide. You will explore the rich, ancient cultural heritage of the Kurna people (traditional owners of the Adelaide Plains).

Tours starts at Victoria Square Fountain and ends at the River Torrens Weir.
Every Thursday 10am-12noon
Bookings essential on 8203 7611

Kurna Walking Trails

The trail begins in the foyer of the Festival Centre, and proceeds along the Torrens River, then back past the South Australian Museum and Art Gallery of South Australia. Detailed guides are available from the Adelaide City Council Customer Service Centre.

Adelaide City Council Customer Service Centre
Ground Floor, Colonel Light Centre, 25 Pirie Street, Adelaide
Phone: (08) 8203 7203
Web: www.adelaidecitycouncil.com/communt/reconciliation/kurna/walking-trails.html



Colebrook Blackwood Reconciliation Park

Colebrook Home housed many children who were removed from their families because of the Government's assimilation policies. Some never saw their parents again. Colebrook Reconciliation Park is a memorial to those children and their families. The Park contains the "Fountain of Tears" and "Grieving Mothers" statues. Guided tours or guest speakers can be arranged.

Shepherds Hill Road (next to Karinya Reserve), Eden Hills
Enquiries, contact Blackwood Reconciliation Group on (08) 8336 2525 or 8370 3026.

Tauondi College Cultural Services

Story telling, food trails (including the Botanic Gardens and Morialta Falls), Aboriginal cultural trails (including the South Australian Museum, Adelaide Zoo, Cleland Wildlife Park, and Black Swan Dreaming Trail), and Aboriginal personal history.

For bookings or further information, please contact Cynthia (Tuesdays, Wednesdays & Thursdays):

Phone: (08) 8240 0300

Email: cs@tauondi.sa.edu.au

Camp Coorong

Camp Coorong offers activities to learn more about Aboriginal history, arts, crafts and the environment within the Ngarrindjeri region.

Bonney Road, Meningie, South Australia
Phone: (08) 8575 1557

Victoria Square – Tarndanyangga

Victoria Square has traditionally been a significant place for Kurna people as it was near here that Tarndanya (Red Kangaroo Dreaming) people gathered for special ceremonies and dances long before Colonel Light planned the city of Adelaide. Today, Victoria Square is used by Aboriginal people as a venue for special events such as NAIDOC week.

South Australian Museum – Australian Aboriginal Cultures Gallery

The Australian Aboriginal Cultures Gallery tells the story of the achievements of Aboriginal Australia. Discover the richness of Aboriginal culture through Themes, Technologies, Regional Case Studies and other Special Features arranged throughout the Gallery's two floors. Experience the history of one of the world's oldest and most continuous living cultures.

North Terrace, Adelaide
Web: www.samuseum.sa.gov.au



SOUTH AUSTRALIA EVENTS

Reconciliation Week, 27 May – 3 June

Each year National Reconciliation Week celebrates the rich culture and history of the first Australians. It's the ideal time for all of us to join the reconciliation conversation and to think about how we can help turn around the disadvantage experienced by many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Reconciliation Week is held every year between 27 May and 3 June.

Web: www.reconciliationsa.org.au

NAIDOC Week

NAIDOC Week celebrations are held across Australia each July to celebrate the history, culture and achievements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. NAIDOC is celebrated not only in Indigenous communities, but by Australians from all walks of life. The week is a great opportunity to participate in a range of activities and to support your local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community.

Web: www.naidocsa.com

LOCAL CONTACTS

* **Paul Eckert**, Indigenous Scripture Production, Bible Society NT, 8292 4888
Email: peckert@bible.com.au

* **Steve Hemming**, Senior Lecturer in Australian Studies, Flinders University,
Phone: (08) 8201 5593
Fax: (08) 8201 3635
Email: steve.hemming@flinders.edu.au



TASMANIA

Museums and Art Galleries

Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery (TMAG)

Ningenneh Tunapry is the TMAG's new Tasmanian Aboriginal Gallery. It is a permanent exhibition (Ningenneh Tunapry means "to give knowledge and understanding")

40 Macquarie St, Hobart

Phone: (03) 6211 4177

Web: www.tmag.tas.gov.au

The Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery in Launceston features Strings Across Time, an exhibition of Tasmanian Aboriginal shell necklaces. It acknowledges the contribution, both past and present, that Tasmanian Aboriginal women have made to the continuation and development of their cultural traditions and practices.

2 Wellington St, Launceston

Phone: 03) 6323 3777

Web: www.qvmag.tas.gov.au

Lake St Clair Larmairremener tabelti-Aboriginal cultural walk

This 1½ hours' circular route follows the Platypus Bay track to Lake St Clair. The signposted Larmairremener tabelti-Aboriginal cultural walk wanders through fern glades, moorlands, rainforest and towering eucalypt stands and provides interpretation of the Aboriginal heritage of the area.

Risdon Cove

The site of the first white settlement in Tasmania from 1803-4, Risdon Cove previously belonged to the Moomairremener people, who were said to have been cast out in a most savage and brutal manner. In 1995, the Tasmanian

Aboriginal Council returned Risdon Cove to the Tasmanian Aboriginal Land Council, and the Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre now administers it.

Risdon Cove Public Access Area, East Derwent Hwy, Risdon Vale

Web: www.environment.gov.au/indigenous/ipa/declared/oyster-risdon

Preminghana

Preminghana's historic Aboriginal engraving sites are protected under Tasmanian and Federal legislation. Preminghana is of environmental, heritage and cultural significance to Tasmanian Aboriginal people. In the 1800s, Aboriginal people were forcibly removed from the region. The land is now an important cultural and recreational asset to Tasmania's Aboriginal people.

Web: www.environment.gov.au/indigenous/ipa/declared/preminghana



Loontitetermairehoiner Cultural Walk

Waterloo Point, Swansea

This walking track gives terrific views over Great Oyster Bay and across at the rugged mountains of the Freycinet National Park.

Tulampanga Interpretation Trail

The trail goes through the spectacular Tulampanga National Park, inland from Deloraine and near Mole Creek. It is an area of special significance for the Tasmanian Aboriginal community as it is near the area known as Kooparooka Niara (Mountain of the Spirits) or the Great Western Tiers.

Web: www.treatwesterntiers.net.au

Strahan Wharf Centre

The Strahan Wharf Centre traces the history of the area from the time Aborigines first settled there. Their close connection with the land meant that they acted as stewards for future generations. With the arrival of Europeans came new attitudes and demands, causing friction and conflicts that are still being played out today.

Web: www.australiaeguide.com.au/strahan

If you are touring the state, check out the fascinating history rooms at **St Helens and Alannah on Bruny Island** to source information on local Aboriginal stories.

The vast cave middens of the **Rocky Cape National Park** in the State's North West provide one of the most complete records of the lifestyle of coastal Aboriginal people anywhere in Australia.

If you are in the North West, stop outside the Parks and Wildlife offices at **Arthurs River** to read about the Aboriginal heritage in the Arthur Pieman Conservation area, considered one of the most important areas of Aboriginal landscapes in the nation.



RESOURCE LIST

Websites

Us Mob

<http://www.abc.net.au/usmob/>

Us Mob is a 7-part “choose-your-own-adventure” series set in the central desert of Australia! It uses online characters and friendships to spark an exchange of experience between non-Indigenous and Indigenous young people. It also features some very readable fact-sheets on water, food in the desert, skin names and Arrernte culture. Great for use with young people.

<http://caama.com.au/productions/>

Central Australian Aboriginal Media Association

TV Series

The Circuit

<http://www.sbs.com.au/shop/product/category/DVDs/170/Circuit-The>

Drew Ellis is the latest lawyer to join the chaotic and challenging world of the Kimberley Circuit Court. One law for two cultures doesn't equal a fair go.

Double Trouble

<http://caama.com.au/productions/catalogue/double-trouble/>

Double Trouble revolves around twins separated at birth.

Yuma, city girl, is a keen dancer, and lives in a Sydney beach-side suburb with her well-off father, Henry, an art gallery dealer specialising in Indigenous art.

Kyanna, bush girl, loves any kind of sport, and lives on a remote community outside Alice Springs in central Australia with her mother, Freda, and her extended family. She knows very little of the city or surf.

Documentaries

Contact

<http://www.contactfilms.com.au/>

In 1964, Yuwali was 17 when her first contact with whitefellas was filmed. Now 62, she tells the story behind this extraordinary footage.

Who Do You Think You Are? Australian Series 1

<http://www.sbs.com.au/shop/product/category/DVDs/581/Who-Do-You-Think-You-Are-Australian-Series-1>

Well-known Australians play detective as they go in search of their family history, revealing secrets from the past. Featuring: Catherine Freeman



Who Do You Think You Are? Australian Series 2

<http://www.sbs.com.au/shows/whodoyouthinkyouare/about/page/>

Well-known Australians play detective as they go in search of their family history, revealing secrets from the past. Featuring: Christine Anu

First Australians – The Untold Story of Australia

<http://www.sbs.com.au/shop/product/category/DVDs/230/First-Australians-The-Untold-Story-of-Australia>

First Australians chronicles the birth of contemporary Australia as never told before, from the perspective of its first people. It is the untold story of Australia.

Cheeky Dog

<http://caama.com.au/productions/catalogue/cheeky-dog-2006/>

Dion Beasley is 15 years old; he lives with his Aunty in Tennant Creek and is an artist. With the help of a close friend and teacher, Joie Boutler, they have established a label for t-shirts and other apparel, called “Cheeky Dog”. It is hoped that this venture will create an income for him, and that in the future he will be able to create financial stability.

Finding Place

<http://caama.com.au/productions/catalogue/finding-place-2006/>

Finding Place explores the issues surrounding ceremonially initiated men as they deal with the daily duality of their social standing, both within the Aboriginal and mainstream Australia. How do you “act like a man” when mainstream society insists you’re still a boy and your male role models often seem just as lost as you are? How do you find your place when you’re torn between two very different societies?

Wirriya: Small Boy

<http://caama.com.au/productions/catalogue/wirriya-small-boy-2004/>

Wirriya: Small Boy is a 26-minute documentary that explores an ordinary day in the life of a young Aboriginal boy, Ricco.

Ricco is 8; he is cheeky, bright and adventurous and lives on a small Aboriginal community nestled on the outskirts of Alice Springs in Central Australia. *Wirriya: Small Boy* is a moving and humorous documentary that follows Ricco throughout an ordinary day in his life.



Movies

Samson and Delilah

<http://www.samsonanddelilah.com.au/>

Explores issues of survival for two ostracised teenagers from a remote Indigenous community in Central Australia.

Beneath Clouds

<http://www.sbs.com.au/films/movie/1012/Beneath-Clouds/type/interview/id/19591>

Lena (Dannielle Hall) has an absent Irish father she longs to see and an Aboriginal mother she finds disgusting. When she breaks away, she meets up with petty crim Vaughn (Damien Pitt) who's just escaped from low security prison to reluctantly visit his dying mother. Blonde and light-skinned, Lena is in denial about her Aboriginal heritage; Vaughn is an angry young man with a grudge against all whites. An uneasy relationship begins to form as they hit the road heading to Sydney, taking them on a journey that's as emotional as it is physical, as revealing as it is desperate.

One Night the Moon

<http://www.sbs.com.au/films/movie/1113/One-Night-The-Moon/type/review/id/19435>

In early 1932, Emily (Memphis Kelly), the only daughter of a farming family in outback Australia, steps out of her bedroom window, fascinated by the full moon beaming down on a dramatic landscape. Distraught and terrified, her mother (Kaarin Fairfax) and father (Paul Kelly) call the police to search for her, but when Albert (Kelton Pell) the black tracker police constable turns up to help, the father refuses to let him – or any other blackfella - on his property, despite the Sargeant's (Chris Haywood) insistence that Albert is the best tracker around. When the search party fails to find Emily and the days stretch to weeks, her mother seeks out Albert for his help. Based on a true story.

The Tracker

<http://www.sbs.com.au/films/movie/979/The-Tracker>

This film is set in the early 20th century Australian outback, where four men are following an Aboriginal man who has been accused of murder.



CURRICULUM GUIDELINES FOR VICTORIAN SCHOOLS

<http://vels.vcaa.vic.edu.au/vels/index.html>

VELS Year 5-Year 10 (Levels 4, 5, 6)

Civics and Citizenship

Humanities - History

<http://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/vce/studies/history/histstudy.html>

VCE - Year 11-12 - History

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

The Australian Collaboration

The Australian Collaboration is a consortium of peak national community organisations representing social, cultural and environmental constituencies and interests. The main activities of the Collaboration are to act as a forum for the exchange of ideas and information, to carry out research, to publish essays and books and to provide educational materials on important societal issues. The Collaboration is an independent network; it has no political links and does not support any political party. Its members are:

- [The Australian Conservation Foundation \(ACF\)](#)
- [The Australian Council of Social Service \(ACOSS\)](#)
- [The Australian Council for International Development \(ACFID\)](#)
- [Choice \(The Australian Consumers Association\)](#)
- [The Federation of Ethnic Community Councils of Australia \(FECCA\)](#)
- [The National Council of Churches in Australia and its Social Justice Network \(NCCA\)](#)
- [The Trust for Young Australians \(TYA\)](#)

Indigenous Fact Sheets

All Fact Sheets found at: <http://www.australiancollaboration.com.au/factsheets/index.html>

Indigenous Australians

Misconceptions about Indigenous Australians

Human wellbeing, rights and fairness - (sheets dealing with Indigenous issues)

Causes of Poverty

Human Rights

A Fair Australia



Fact Sheets distributed by Government Departments

The **Australian Clearinghouse for Youth Studies** - <http://www.youthfacts.com.au/> On this web site there is a useful series of fact sheets on “youth facts and stats”, including stats on Indigenous youth http://acys.info/youth_facts_and_stats/design_extras/focus/indigenous

Australia Now - <http://www.dfat.gov.au/geo/australia/index.html>

Australia Now is a series of fact sheets produced by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade covering aspects of contemporary Australia and Australian policies and attitudes. The fifteen groups of issues discussed include culture and the arts, economy and business, environment and science and technology http://www.dfat.gov.au/facts/Indigenous_peoples_overview.pdf

Reference Sites - Indigenous statistics

Australian Bureau of Statistics: Summary Booklet: National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey (2002)

[http://www.ausstats.abs.gov.au/Ausstats/subscriber/\[...\].pdf](http://www.ausstats.abs.gov.au/Ausstats/subscriber/[...].pdf)

Indigenous people

Indigenous Australians suffer systematic inequalities in health, education, employment and housing:

- Life expectancy for Indigenous females is 10 years less than for non-Indigenous females, and for males the difference is 12 years.
- Infant mortality is about 3 times the rate of the non-Indigenous population.
- In 2006, 21 per cent of 15-year-old Indigenous people were not participating in school education.
- In 2002, 1 per cent of Indigenous people had a higher education.
- In 2006, Indigenous students were half as likely as non-Indigenous students to continue to Year 12.
- 16 per cent of the Indigenous population is unemployed, compared with 5 per cent of the non-Indigenous population.
- Indigenous people have much higher levels of criminal convictions, with the imprisonment rate for Indigenous women increasing by 34 per cent between 2002 and 2006.
- The level of kidney disease is ten times higher amongst Indigenous people than non-Indigenous people.

To Indigenous people, rights represent another important area of marginalisation and injustice. The rights sought by Indigenous people include the right to make decisions about their lives, formal recognition as the first e of Australia, and symbolic measures such as the National Apology (for past mistreatment as a consequence of official government policy) that was granted on 13 February 2008.



In order to provide a broad, current social picture of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, the 2002 National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey (NATSIS) presents a summary on culture, language, family, community, education, health, work, and housing.

Information on the 2008 NATSIS can be found at:

[http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/DOSSbyTopic/\[...\]OpenDocument](http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/DOSSbyTopic/[...]OpenDocument)

Australian Bureau of Statistics: The Health and Welfare of Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People (2008)

<http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/4704.0/>

This report provides a comprehensive overview of the health and welfare of Australia's Indigenous population, drawing on extensive surveys and ABS censuses. The areas covered in the report include education, health, housing, population, disability, and mortality.

Australian Government: Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA)

<http://www.facsia.gov.au/internet/facsinternet.nsf/indigenous/nav.htm>

FaHCSIA is the Australian Government's coordination agency for Indigenous Affairs and also has a range of programs to assist Indigenous people. This website provides information on the aims, responsibilities and programs of FaHCSIA. Access to the Indigenous Portal provides resources, contacts, and information on governmental programs and services (<http://www.indigenous.gov.au>)

United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues

<http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/>

The United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII) is an advisory body to the United Nations Economic and Social Council. The Forum is mandated to discuss Indigenous issues on economic and social development, culture, the environment, health, education, and human rights. The website contains information on news, events, and member organisations, as well as access to a photo gallery, official documents, speeches, and news releases.



BOOK LIST

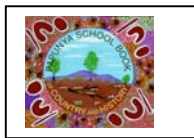
For Children



Little Black Books

Written and illustrated by kids for kids, the set of 12 colourful books are all the work of Indigenous students and young people.

www.blackinkpress.com.au

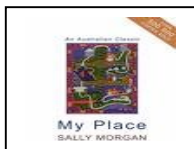


Papunya School Book of Country and History

Author: Nadia Wheatley and Ken Searle

Publisher: Allen and Unwin, 2003

Tells the story of how Anangu from five different language groups came to live together at Papunya.

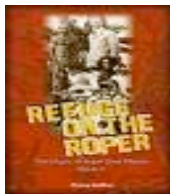


My Place

Author: Sally Morgan

Publisher: (Paperback) Fremantle Press

Sally Morgan writes of her quest to uncover her heritage as an Aborigine, a heritage that had been denied her for many years by her family's insistence that they were not Aboriginal at all.



Refuge on the Roper: the origins of Roper River Mission Ngukurr

Author: Murray Wilfred Seiffert

Publisher: Acorn Press, 2008

This book details the beginnings of the Roper River Mission in the Northern Territory, now called Ngukkur, established in 1908 by the Church Missionary Society of Victoria. It describes what was involved in starting the mission, what they were trying to do, how they did it and the response of the original residents of the Roper River district.



One land, One Saviour: seeing Aboriginal lives transformed by Christ

Authors: Peter Carroll, Steven James Etherington

Publisher: Church Missionary Society Australia, 2008



Press - Information Booklets

<http://www.spinneypress.com.au>

Indigenous Issues

- Volume 200 - Indigenous Health
- Volume 234 - Aboriginal Reconciliation
- Volume 248 - Indigenous Australians and the Law
- Volume 256 - Native Title and Land Rights
- Volume 271 - Indigenous Disadvantage
- Volume 278 - Racial Discrimination
- Volume 289 - Stolen Generations: The way forward



Campfires at the cross: an account of the Buntingdale Aboriginal Mission 1839-1951 at Birregurra, near Colac, Victoria

Author : Heather Le Griffon
Publisher: Australian Scholarly Publishing, 2006
ISBN: 1740971124, 9781740971126
Length: 321 pages



The original Australians: story of the Aboriginal people

Author: Josephine Flood
Publisher: Allen & Unwin, 2007
ISBN: 1741148723, 9781741148725
Length: 306 pages

Offering insight into the life and experiences of the world's oldest culture, this account of Australia's Aboriginal history spans the mythologies of the Dreamtime through to the modern-day problems within the community. Culture and history enthusiasts will get answers to such questions as: *Where did the Aborigines come from and when? How did they survive in such a harsh environment?* and *What was the traditional role of Aboriginal women?* This story emphasizes the resilience and adaptability of the Aboriginal people, especially throughout their relationship with the Europeans who eventually colonized the continent.



LIST OF INDIGENOUS AUSTRALIAN MUSICIANS

Solo artists

- [Trevor Adamson](#) -- country/gospel singer
- [Auriel Andrew](#) -- country musician
- [Christine Anu \(Torres Strait Islander\)](#) -- pop singer
- [David Arden](#) -- singer and guitar player
- [George Assang](#) -- singer and actor
- [Mark Atkins](#) -- didgeridoo player
- [Maroochy Barambah](#) -- mezzo-soprano
- [Black Allan Barker](#) -- country/blues singer
- [William Barton](#) -- didgeridoo player
- [Lou Bennett](#) -- musician and actor
- [Harold Blair](#) -- tenor
- [David Blanas](#) -- didgeridoo player
- [Brothablack](#) -- hip-hop performer
- [Burragebba](#) -- didgeridoo player
- [Sammy Butcher](#) -- guitarist, ex Warumpi Band
- [Kev Carmody](#) -- singer-songwriter
- [Troy Cassar-Daley](#) -- country musician
- [Deborah Cheetham](#) -- opera singer
- [Jimmy Chi](#) -- composer, musician and playwright
- [Seaman Dan \(Torres Strait Islander\)](#) -- singer and songwriter
- [Ash Dargan](#) -- didgeridoo player
- [Alan Dargin](#) -- didgeridoo player
- [Casey Donovan](#) -- pop singer
- [Emma Donovan](#) -- singer and songwriter
- [Kutch Edwards](#) -- singer and songwriter
- [Richard Frankland](#) -- playwright, musician and activist
- [Joe Geia](#) -- musician, composer of the song "Yil Lull"
- [Djalu Gurruwiwi](#) -- didgeridoo player
- [Grant Hansen](#) -- musician and broadcaster
- [David Hudson](#) -- didgeridoo player
- [Ruby Hunter](#) -- singer and songwriter
- [Roger Knox](#) -- country singer
- [Herbie Laughton](#) -- country singer
- [Georgia Lee](#) -- jazz and blues singer
- [Tom E. Lewis](#) -- actor and musician
- [Jimmy Little](#) -- country singer
- [Little G](#) -- rapper
- [Jessica Mauboy](#) -- pop and r&b singer
- [Bobby McLeod](#) -- activist, poet, healer and musician
- [Shellie Morris](#) -- singer, song writer
- [Munkimuk](#) -- hip-hop artist
- [Johnny Nicol](#) -- jazz singer
- [Rachel Perkins](#) -- director, producer, screenwriter and singer
- [Bob Randall](#) -- singer and author
- [Wilma Reading](#) -- jazz singer
- [Archie Roach](#) -- singer, songwriter and guitarist
- [George Rurrumbu](#) -- rock singer, ex Warumpi Band
- [Vic Simms](#) -- singer and songwriter
- [Dan Sultan](#) -- rock singer
- [Richard Walley](#) -- activist and didgeridoo player
- [David Williams](#) -- didgeridoo player
- [Gus Williams](#) -- country musician, community leader
- [Warren H Williams](#) -- country musician
- [Bart Willoughby](#) -- musician, No Fixed Address, Coloured Stone, Mixed Relations
- [Frank Yamma](#) -- Indigenous Roots musician
- [Isaac Yamma](#) -- country musician
- [Dougie Young](#) -- country musician
- [Ursula Yovich](#) -- actress and singer
- [Geoffrey Gurrumul Yunupingu](#) -- singer and guitarist, Yothu Yindi, Saltwater Band
- [Mandawuy Yunupingu](#) -- singer, community leader, Yothu Yindi



Indigenous bands

See also [CAAMA](#), [Aboriginal rock](#), [The Deadlys](#), [Stompen Ground](#), [Vibe Australia](#)

- [Amunda](#) -- rock band from [Alice Springs](#)
- [The Black Arm Band](#) -- concert band of some of Australia's premier Indigenous musicians
- [Blackfire](#) -- rock band from [Melbourne](#)
- [Blackstorm](#) -- rock/blues band from Yuendumu
- [Blekbala Mujik](#) (Blackfella Music) -- band from Arnhem Land
- [Coloured Stone](#) -- rock/reggae group from [Ceduna](#)
- [The Country Lads](#) -- country rock band
- [Deadheart](#) -- rock/pop band from [Geelong, Victoria](#)
- [Djaambi](#) -- band from [Melbourne, Victoria](#)
- [The Donovans](#) -- country band based around the Donovan family
- [Fitzroy Xpress](#) -- country rock group from [Fitzroy Crossing](#)
- [Ilkari Maru](#) -- rock band from Central Australia
- [Kuckles](#) -- Broome band featuring Jimmy Chi
- [Kulumindini Band](#) -- rock band from [Elliott, Northern Territory](#)
- [Lajamanu Teenage Band](#) -- rock band from [Lajamanu, Northern Territory](#)
- [The Last Kinection](#) -- hip-hop group from [Newcastle, New South Wales](#)
- [Letterstick Band](#) -- reggae/rock band from Northeast Arnhem Land
- [Local Knowledge](#) -- hip-hop group from [Newcastle, New South Wales](#)
- [Mixed Relations](#) -- reggae, pop, rock and jazz band
- [Nabarlek](#) -- Indigenous Roots band from [Arnhem Land](#)
- [No Fixed Address](#) -- reggae/ska/rock band from [Ceduna](#)
- [NoKTuRNL](#) -- hip-hop/metal group from [Alice Springs](#)
- [North Tanami Band](#) -- reggae/ska band from [Lajamanu, Northern Territory](#)
- [Ntaria Ladies Choir](#) -- choir from [Hermannsburg, Northern Territory](#)
- [The Pigram Brothers](#) -- country/folk group from [Broome](#)
- [Saltwater Band](#) -- Indigenous Roots band from Galiwin'ku on [Elcho Island](#)
- [Scrap Metal](#) -- country/reggae band from [Broome, Western Australia](#)
- [Shakaya](#) -- two-piece girl group
- [Soft Sands](#) -- country and gospel band from Galiwin'ku on [Elcho Island](#)
- [South West Syndicate](#) -- hip-hop group
- [Spin.FX](#) -- reggae, rock, country band from [Papunya, Northern Territory](#)
- [Stiff Gins](#) -- acoustic group from [Sydney](#)
- [Street Warriors](#) -- hip-hop group from [Newcastle, New South Wales](#)
- [Thylacine](#) -- rock band from [Darwin, Northern Territory](#)
- [Tiddas](#) -- three-girl folk band from Victoria, Australia
- [Tjimba and the Yung Warriors](#) -- hip-hop group from [Melbourne](#)
- [Tjupi Band](#) -- reggae band from [Papunya, Northern Territory](#)
- [Us Mob](#) -- rock band from [South Australia](#)
- [Warumpi Band](#) -- rock/reggae group from [Papunya](#)
- [The Wilcannia Mob](#) -- rap/hip-hop group from [Wilcannia, New South Wales](#)
- [Harry and Wilga Williams](#) -- country music artists
- [Wirrinyga Band](#) -- rock band from [Milingimbi, Northern Territory](#)
- [Yothu Yindi](#) -- rock/folk group from [Arnhem Land](#)



THE PROCESS OF ABORIGINAL RECONCILIATION: A LOCAL CHURCH EXAMPLE

Digby Hannah

A person has been lying on the ground enduring a beating for a long time - say 200 years. The person doing the beating suddenly stops, offers a hand and says "let's be reconciled!" Does the person on the ground suddenly leap up, embrace their new friend and walk hand in hand into the sunset? In the first place, getting up from the ground will be painfully difficult.

This metaphor powerfully illustrates the idea that reconciliation between Aboriginal people and the wider Australian community is both long overdue and fraught with obstacles. What follows is one attempt to respond to the recent request from the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation for community members to contribute examples of how Aboriginal and other Australians have worked together for positive change. The recently appointed Council consists of 25 Australians who have been set the task by the Federal Parliament of promoting this much-needed process of reconciliation. To my knowledge this Council still has no official church representation. This is an astounding omission, firstly because the church has participated in a great deal of dispossession and cruel separation of family members one from another and surely has some reconciling to do. Secondly, the church can claim some

special expertise in the business of reconciliation and therefore should be a key participant in the process.

There are some, of course, who are opposed to the very existence of the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation. They maintain that this Council is merely a smoke screen concealing the main issues of land rights, self-determination and the need for a treaty. I would hope that any moves towards reconciliation would seek to address, rather than avoid these issues.

This example of one group's participation with the Aboriginal community is at the level of local church. These efforts of reconciliation commenced more than seven years ago and they are continuing today. They have focussed in two main directions. In one instance they have largely failed. In the other we feel what the results have been mutually enriching and more than worth the effort.

We are St Augustine's church, San Remo, a small Anglican congregation consisting of a couple of dozen families, mainly with young children and individual members of various ages. We are located in country Victoria in an area where very few Aboriginal people reside, and where there is no local Aboriginal community as such.

At the time of the white invasion, in the early 1800s, our region of Westernport Bay was the domain of the Boonoorong Group. Members of this group enjoyed their protected coastal environment and camped at many sites in the neighbourhood during certain seasons of the year. The evidence of their



activities is very clear at several middens, some quite recent kitchen middens in the dunes and at the mouth of local rivers. The history of the Koorie people in our locality was similar to that of Gippsland and indeed, Australia generally.

The arrival through the Snowy Mountains of mainly Scottish settlers with sheep and cattle denied the Aboriginal people their normal hunting grounds and disrupted their established territorial boundaries. The resulting turmoil produced inter-tribal conflict as well as the predictable conflict between the Aboriginal people and their invaders. The slaughter, dispossession and disruption was so thorough, that contemporary Aboriginal people in this area have no idea as to their geographic origins.

In the absence of a local Aboriginal community, our church community decided to attempt to build bridges with two groups of Koories who were within a few hours' drive of our town. Our reasons for wishing to do this were varied. Many of us were conscious of the past injustices suffered by local Koorie people. We felt that we should explore possible ways in which we could make even a small contribution towards recompensing these injustices. We were aware of the lack of Aboriginal culture in our own area and were hopeful that some interaction between our community and the Aboriginal community would be mutually enriching. We were mindful of several people in our church community who have an Aboriginal heritage. It was felt to be particularly important that these children

should have the opportunity of building friendships with other Koorie people and identifying with the wider Aboriginal community.

We had heard of a Koorie church in Dandenong which was organised by Aboriginal people under the leadership of Aboriginal pastor Ricky Manton and his wife Kayleen. We wrote to the group asking whether they would consider coming and running an informal service at our own church. We received an early lesson in Aboriginal culture when several car-loads, including the Manton extended family members from hundreds of kilometres away, arrived at our little church and in a collective, informal, participating and co-operative fashion proceeded to lead us in worship and learning. We noted how the warm and social response to one invitation contrasted with the more formal individualistic approach assumed by members of the non-Aboriginal community.

Since that day, seven years ago, we have continued to visit one another's churches, exchange letters, pray for each other and pursue friendships. From the relative economic wealth of our church community we have been able to give regular financial support towards the salary of the Aboriginal pastor.

Many lives have been affected directly and indirectly as a result of the interaction between the Dandenong and San Remo communities. Ricky Manton's brother Brett, for example, lived and worked at San Remo for several months making good friends with a young family who subsequently



moved to teach at an Aboriginal school at Coolgardie. A second young couple from our church community has left to teach at the school for Aboriginal children at Camooweal in the far north of Australia. Through Kayleen Manton and her brother we now have made contact with people at the remote Queensland settlement of Cherbourg. Thus our contacts and friendships with the Aboriginal community continue to spiral and grow and our lives have become so much the richer for this.

Our consciousness has been raised in other ways through our involvement with the Aboriginal community. Some members of our congregation have adopted the notion of "paying the rent" whereby any land-owner, private or corporate, voluntarily pays one per cent of their annual income to a chosen segment of the Koorie commonly in recognition of the land which they are renting from the former, now disenfranchised, owners.

This process of conciliation between two communities sounds simple when written in the space of a few short paragraphs. It has not occurred without effort and determination on both sides. Church congregations are notoriously fickle - happy to be entertained by visiting preachers, but reluctant to maintain interest and support towards individuals or projects over a long period of time. This is particularly true when these individuals or projects are not resounding success stories with regular exciting instalments. During his most recent visit to our congregation the pastor from Dandenong lamented how often he is asked to address non Aboriginal groups, how often they

express interest and intended on-going support, and how rarely this continuing interest is forthcoming. He expressed his gratitude for our good relationship which has weathered all these years.

This example of Aboriginal and non Aboriginal cooperation is modest, but for the people in our small corner it has been immensely enriching. In turn, we have been able to give some consistent support to a small Koorie community who are providing care and counsel to many single parent Aboriginal families and other individuals who are struggling with a level of social and economic deprivation which remains hidden from the view of most people.

The second group of Aboriginal people with whom we have attempted to build bridges is from rural Gippsland. In this case, contact was made through Rev. Graeme Vines, an Anglican clergyman who has worked within that community for many years and who is much loved by the local Koorie people. We had several meetings. We attended a day of Aboriginal culture and dancing organised by Graeme and the Gippsland Koorie community. This was colourful and enriching for us and a good way to start. A group of Koorie people accompanied by Graeme visited our community for a weekend. They, too, joined with us and contributed to our Sunday worship. The following year our church community made a reciprocating visit to Lake Tyers and Lakes Entrance for the weekend. This week we entitled *Mullauna* an Aboriginal word meaning "together". For three years subsequently, in partnership with



Graeme Vines, we planned "Koories and Friends" camps with the aim of sharing hospitality and holiday experiences with this community of Aboriginal people who would not normally have such opportunities. We attempted to plan these events "with" the communities and not "for" them, but in this case we may have failed. The members of these communities expressed polite interest during various planning stages, but finally voted with their collective absence. This was a great source of disappointment to us and also to Graeme.

Though I trust we have not abandoned all hope, our contacts with this community have dwindled to all but nothing. From all these attempts we feel that a sense of reconciliation and good relationship is flickering only faintly. Though we have sensed failure we have also learned some important lessons.

First, we have become acutely conscious that in some quarters the Koorie community has been oppressed and depressed for so long that they are simply not in the mood for co-operative ventures. Secondly, we are conscious that any act of reconciliation will require a determined effort over a long period of time. Many welfare recipients within the non-Aboriginal community are thoroughly cynical about the "do-gooders" who come into their lives with hopes and promises only to disappear when most needed. How much more does the Aboriginal community have reason to be bitter and cynical.

We are a small church-based community who have benefited immensely from our involvement with the Aboriginal community. We feel that we have developed an understanding of our respective histories and have strengthened in our determination to heal some of the scars which remain from our tragic past. We have been enriched as we have learnt something of a culture which has some earthly and timeless values which our materialist and impatient society needs so desperately to absorb. We hope that in a small measure we have contributed some strength to the struggling Koorie communities with whom we have been involved. We believe that church-based groups should, of all groups, have the motivation and commitment to engage in acts of reconciliation. If they have not, then it is time that they returned to the basics of their faith and the good news which was preached and lived by the Galilean teacher, two thousand years ago.

When this article was written, Digby Hannah was a member of the Anglican church in San Remo, Victoria.

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FIRE IN THE SOUTH LAND RECONCILIATION FROM AN ABORIGINAL'S PERSPECTIVE

By Rev. Ron Williams

A Story

I was up in a northern country town called Derby as the pastor of the People's Church in 1972. One day an old Aboriginal man named Spider came to me for a yarn. "William (as he called me)", he said. "God been speakin' to my brains. He said, 'You go and talk to Williams and he will tell you what to do.'" Well, I told Spider about the Bible and the God of Creation, that God "don't make junk and everyone is special and people are not rubbish." He listened patiently and very intently and then he replied to me, saying: "William, I was a black police trooper and I helped the police round up lots of Kimberley blackfellas. One day we heard blackfellas in the top end, they speared and killed two whitefellas. Them two, they raped Aboriginal womans."

The Aboriginal women, at that time, were naked in their natural life in their own bush country. He went on to say, "We took two barges up the coast with black police troopers and we found 'em and killem the whole lot and no one get away."

Somewhat saddened, I looked at this dear old man. "You did not know what you were doing," I told him. "Even though they were wild bush people, God loved them and everyone needs to know about Jesus." Tears filled his eyes and he took off his hat as we bowed our heads together. Tears flowed down my face as I heard old Spider pray: "Forgive me Father, for killem my own people. I did not know about you, that you love all people and the blackfellas in the bush. I'm sorry for what I done. Thank you for speakin' to my brains to come to William, because you give 'im word to tell me."

We finished praying. I told him that God had forgiven him, the past was behind him and that the path of reconciliation would be a road that I would travel on until God called me home. This old police trooper did not only care for his own

people, but he cared for his white police friends, too. Sometime later one of his white

constable friends was bitten by a death adder in the Kimberley bush. Spider killed the snake and then rode swiftly through the night fifteen kilometres to get help. When they got back, his friend was dead from the poison. They buried him in the bush, in an unmarked grave, but Spider never forgot that friendship as he often spoke with affection for him years later.

In 1965, as a young man of 25 years, I was training to be an evangelist at Ambassadors for Christ, listening to Australia's great men, John G. Ridley and Harold Whitney, as they thundered, "Now we are ambassadors for Christ." This message began to burn in my heart with an unextinguishable flame. The journey has been a long one and full of many surprises, as well as toil, tears, joys, and sorrows. From the prisons of Australia, its brothels, the outback bush and the sprawl of the urban scene, I have connected in that journey with a white American who has given her life to reconciliation as well. We have walked this road together, through the bumps and corrugations, to the whisper of God from 2 Cor. 5:19: "He has committed to us the message of reconciliation." We have ministered to and wept with people of all races and cultures: Vietnamese, Chinese, Africans, Native Americans, Aboriginal Australians, white Australians and Europeans.

Most men and women will die with their music trapped inside of them, not being released or set free. The Aboriginal people need to forgive and be reconciled to each other, as well as reconciliation between black and white. May we also be reconciled to the young Australian, the unborn Aussies, the older Australian and father to son, husband to wife, mother to daughter.

As I have wept and considered reconciliation from a Biblical point of view, I asked myself:

What is true, meaningful reconciliation all about anyway?

The rest of this booklet presents these thoughts as I have talked with others, both black and white, and as I have considered my own life, my journey with my fellow man, and the journey to reconciliation.



Revelation

As a nation and as individuals, we need a revelation. The Bible says that “without a vision, the people perish.” (Prov. 29:18) What we need is a revelation of each other. In the early 70’s I attended the Bible College of South Australia. It was a time of trials and testings, as I was the only Aboriginal student there. As the time of college graduation drew near, a fellow student came to my house for a cup of tea - suddenly the tears started to flow down his face. I was taken by surprise when he said: “Ron, I want to tell you that I’m very sorry for my attitude toward you. I’ve lived in South Australia all my life and all I’ve seen is Aboriginals fighting and drinking and I always thought that was how they all were. I was fearful of them. So I was fearful of you when you came here to college and then became my neighbour as well. Please forgive me Ron, because I thank God that you have taught me to see you and your people so differently.” We cried together in the midst of this revelation.

I have received a revelation of white people, too, many of them over the past years. Sometimes I have thought to myself that white people don’t have any problems. But as I have mixed with white people from around Australia, I have learned that they have many of the same problems and hurts that we do. I remember a good friend of mine, whom I have known for maybe 20 years and who has worked closely with Aboriginal communities all that time, came to me. He said: “Ron, the other day when we were talking together, something you said really hurt me. I felt I could not go on without talking to you about it.” As we shared together I realised, too, that I could hurt others and that I needed to seek forgiveness. That day I, too, had another revelation. This step of revelation leads us to remorse.

Remorse

“A deep regret for wrongs committed” is what the dictionary says. It reminds me of a story of an old missionary in Tasmania. He had been a young man full of zeal and wanting to do something useful with his life. He had gone to Bible College and was planning to go to China as a missionary. One day a circus came to Hobart and he went along to enjoy the show. He was deeply impressed by an Aboriginal from Victoria who performed with a

stock whip, an 18 footer and a 24 footer, and one in each hand.

The next day as he was walking through a park in Hobart, he saw the young fellow, lying drunk on the ground, so helpless. Through his mind raced the plight of the Aboriginal people of Tasmania, most of them wiped out by government policy and the ones who were alive, drunk and outcast. Remorse filled his heart and, at that moment, he decided to spend the rest of his life helping Aboriginal people and being their friend.

Many years later, lying on his death bed, I looked at this old man and ran my fingers through his snowy white hair. Sixty odd years of his life he had spent living and working among the black people of Western Australia, whom he loved. He had given me \$300 a few weeks earlier to help on an evangelistic trip around Australia. Now at 90 years of age, he looked up at me and smiled, “I am going to be buried alongside my wife and an Aboriginal friend and, one day when Jesus comes, we shall rise up together and meet our Lord in the air.” Tears came to my eyes as I reflected: “Not all Tasmanians were prejudiced. Some had the love of Jesus in their hearts.” And this attitude leads to repentance.

Repentance

We cannot fully appreciate 2 Chronicles 7:14 if we have never had a revelation nor felt the pain of remorse. I well remember how God spoke to me at a John Wimber conference in Perth in 1993. At a lunch-time meeting with pastors and leaders, John Wimber spoke on healing. I got up to share how the greatest healing needed was between black and white. I told of how a young Aboriginal man was recently murdered in Kalgoorlie by a couple of young white fellows who were out for a night of fun, finding someone to beat up. As I spoke, anger rose in my heart and my words came out with a condemning attitude. Later, as I saw one of my friends – a white Christian leader – after the meeting, I went to shake hands with him, but he turned away.

That night the preacher spoke on repentance and forgiving our fathers for the mistakes they made and the failures of relationship. “Some of you may not have had a father,” said the preacher. “You may be illegitimate.” Hundreds



of people were responding to the message with tears of repentance and forgiveness. At that moment God spoke to me of my own bitterness, resentment and anger towards others. I, too, went forward to receive a touch from God. After that meeting I saw my friend, and when we looked at each other, we embraced each other and wept together. He then said to me: "Brother, I turned away from you and I am sorry, but I could see a bitterness growing inside of you and I wanted you to be free. Of all the Aboriginal people I know in Australia, God has used you to touch so many white people deeply, more than anyone that I have known. I couldn't afford to be quiet. I care for you."

Remember, friends, that repentance comes before reconciliation. But in between those two steps comes restitution.

Restitution

Our government has tried to give restitution in the form of money, scholarships, compensation of different varieties. This is good to some degree, but that alone will not deal with the pain and the problems.

Restitution reminds me of a young Australian man who joined the air force during the war. After that he went to Bible College and Teachers' College and was one of the first government teachers in the Goldfields of Western Australia. He got married and became a missionary teacher among the Wongi people. His wife was the daughter of a great pioneer missionary among Aboriginal people. After some years of a very successful teaching career, he was offered a promotion in another government school. At the same time there was a need to train Aboriginal students in an Aboriginal Bible Institute. So the two of them packed their bags and their children and went to the South-west to start the college. They gave all the money they had, \$100, to put a down payment on land and buildings. For 16 long years they gave a labour of love to training Aboriginal students in the Word of God. I was one of the first students at the College. There were many tears, sorrows, plus lots of joy as a good foundation was laid for later on, when I became the first Aboriginal principal of a Bible College in Australia.

It was a good training ground for me to travel around Australia and other parts of the world. The restitution here was not just money, but it was lives given in love and service to see people grow and have an abundant life. We can never repay debts that are incurred through selfishness, and wrong motives, but we can repent and, through God's help, we can help one another along the footsteps of life. This is what prepares us for true reconciliation.

Reconciliation

This word, "reconciliation", is a much-used word today and, perhaps because of over-use, is in danger of losing its true meaning. There is a national council of reconciliation formed by the government, and millions of dollars is being spent on "reconciliation meetings". True reconciliation, I believe, can only come when we have walked through the previous steps mentioned in this paper, and we come to the cross of Jesus Christ.

My wife and I have had to walk out reconciliation every day of our lives. We come from two very different backgrounds and parts of the world. We represent two major people groups of the world – the western mindset and the indigenous culture. Because Jesus is the centre of our lives, we are able to appreciate one another and learn to walk together, complementing one another. Our daughter is proud that she has five cultures as her heritage. As we have shared with multicultural marriages, cross-cultural ministry and reconciliation services, we have tried to live out the ministry that God has given us. As an Aboriginal, I have now become reconciled to my past, my history, to my God and to my fellow man.

Reconciliation is not an act in itself, but a result of other acts and attitudes and changes within the heart of man. I do not believe that we can have "reconciliation" meetings, but it is as we receive revelation from God, as we sense the remorse of wrongs done, and repent of our actions and attitudes, as we seek to have restitution, the result will be true reconciliation. It will cost us something to be reconciled, but we must not forget that it cost God His Only Son to reconcile us back to Himself and to one another. Reconciliation in Australia will not be achieved by anything less. And, praise the Lord, then we can look forward to revival.



Revival

When we are truly reconciled we will see a mighty revival touch our nation. I have seen revival touch people in many parts of our country, especially in Aboriginal communities. Let's get a glimpse of a recent wave of God's Spirit touching the Western Desert area.

"This holy sacred site, in this dry river bed, has become the regular meeting place of the Aboriginal churches of the Pilbara for 16 years. This year meetings began in the afternoons and continued through most the night. Many people have been freed from the grip of alcohol and the attitudes of worthlessness."

"Many were telling about their families now being together, and a freedom in song and stories of God."

"Many travelled to a memorial service of an American Bible translator who had worked with the Martu people for over 30 years. The ceremony given by the Martu people, fitting for a local tribal elder, indicated the respect that the people held for this man who had given his whole life for them."

This is reconciliation worked out in revival. This is not the end of the story, for along with revival comes reconstruction and restoration.

Reconstruction and Restoration

Our lives will be built together and we will be like the time of Nehemiah, where we build the broken wall together, stationed in family groups, linked together in a new and fresh way.

In the Goldfields, we saw something of reconstruction and restoration when our church began in an alcoholic rehab centre. Since that time, lives have been renewed and most of our church members now have good jobs, strong families and many blessings from God. We want to join together with other Aussies for the spiritual, emotional, physical and mental well-being for all the people of our nation. We want to be part of helping this nation be what God has meant it to be.

We will then be able to offer something of value to the peoples of the world, other than gold, pearls, wool, diamonds and minerals. Because then we will understand that it is

more blessed to give than to receive. Through healing and forgiveness of past hurts and pain in our land, we will understand what was meant when it was said:

"God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself."

May God bless you.

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