

**From:** Peter Russell  
**Sent:** Monday, 21 May 2007 11:58 AM  
**To:** - recipients  
**Subject:** THE GREAT SOUTHLAND - a new verse

### **THE GREAT SOUTHLAND - a new verse**

At an Easter Camp in the mid-nineties, at the height of the popularity of the Great Southland by Geoff Bullock...the Aboriginal people present from Port Augusta spoke on the lack of acknowledgment of their people already being in the great southland!!

When Jodie asked Denise Champion what she thought about that song, Denise burst into tears and said she couldn't sing it. "They've forgotten us again," she said. "How can we make things right so you can sing it?" was the reply.....

"So Denise Champion and her sister, Noelene, Chris Yeend, Jodie Whillas and Lynley Heath sat down with a few others - myself included (we just gave our opinion on what sounded good!) and wrote a new first verse," reported Sue Ellis.

**This is our nation, this is our land  
A land of dreaming, a forgotten past:  
A kindred people, willing to share  
This sacred land, this is our home.**

There appear to be a few variations in the last line but the version above is the one Denise prefers. Many Uniting Churches now insert this verse at the beginning of "The Great Southland" thus recognising the first nations. It is interesting to note that Geoff, himself, has rewritten many of his old songs.. including "The Great Southland".

Geoff Bullock's comments are quite enlightening and a powerful testimony;

*Years, with their brokenness, pain and resurrection show us the wisdom of God that confounds our arrogant faith. I have had the privilege to rewrite this rather ignorant racist song to embrace the wisdom of my (Koori) brother who took the time, all those years ago, to show me grace, wisdom and patience. I dedicate this song to the faith of those whom Jesus reaches, in spite of our white middle class well intentioned endeavours.*

Read the full story here and scroll up for the words: <http://www.signposts.org.au/2005/09/04/the-great-south-land/comment-page-1/#comments>

So if we change the first line to fit in with the rewritten version we have:

**This is Your nation, this is Your land  
A land of dreaming, a forgotten past:  
A kindred people, willing to share  
This sacred land, this is our home**

Thanks to Rev Sue Ellis from West Lakes Uniting Church for reminding me of this story and to Denise Champion who filled in the missing bits. It comes a little late but anyone thinking of using this song at Pentecost next Sunday, also Reconciliation Sunday, may find the new first verse and these stories helpful.

### **CHURCH SERVICE for Reconciliation at Otherway Centre - 7:30pm Wednesday, 30 May**

Indigenous Peoples from the various Christian churches are holding a combined Reconciliation Service. This service will include traditional dance and singing as well as prayer and scripture readings - all welcome.

Location: Otherway Centre, 185 Pirie Street, Adelaide.

**WORKING PARTY – Help needed.....**

Covenanters may be aware of the planned Working Party to the Pitjantjatjara Lands to repair a building and work with youth over the July School Holidays.

We are seeking craft materials for sessions with the women and children. If you are able to donate any of the following items to assist please forward to the Covenanting Coordinator at the Synod Office at 212 Pirie Street.

- raffia - assorted colours
  - crochet hooks and wool for making beanies (mukutas)
  - beads and bead making 'gear'
  - elastic (ie hat elastic) for bead making
  - paints for face painting
  - pencils; crayons; pastels; lots of paper for drawing and colouring
  - small canvas; paints; brushes
  - butchers paper & textas
- Donations gratefully received.

Shalom,

Peter

*Peter Russell*

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