

Reconciliation Sunday

May 27, 2007

Dear colleagues in Ministry,

It was agreed that the Presbytery establish Reconciliation Sunday in Reconciliation Week (27 May to 3 June) annually, to be celebrated across the Church, and request Church Councils to include this day in their worship calendars.

We have prepared the following worship resources for use on Reconciliation Sunday, May 27, which this year is also Pentecost. With this in mind we have endeavoured to make links between both themes.

This year is also significant because May 27, 2007 marks the 40th anniversary of the 1967 Referendum in which more than 90 per cent of Australians voted to remove clauses from the Australian Constitution which discriminated against Indigenous Australians.

Please feel free to copy, all or part of these resources in planning worship for this day else they may also be used later during NAIDOC week celebrations if this fits in better with your worship planning.

The resources include:

1. A complete order of service.
2. Some material for consideration when sermon writing..
3. General information on the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress and Covenanting.
4. Suggested hymns with notes and a children's story.

Marelle Harisun,	Chairperson Covenanting Committee
Andrew Clarke,	Secretary, Covenanting Committee
Peter Russell,	Covenanting Coordinator

Order of Service for 27 May 2007

Pentecost

Preliminaries:

If weather and architecture permit, the congregation might gather outside the church, and use the first hymn as a processional hymn.

As the people gather, the sound of the didgeridoo is heard, calling the people to worship.

The Christ candle (red) is lit on the communion table. It should be surrounded by half a dozen smaller candles, either black and white, or black, red, gold, blue, green and white, representing Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous people. (these candles to be lit later)

If a local didgeridoo player is available, he might be invited to play. A fee would no doubt be payable. Otherwise there are good didgeridoo recordings available. Narana Creations stocks them (410 Torquay Road, Grovedale, Vic 3216. Fax: 03 5241 5711. Tel: 03 5241 5700). Narana is run by the Congress in Victoria so purchasing from this organisation supports Aboriginal employment.

Welcome:

If a local Aboriginal elder is available, he/she might welcome people to the land.

In any case, the worship leader welcomes people to the service, intimating the special nature of the service, and either thanks the Aboriginal elder for the welcome to the land,

or

simply draws the attention of the congregation to the fact that we are meeting on land which has been cared for from time immemorial by the (name of the local Aboriginal people) people, as stewards of the Creation. One of the following may be used.

I/we acknowledge that we are on the land of the _____ people. I/we pay respect to their tribal Elders, honour their continuing culture, and pray that we might all work together for reconciliation in this nation.

I/we acknowledge the traditional custodians of this land and pay our respects to the Elders both past, present and future for they hold the memories, the traditions, the culture and hopes of Indigenous Australia.

(use the second example unless you can identify the traditional owners of the area)

Introduction to Worship:

The worship leader will indicate the special theme of the worship for the day, picking up the theme of reconciliation. Reconciliation begins in the immense love of God, who has continually reached out to reconcile the whole creation to God. That love invites a response from all of us towards God and towards all people, including those from whom we are alienated.

Greeting:

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all;

And also with you.

Call to worship:

“In the Last Days,” God says,

“I will pour out my Spirit

on every kind of people:” Acts 2:17

(quotation from THE MESSAGE: The Bible in Contemporary Language copyright 2002-2003 by Eugene Peterson. All rights reserved.)

All those who walk in the spirit of God

are sons and daughters of God. Romans 8:14

If you love me, show it by doing what I’ve told you.

I will talk to the father and he’ll provide you another Friend

so you will always have someone with you.

This friend is the Spirit of Truth. John 14:15-17a

(quotation from THE MESSAGE: The Bible in Contemporary Language copyright 2002-2003 by Eugene Peterson. All rights reserved.)

Hymn: As a Fire is Meant for Burning [words Ruth Duck, Tunes TIS 493 or AHB 205 (ii)]

As a fire is meant for burning
with a bright and warming flame,
so the church is meant for mission,
giving glory to God’s name.
Not to preach our creeds or customs,
but to build a bridge of care,
we join hands across the nations,
finding neighbours everywhere.

We are learners; we are teachers;
we are pilgrims on the way.
we are seekers; we are givers;
we are vessels made of clay.
By our gentle loving actions,
we would show that Christ is light,
in a humble listening spirit,
we would live to God’s delight.

As a green bud in the springtime
is a sign of life renewed,
so may we be signs of oneness
mid earth’s peoples many hued.
As a rainbow lights the heavens
when a storm is past and gone,
may our lives reflect the radiance
of God’s new and glorious dawn.

Light the candles representing Indigenous and non-Indigenous people starting with the red one which also signifies Pentecost.

Prayer of Confession:

Holy God, Spirit of discomfort,
we are both grateful and pained
 when you confront our sin
 and bring us to sincere confession.

We have believed in new creation, talked about change, yet have allowed things within and around us to remain as they have been.

We hope that the living standard of the poor, especially our Indigenous brothers and sisters, can be upgraded above poverty and disease, but we avoid the sacrifices which would slightly downgrade our lifestyle towards theirs.

We believe that love is a far greater power than mere justice, yet we have willingly participated in a state of affairs where Aboriginal people are treated far less justly in health, employment, education and accomodation.

We make emotional journeys of the soul into the region of your self-giving on the cross, and make small offerings of gratitude, yet we hold back from taking up the cross and following you on the costly path of love.

We join in fellowship and worship of the church, with the best of intentions and goodwill, yet we know how easily tomorrow we can cynically slip back into the opportunistic hedonism of the world around us.

Holy Spirit, we thank you for discomforting us right now, and lifting our confession from mere words into sincere prayer. Please continue to discomfort us and bring us contritely to the saving grace of Christ Jesus. In him, let us trust again the divine love which both forgives and re-Invigorates both body and soul of all in God's family.
In Christ's name. **Amen!**

(adapted with permission from Bruce Prewer, Australians at Prayer, Open Book Adelaide, 2004. p48)

Assurance of forgiveness:

Friends, hear once again the promise of the Christian faith:
The gift of life is to be embraced and not feared.
In the love of Christ we have our peace,
and we have our healing.

Thanks be to God. Amen!

(Prayer by Sean Gilbert, p53 Singing while it is still dark)

Children's Address

Hymn

Scripture readings:

Acts 2:1-21

Romans 8:14-17

John 14:8-17 (25-27)

Witness:

Prayer for Indigenous People:

God of our ancient people,
lover of all tribes,
show those of us who are
more recent arrivals
in this great south land
how best we can allow Indigenous Australians
to recover their dignity
and to make their rich contribution
to the wellbeing of 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 needs and cries.
Thank you for the land rights that have been recognised,
for progress among tribal groups,
for emerging Indigenous poets,
priests, ministers and managers.

We pray with anguished souls
for the descendants of tribes
disinherited long ago,
for those broken spirits
who gather without aim or hope
in parks and lanes of cities and towns.
God, guide us,
for we feel incapable of discovering
how we can best assist them -
except that perhaps to admit to them
that we are burdened to belong
to the race that helped corrupt them.

Merciful God, hear our cry.
Many of us long to undo
the many wrongs,
as far as is possible.
But how do we start, God?
Where do we start?
Merciful God, hear our cry!

(Bruce Prewer - Australian Prayers, Open Book, Adelaide - used by permission)

Hymn

Intercessory Prayers: Let your Spirit Challenge and Transform

Great lover of humanity, we seek your blessing on the people of this Land. Tear us away from all that evades the truth and thereby adds to Misery. Gather us in, closer to your light and love and peace.

Let your Spirit challenge and transform Christian congregations that are self-satisfied. Discomfort those who are so entrenched in practices that they treat everyone who does not exactly share their dogma or lifestyle as a sinner and enemy.

Let your spirit challenge and transform communities where racism and injustice are accepted as normal, or are even lauded as a good thing. Break through closed minds and soften hard hearts, that the inclusive love of Christ may be embraced and practised.

Let your Spirit challenge and transform our parliaments and politicians. Overcome our human pride, greed, humbug, and hasten the day when humanity will treasure all its members.

Let your Spirit challenge and transform each of us, that free of self-justification, and relying totally on your grace, we may be Christians who give our best without counting the cost and accept our limitations without self-disparagement.

Great lover of humanity, we seek the blessing of your Holy Spirit also on:

those whose lives are in disarray (pause)
who have lost their jobs or have no jobs (pause)
endured marriage or family break up. (pause)
been diagnosed with serious illness. (pause)
suffered road accidents. (pause)
watched their loved ones die. (pause)
and any who are at their wits end, or maybe planning suicide. (pause)

Loving God you alone fully know both our deep needs and their best

remedy. Please save those who cry for your help, and also those who feel too weak or too confused to even do that. Through Christ Jesus our Saviour. **Amen!**

(adapted with permission from Bruce Prewer, Australians at Prayer, Open Book Adelaide, 2004. p81-82)

The Lord's Prayer

The Offering

Prayer of Dedication:

Hymn: For You, Deep Stillness of the Silent Inland

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

(repeat - last time, add 'in the name of Christ' once more)

(© 1997 Robin Mann. Words: Julie Perrin (from Robin Mann, Altogether Again, Open Book)

Words of Mission:

Go with us God in all that builds community.

Go with us Christ in all that breaks down barriers.

God with us Spirit in all that reconciles. **Amen!**

From Singing while it is still dark p98 (Susan Wickham)

Some Sermon Notes

Acts 2:1-21

We celebrate on Pentecost Sunday the coming of the Spirit in power and might to those early disciples. Strange is it not that we read in other accounts Jesus giving the gift of the Spirit to his disciples. We read in the gospel that fifty days before, after his death and resurrection, Jesus gave his disciples the Spirit. What is going on here? ..he breathed on them and said, "receive the holy Spirit..." (John 20:22) They already had the Spirit in them but it lay dormant until it finally burst forth at Pentecost. As one commentator said the spirit was there but it did not work, maybe because they were afraid that they would have to change....

The Holy Spirit doesn't appear suddenly at Pentecost for the first time, the same spirit is documented at work in both the New and Old Testaments. The Spirit was there at the creation and comes upon those whom God chooses.

Aboriginal Christians believe the Spirit was present in this Land long before the Europeans arrived. In the words of the song, "You were in this place but we never knew". We Europeans tend to think we had something to do with bringing the light of God to a people who had no knowledge of God. Yet the Spirit was already there so that when the Gospel came it was received with great joy. It is a humbling realisation.

The prophet Isaiah says,

¹⁵When the Spirit is given to us
from heaven,
deserts will become orchards
thick as fertile forests.

¹⁶Honesty and justice
will prosper there,

¹⁷and justice will produce
lasting peace and security.

(Isaiah 32:15-17 **Contemporary English Version (CEV)**
Copyright © 1995 by **American Bible Society**)

It is a promise that Aboriginal people are waiting to see. We have failed to deliver justice to our Aboriginal brothers and sisters in the past and have lacked the integrity to recognise that their present condition, in health, education and employment is the result of this. There have been continued lost opportunities to right these wrongs. We have been blinded by our own greed in the past as we took this land and in the present as we have denied opportunities to redress these wrongs.

For example :

Access Economics estimated at the time of the last election that the basic health needs for Indigenous Australians were under-funded by \$450 million and in a year of record budget surpluses, this pressing need was not addressed.“

Underspending on essential matters - and it is hard to think of anything more essential than basic health services - lack of investment in infrastructure and human capital are far from conducive to breaking cycles of desperate poverty. In fact, it is more of a breeding ground for it.

RECLAIMING THE HUMAN RIGHTS VISION Professor Larissa Behrendt Sep 2006

We need to seek forgiveness

‘Forgiveness enables justice to happen in a way that is credible and sustainable. If the goal of reconciliation is to restore life and hope amongst the people of the world, not only amongst Australians, then forgiveness, sincerely sought and generously given, is the transforming gateway.’

Robin Reynolds quoted in Susin, Luiz Carlos and Maria pilar aquino (eds) 2003 *Reconciliation in a World of Conflicts*, London, SCM Press (Concilium 2003/5)

and this can only happen in the power of the Spirit.

In 1994 the Assembly of the Uniting Church made a covenant with the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress and Aboriginal people.

A portion of this statement, spoken by Dr Jill Tabart in the presence of all the Moderators and General Secretaries and the representatives of the UAICC, says:

I apologise on behalf of the Assembly for all those wrongs done knowingly or unknowingly to your people by the Church, and seek your forgiveness. I ask you to help us discover ways to make amends.

We want to bring discrimination to an end, so that your people are no longer gaoled in disproportionate numbers, and so that equal housing, health, education and employment opportunities are available for your people as for ours. To that end we commit ourselves to work with you towards national and state policy changes. We commit ourselves to build understanding between your people and ours in every locality, and to build relationships which respect the right of your people to self determination in the church and in the wider society.

We acknowledge that no matter how great our intentions however, we will not succeed in our efforts for reconciliation without Christ's redeeming grace and the renewing power of the Holy Spirit at work in both your people and ours.

Reconciliation is possible but only in the power of the Spirit and as we let the Spirit move and change us.

Vince Ross, Chairperson UAICC, speaking at the 11th Assembly, in 2006 said,

The question to you as our brothers and sisters, you have a responsibility to care for your family of the UAICC. Each one of us can be change agents for the things that can affect people, black and white, throughout this land of ours. We all have excuses, but that's what the Gospel is all about. Jesus said, 'I have come so you might have life in all it's fullness.'

And in today's Gospel Jesus also said, "If you love me, show it by doing what I've told you."

Reconciliation - some Quotes

... a unique opportunity to build ... a nation which treasures and celebrates the fact that one of its contributing traditions is the oldest continuous culture on the planet.

Patrick Dodson , Chairperson, Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation 19911997.

... an Australia where justice and equity are core values which apply to all peoples and an Australia in which heritage and culture are publicly valued.

Randolph Alwis , Chairperson, Federation of Ethnic Communities Council of Australia (FECCA), First plenary session, Reconciliation Convention 1997.

I have a vision. And it is a shared vision. It is a vision which was put into words by that old man of the Gurindji people, Vincent Lingiari, after the soil from the heartland of the Gurindji territory had been poured into his out-stretched hand. We can go forward together as friends and equals, he said.

Sir William Deane , Governor-General of Australia, 30th Anniversary of the 1967 Referendum Convention for Aboriginal Reconciliation 1997.

Reconciliation implies forgiveness of past wrongs and a firm intention to go forward as one undivided nation.

The Honourable Dame Roma Mitchell , AC DBE, Citizenship in Australia, Plenary session three, Reconciliation Convention 1997.

We have a long way to go but there is no turning back. For Indigenous Australians, the acid test of reconciliation will be improved health, better housing, education and employment. Reconciliation is the way of the future, our shared future in which Australia is united as one people with many rich cultures and a commitment to justice and equity.

Dr Lois ODonoghue , CBE AM (Lowitja).

Reconciliation requires mutual respect between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Australians. In my view, this is best developed in practice through cooperation on projects of joint benefit at local and regional level.

Ray Martin, Presenter , A current affair Channel Nine; Member of the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation in The Weekend Australian August 1994.

Some Information on the Congress

Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress

The UAICC:

- consists of Aboriginal and Islander members of the Uniting Church in Australia and members in fellowship who may also be members of any other denomination;
- is made up of Aboriginal and Islander people seeking to fulfil their calling as Christians among their own people, especially in the area of wholistic community development;
- determines its own goals and objectives and decides its policies and priorities;
- runs its own programs and institutions;
- aims, in collaboration with other people, to bring to an end the injustices which hold Aboriginal and Islander people at the bottom/on the fringes of Australian society.

We are Aboriginal and Islander Christians from all over Australia, who have come together to form a national Congress as a result of a vision grasped in a conference held at Crystal Creek, North Queensland, in 1984.

The Congress seeks to unite in one fellowship all Aboriginal and Islander Christians who have accepted Jesus Christ as Lord, accept the authority of the Scriptures and desire to follow and serve Christ as his disciples.

The UAICC was established by resolution of the Uniting Church Assembly in 1985. We are part of the Uniting Church, but Congress determines its own goals and objectives and decides its policies and priorities.

The Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress is now the largest non-government indigenous agency in Australia. It operates in all States and the Northern Territory, as Regional Councils in Western Australia, South Australia, Northern Territory, Victoria, New South Wales, Tasmania and as Calvary Presbytery in Queensland.

We desire to share in the struggles of our people, not for gain but because obedience to God demands nothing less.

Wholeness

Congress has developed a style of ministry - wholistic ministry - based on the way Jesus ministered and taught.

We proclaim the gospel as it relates to every part of life: the physical, social, emotional, spiritual, cultural, political and economic areas of human existence. No area escapes God's saving power, or avoids God's judgement.

The Congress does not exist to call people to itself, but to go to them and share in their struggle, wherever they are. Only by so doing can we follow the example of our Lord Jesus Christ.

We work under the guidance of God, the Holy Spirit, reaching out to those who are lost from God and in need of salvation, and to the poor, the hungry and those who are sick, oppressed, imprisoned or hurt in any way.

A Congregational Covenant

Many congregations are seeking to strengthen their commitment to covenanting with the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress and the Indigenous communities of Australia.

We suggest that it is the journey with Indigenous people which is most important – so we would emphasise that the process towards making the statement is just as important as the statement itself.

It is a journey for the congregation and a journey the congregation takes with Indigenous people. This means that it is important that there is an educational process for the congregation and a process of developing relationships with your local/regional Congress folk and your local/regional Indigenous community. Covenanting has many resources and the National Director is available to run workshops for your congregation. Any statement needs to be the outcome of negotiations with Indigenous people – it is a covenantal statement after all, a statement of partnership.

For a congregational covenant to be meaningful it needs to say something about

- Recognition and acknowledgement of the problems of European contact, including the impact with the church.
- Respecting and listening to Indigenous people.
- Understanding our place in Australia.
- Recognition of traditional Indigenous relationship to the land.
- A commitment to covenant and journey together.

Further information on Covenanting can be obtained from the Covenanting Coordinator, Presbytery Synod of South Australia **Email: peterr@sa.uca.org.au**

Suggested Hymns & Notes

Two specific Hymns have been included in the order of service which we believe lend both inspiration and challenge to worshippers. It is important to deliver the message of Reconciliation clearly. That means that hymns chosen should help convey the message.

HYMN: As a Fire is Meant for Burning

[words Ruth Duck, Tunes TIS 493 or AHB 205 (ii)]

Indigenous people have for over 200 years been the victims of “well meaning” people who thought they knew what was best. Aboriginal people have been preached to, rarely listened to, and even today their voices are drowned out by those who think they know better. The most important advice that can be given to someone meeting an Indigenous person is to close your mouth and listen. And practical reconciliation is together “building a bridge of care”.

We look forward to the day “when the storm is past” and we have true reconciliation in this land.

As a fire is meant for burning
with a bright and warming flame,
so the church is meant for mission,
giving glory to God's name.
Not to preach our creeds or customs,
but to build a bridge of care,
we join hands across the nations,
finding neighbours everywhere.

We are learners; we are teachers;
we are pilgrims on the way.
we are seekers; we are givers;
we are vessels made of clay.
By our gentle loving actions,
we would show that Christ is light,
in a humble listening spirit,
we would live to God's delight.

As a green bud in the springtime
is a sign of life renewed,
so may we be signs of oneness
mid earth's peoples many hued.
As a rainbow lights the heavens
when a storm is past and gone,
may our lives reflect the radiance
of God's new and glorious dawn.

HYMN: For You, Deep Stillness of the Silent Inland

(All Together Whatever also in 'Let's Sing it Again CD & Book)

1997. A Christmas card from Warren and Lorraine Bartlett contained this adapted Celtic (or Gaelic) Blessing. Warren was at that time moderator of the Uniting Church in Victoria, and this blessing had been written for the annual synod of their church. Julie Perrin, a storyteller, had written the words — or rather, she says, 'they were just waiting to be written down'. The song is made really complete with a series of movements devised by Ian Ferguson. (see below) What a great world you've made. Thanks for this country, Australia. May we be reminded of your presence by whatever we see and feel and hear.

FOR YOU – DEEP STILLNESS

Movements by Ian Ferguson "For you", Each time these words are sung we extend our arms and hands forward and out in a sweeping gesture of openness and offering "deep stillness of the silent inland" We gently bring our hands in to cradle our belly feeling space and stillness in that place — the heart of our land resounds in the centre of our bodies. We offer that feeling. "For you, deep blue of the desert skies" With our extended arms we trace the arch of the sky and lift our faces to the sky, bathing ourselves in the depth and immensity of it — and we offer that feeling. "For you, flame red of the rocks and stones" We clap on 'red', then form one fist on 'rocks', followed by another on 'stones'. We hold our fists together close in front of us, feeling the bite of the flame and the strength of the rock — and we offer that. "For you, sweet water from hidden springs." We form a cup with our hands, scoop that water in front of us, then, with a pouring/flowing/circling action we bring our hands to our chest and then to our sides, letting the water flood into our hearts and out to wash over those around us. "From the edges seek the heartlands" We join our hands with those on either side of us and bring our right hand holding our neighbour's left up to our hearts. "and when you're burnt by the journey" Still holding hands we swing our arms down and let our heads hang in a relaxed motion. "may the cool winds of the hovering Spirit" We raise our heads and swing our arms high above our heads, releasing hands as we reach the top. "soothe and replenish you." We lower our arms slowly down in front of us with a wavelike motion in a gesture of peace. "In the name of Christ," We cross one arm over our chest. "In the name of Christ" We bring the other arm to join the first and bow our heads with arms crossed over our chests before beginning again on 'for you' with a sweeping gesture of open offering.

(Words: Julie Perrin. Movements: Ian Ferguson. Music: Robin Mann © 1997)

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

(repeat - last time, add 'in the name of Christ' once more)

PDF files of lyrics from Robin's songs are available for downloading from his website:
Go to <http://www.robinmann.com/discography.html>

HYMN: Pentecost Prayer © 1976 Robin Mann
(‘All Together Now’ also in ‘Let’s Sing it again’ CD & Book)

1976. Some songs are written quickly — this wasn't one of them. I understand the Holy Spirit's work as being mainly recreative: producing faith in people, and the fruits of faith which can largely be summed up under the heading of LOVE. Exotic and unusual things like speaking in tongues and miraculous healings are a fair way down the list. God of creation, God of Easter, God of Pentecost — you're always doing something new. Do something new in each one of us. Make us receptive to your creative touch.

1. When this earth was created
it was God who spoke the word
and it was done;
gave his warmth to the cold earth —
all was new and all was young,
time had begun.

*Make me warm when I am cold,
make me young when I am old;
move me, touch me inside,
let your love burn in me now.*

2. If I'm rough, make me gentle;
if my words are hard and sharp,
soften this heart.
If I'm weak, make me stronger,
let me look to you for strength
to make a new start.

3. If I'm deaf, break the silence;
if I'm blinded by the dark,
give me your light.
If I'm lame and I stumble,
let me take your hand again
and hold it so tight.

4. If you speak, let me hear you;
help me recognise your voice
everywhere.
If you pass, let me see you;
help me know the face is yours,
help me to care.

HYMN: You Were In This Place Words and music: Robin Mann © 1987
(All Together Whatever CD and Book)

1987. An Australia Day service is organised each year in the city of Adelaide. For the 200th anniversary of white settlement, repentance was as much in mind as celebration. The story of Jacob's dream at Bethel (the original stairway to heaven!) was central in the service. This song rose out of that story, and especially from Jacob's statement when he wakes up from his dream: "God is in this place, and I didn't know it!"

1. At the dawn of the ages
you pulled land from the sea.
With your word you invented
all we know, all we see:
creek and desert and forest,
red and grey kangaroo.

You were in this place—
but we never knew.

2. Paintings seen on the rock face,
footprints left in the sand,
campfire next to the river,
songs that rise from the land:
signs that seem so elusive,
shadows just out of view.
You were in this place—
but we never knew.

3. Do we take after Jacob,
blind to what lies at hand,
needing dreams to inform us
God is here in this land?
See him suffering and dying,
bread and wine tell the news.
You were in this place—
but we never knew.

4. Jesus, open our senses,
help us see you today
in the person beside us,
as we work, as we play.
While we love you and serve you,
may it never be true:
you were in this place—
but we never knew.

HYMN: Creator God, you made this land

(Words by Keith Pearson. Tune AHB 297 (ii); TiS #375

© The Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress)

1. Creator God, you made this land
and gave to us the gift of life.
You wish that we should live as one,
but we acknowledge sin and strife.
 Let justice everywhere be found,
 Let discord end and love abound.
2. Your covenants of old stand firm,
your ways are faithful, right and just.
Bind us together in your love
to live and work in growing trust.
 Strengthen those ties which keep us true
 to serve each other, serving you.
3. Our Saviour Christ, you came to earth.
You know our joys, our hopes, our pain.
To call us into covenant,
you gave your life and rose again.

You make us yours, you give us worth
to be your light in all the earth.

4. Great Spirit in this ancient land,
speak in the stillness deep within.
Remove all prejudice and fear,
give life to all, new hope begin.
Then help us gently walk as friends,
while on this land your peace descends.

HYMN: A Song of reconciliation

This song, a resource for the *Week of Prayer for Reconciliation*, may be sung to AHB 115.
©John P. Brown, August 1996: permission is given to copy for free distribution with these lines attached.

Let us sing to the God of the covenant,
God who rescued the slaves from fear,
God who says to us, "You are my people
You shall love as I have first loved you."

Chorus: Covenant people! Covenant people!
Worship now the God of steadfast love.
Peace and justice, faithful living,
Bring among us now we pray,

Let us sing of the Word dwelling with us,
Naming outcasts his family,
Humbly taking the form of a servant,
Giving life to us in bread and wine.

Chorus

We will live by the law of the covenant –
Love, respect, solidarity;
Black and white, hand in hand is our motto,
Different ways, but one dream, one God.

Chorus

Love shall cast out all fear from among us,
Love defeat racist hate and wrong;
Love shall heal ancient hurts, broken
spirits,
Love shall fan the dying coals to life.

Chorus

Christ was raised, giving hope of a new start.
Spirit gives life to all who grieve.
God shall yet rule this land with a people
Reconciled, and with the earth at peace.

Chorus

THUKERI¹ – the bony bream

In this story from the lower River Murray area of South Australia, two fishermen are delighted with their huge catch of fish. The trouble begins when they refuse to share it.

A cautionary tale about greed, from the Ngarrindjeri people.

Original Story: Lela Rankin

Retold by Veena Gollan

This is a story about two men who lived on the shores of Lake Alexandrina. They belonged to the Ngarrindjerri² people.

The two men set off in their bark canoe to go fishing on the lake. They travelled along on the calm, cool waters until they came to their favourite fishing place, called Loveday Bay, where they always caught the best and most delicious bream fish. In their language, this fish is called Thukeri.

They found a good sheltered spot among some high reeds. They had made their own fishing lines, called nungi, from cords they had made from the reeds. They used very sharp bird bones for hooks.

As the day went on the two men sat there catching more and more fat, juicy Thukeri. They were having such a wonderful day catching so many fish and wanted to keep catching more and more, but the canoe was almost full and looked like it would sink.

As they paddled in closer to shore, they could see a stranger in the distance. He seemed to be walking straight towards them. The two men looked at each other; what if this stranger wanted some of their beautiful, juicy Thukeri?

They were greedy and decided not to share with the stranger. They decided to keep all the fat, lovely Silver Bream for themselves and quickly covered the fish up with their woven mats so that the stranger would not see them. When the stranger came up to the two men he said, 'Hello, brothers. I haven't eaten anything at all today. Could you spare me a couple of fish?'

The two men looked at each other and at the mats hiding the Thukeri. They turned to the stranger and one of them said, 'I'm sorry, friend, but we caught only a few fish today and we have to take them home for our wives and children and the old people,

because they are depending on us. So, you see, we can't give you any.'

The stranger stood there for a long while and then started to walk away. He stopped, turned around and stared at them. 'You lied,' he said. 'I know that you have plenty of fish in your canoe. Because you are so greedy, you will never be able to enjoy those Thukeri ever again.'

The two men stood there, puzzled, as the stranger walked away into the sunset. They shrugged their shoulders, then quickly took off the mats and began to gut the fish. But as they did this, they found that these beautiful silver Thukeri were so full of sharp, thin bones that they couldn't eat them.

'What are we going to do?' they said. 'We can't take these home to our families, they'll choke on them.' So the two men had to return home in shame with only the bony fish. When they got home, they told their families what had happened. The old people told them that the stranger was really the Great Spirit called Ngurunderi. Now all the people would be punished for ever, because the two men were so greedy.

And so today, whenever people catch a bony bream, they are reminded of long ago, when Ngurunderi taught them a lesson.

1. Thukeri – pronounce the "u" as "oo" in book.
2. In Ngarrindjeri and Ngurunderi the "g" is silent.

(adapted with permission from Rev. Ken Sumner. Ken is a Ngarrindjeri man and state chairperson of the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress.)

Original story from : <http://www.dreamtime.net.au/thukeri/index.cfm>

The story above is a suggested basis for a children's address. While it teaches about the consequences of greed, telling untruths and failing to share, its message might not be lost on those thinking about the need of reconciliation.

Acknowledgements

Material has been sourced from:

the Worship resources prepared by Rev. John P. Brown on the NATSIEC website and material originally prepared and/or written by Peter Lewis

go to - <http://www.ncca.org.au/natsiec/resources/liturgies>

Bruce Prewer **Australian Prayers** and **Australians at Prayer** both published by Open Book, Adelaide

Robin Mann **All Together** Books published by Open Book and obtainable from Robin Mann directly through his web site at: <http://www.robinmann.com/>

NATSIEC Website – Worship Liturgy

<http://www.ncca.org.au/natsiec/resources/>

Some other Sources:

Reconciliation Australia

<http://www.reconciliation.org.au/>

Drawing Together 2007 ... an art competition exploring reconciliation.....

A Challenge for Serious Artists in your Congregation 15 years and older.

This competition encourages artists to focus on their own creative interpretation of what reconciliation means to them. This is a national public art competition which is OPEN to all Australians.

<http://www.apsc.gov.au/drawingtogether/competition.htm>

UAICC

National - <http://www.bergetti.com/PRIVATE/UAICC/index.html>

Port Augusta - <http://www.congress.org.au>

From Little Things Big things Grow

A classic song of Aboriginal people standing up for their rights. Written by Kevin Carmody and Paul Kelly this song could be played and the chorus sung by everybody.

Lyrics:

<http://www.paulkelly.com.au/lyrics/from-little-things.html>

The story (interview by George Negus):

<http://www.abc.net.au/gnt/history/Transcripts/s1147120.htm>

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