

Worship Resources for Reconciliation Sunday

June 1, 2008

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.

This is the second year that we have prepared worship resources for use on Reconciliation Sunday. The resources we produced last year for the first Reconciliation Sunday may also be useful.

Please feel free to copy all or part of these resources in planning worship for this day or they may 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 and a children's story

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Order of Service for 1 June, 2008

Pentecost 3

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 smaller candles to be lit later)

If available a coolamon or piti (an Aboriginal wooden bowl) may be placed on the communion table and used for the collection. Members of the congregation may be asked the Sunday before to bring any appropriate Aboriginal artefacts such as bowls, carved animals and clap sticks to be placed on the table.

** 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 recommends the following CD Didgeridoo – Norm Stanley \$29.95 + \$5 postage & packing. Narana is run by the Congress in Victoria so purchasing from this organisation supports Aboriginal employment. If it is too late to get it this year, order it anyway for use next year or on other special occasions.*

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:

God of Love, we come to worship you. You are the Creator of this land and of all good things. Our hope is in you because you gave your Son Jesus to reconcile the world to you. We pray for your strength and grace to forgive, accept and love one another, as you love us and forgive and accept us in the sacrifice of your Son.

(adapted from material by Wontulp Bi-Buya Indigenous Theology Working Group)

Welcome to Country:

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

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

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.

or

I/we acknowledge the traditional owners that God placed as the original custodians of the country on which we meet. I/we pay respect to their tribal Elders, honour their continuing culture, and pray that in the power of your Spirit we might all work together for reconciliation and justice in this nation.

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

Hymn: Hear our cry before we call

From *Songs for Pilgrims*, Words: Neil Qunitrell; Music: Norm Inglis
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(For downloading music accompaniment see note below: Resources)

With the recent apology a new era has dawned for many of our Aboriginal brothers and sisters, but we need to realise this is only the beginning. We are still longing for the days when the cries of distress are stilled and the sound of weeping is heard no more..... We need to commit for the long haul.

We long for the days when the cries of distress are stilled
and the sound of weeping is heard no more
when the taste of the laughter fills the mouths of the people
and joy is in the land.

*Spirit of a new beginning,
Hear our cry before we call.
Answer when the time is ready;
Give us courage to endure.*

We long for the days when the hammer of arms is hushed
and the threat of warring is feared no more:
when the pulse of freedom fires the hearts of the people
and peace is in the land.

*Spirit of a new tomorrow,
Hear our cry before we call.
Answer when the time is ready;
Give us courage to endure*

We long for the days when the lost of earth are home
And the pain of hunger is felt no more:
When the dream of harvest lights the way of the people
And hope is in the land.
*Spirit of a new creation,
Hear our cry before we call.
Answer when the time is ready;
Give us courage to endure.*

(An alternative Hymn: You Were In This Place Words and music: Robin Mann © 1987 - All Together Whatever CD and Book. This song fits in with the reference to Jacob in Psalm 46. - see resources notes for 2007)

Prayer of Thanksgiving and Confession:

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 God's 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.

Aboriginal and Islander Commission National Council of Churches in Australia. 2002.

Children's Address

(see resources for the Adnyamathanha story by Auntie Denise – download the bellbird song from the website – vakuvaku.mp3)

As a follow on from the story a damper may be prepared with children's involvement and served after the service)

Hymn: Source of our call

From Songs for Pilgrims, Words: Neil Qunitrell; Music: Norm Inglis
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(For downloading music accompaniment see note below: Resources)

What we ask for and what God gives us may be two different things. When we seek to walk with Aboriginal people we find ourselves on a new journey with a new vision given through God's Holy Spirit. May we follow boldly with lives renewed...

We asked for a home, and you gave us a journey,
faith, like a single flame,
weaving light and shadow on an unknown way.

We asked for a sign and you gave us a vision,
hope like a dancer's hands,
forming shape and substance from tomorrow's day.

Chorus:

*Source of our call, and source of our sustaining,
spin into our dance of time
faithfulness in days of doubt,
that we may follow, follow boldly.*

We asked for a rest, and you gave us a calling,
peace, like an eagle's rise,
lifting doubt and weakness into certainty.

We asked for love, and you gave us community,
trust, like a desert flower,
bringing joy and beauty in its promised spring.

Chorus:

*Source of our call, and source of our sustaining,
renew us by your Spirit rain,
that from the stony days of drought
our lives may rise up, rise up greening.*

Scripture readings:

Ps 46

Romans 1:16-17; 3:22b-28(29-31)

Mt 7:21-29

Witness:

Hymn: Lord of Earth and all creation

Together in Song 672

or

Follow the Songlines

From Songs for Pilgrims, Words: Shirley E Murray Music: Douglas Simper
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For downloading music accompaniment see note below: Resources

God was in this land before Captain Cook. Through faith we can see the ancient one's dreaming, the Creator Spirit, then and now, calling us to work for God's justice in this land.

Chorus:

*Follow the songlines, follow the Spirit
singing the world into being anew,
follow the theme of the ancient one's dreaming
footprints in faith that the track will run true.*

Time beyond time, dream before dreaming,
one Holy Spirit has sung the design;
pathways of peace, widening circles,
music and dance that declare the divine.

Chorus:

Bushfire may flare, searing our courage,
earthquake of doubt shake the words that we pray:
look for the shoots, green growing saplings,
look for the hopeful amid the decay.

Chorus:

New songs be born, sensed by God's longing,
new lines be drawn, in the rock, in the dust,
calling out love, calling out justice,
calling a people to grow and to trust.

Chorus:

Intercessory Prayers:

Leader: God of our land and all people

People: Grant us your wisdom

Leader: God of true Wisdom, we ask forgiveness for our failures to listen to the wisdom of our Land, and to the powerful stories of joy and creation, and of pain and destruction, shared by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and passed down through the generations. Open our eyes, we pray, to the needs of all your children, and our eyes to the cries of those who suffer. Teach us to walk in your way and to learn your wisdom. Give strength to our Indigenous Christian brothers and sisters and help us work more closely with them, that your Church might be a greater sign of your healing and reconciling love.

God of our land and all people

People: *Grant us your wisdom*

Leader: Jesus said: *"If any one would be first, they must be last of all and servant of all."*

God of true Justice, we pray for all those with power and responsibility over the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' lives: for our governments, local councils, education, health, welfare and other support agencies, and for all community leaders, that they may truly serve and empower the people for whom and with whom they work. Grant to them, and to all of us, we pray, fresh insight and understanding, and a renewed will to share in the transformation of the problems faced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Enable Indigenous Australians greater opportunity and resources to determine their lives, and grant to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leaders the grace and courage to bring their visions to fruition.

God of our land and all people

People: *Grant us your wisdom*

Leader: Jesus said: *"Whoever receives one such child in my name receives me; and whoever receives me, receives not me but him who sent me."*

God of true Peace, We pray for all your suffering children, and especially for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people struggling with poverty and hardship. Hear our entreaties for the wounded and dispossessed, for those struggling for identity and self-respect, for the sick and the suicidal, for the victims and perpetrators of violence, and for those who mourn. May your Holy Spirit bring new life and riches to all your children, that your will may be done on earth as in heaven and we may all come to rejoice in your presence with all those who have gone before us who shared your love and spirit in this land.

God of our land and all people

People: *Grant us your wisdom. Amen.*

Prayer adapted from worship resources for Social Justice Sunday, 2006

The Lord's Prayer

The Offering

(Please consider using the offering or a special retiring offering today for the work of the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress in its ministry to Aboriginal people. – for contact details see References)

Prayer of Dedication:

(the prayer from the liturgy supplied after the apology may be adapted for this purpose replacing the words at the end with – “Bless and use these gifts and through the power of your Spirit move us to acts of true reconciliation and change us so that we might make a difference”).

Hymn: For You, Deep Stillness of the Silent Inland

(Background notes to this song and movements are contained in the Resources section of the 2007 Reconciliation materials; downloadable from the website)

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 – then to finish, sing 'in the name of Christ' three times)

(© 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* p. 98 (Susan Wickham)

Other resources

Some Sermon Notes

Matthew 7:21-29

We might consider on what foundations we have built our lives as individuals and as a nation. Certainly as individuals we are very much a part of our culture and past. A past that took the land from Aboriginal people, removed children from their mothers, damaged their culture and language in many cases to extinction and practised discrimination and exclusion. It was the behaviour of many of our forbears in the past that created the situation today where Aboriginal people have a life expectancy of 17 years less than other Australians and suffer far greater with regard to poor health, housing, education and un-employment.

Brian D McLaren in his book, “Everything Must Change” (Nelson 2007) notes that we live today with two framing stories that can guide our lives.

If our framing story tells us that we are - intelligent and virtuous creatures outside a limited environment of space and time, without potentially fatal flaws - we will have no reason to acknowledge or live within limits, whether moral or ecological.

Similarly if it tells us that the purpose of life is for individuals or nations to accumulate an abundance of possessions and to experience the maximum amount of pleasure during the maximum number of minutes of our short lives then we will have little reason to manage our consumption.

If our framing story tells us that we are in life and death competition with each other, that only the fittest will survive, that each species and group is in a violent struggle to outcompete and gain independence or safety from or dominance over all others, then we will have little reason to seek reconciliation or collaboration and non-violent resolutions to our conflicts.....

But if our framing story tells us that we are free and responsible creatures in a creation made by a good, wise and loving God, and that our creator wishes us to pursue virtue, collaboration, peace and mutual care for one another and all living creatures and that our lives can have profound meaning if we align ourselves with God's wisdom, character and dreams for us...then our society will take a radically different direction and our world will become a very different place. (McLaren p. 67)

At the foundation of our state of South Australia there were two framing stories in conflict. One story was about the business of creating a new settlement of free people. This settlement was to test a theory of sustaining the business of settlement through the sale of land which would finance the building of infrastructure such as roads and bridges and the transport of labourers and artisans to provide labour. The second story was one about recognising the original inhabitants. This story was based on the faith of those Christian men and women (like William Wilberforce and others) who had successfully fought the slave trade and now turned their attention to the Indigenous people of the empire. So we had enshrined in the Letters Patent, signed by the King, William IV, establishing the Province of South Australia on 19th February 1836, the foundational document of this state, the following words:

“Provided Always that nothing in those our Letters Patent contained shall affect or be construed to affect the rights of any Aboriginal Natives of the said Province to the actual occupation or enjoyment in their own Persons or in the Persons of their Descendants of any Lands therein now actually occupied or enjoyed by such Natives”

This was another framing story, one based on Gospel values, that recognised the rights of Aboriginal people to retain their land. Lord Glenelg, Secretary of State for the Colonies, demanded that before the colonising ships set sail the company agree to three demands:

- Aboriginal Land Rights be respected
- Settlers purchase the land
- All transactions be supervised by a Protector

This caused conflict with the aims of the South Australian Company and the statement of the preamble of the Act (drafted by the company and passed previously by parliament) which asserted that "*the southern area was waste and unoccupied lands which are supposed fit for the purposes of colonisation*".

Well, thousands of miles away from the reach of the British government, the company had other ideas... but it could have been a different story. In the end, for Aboriginal people, South Australia was not much different from the convict states.

Today we are still confronted by these same framing stories. One will entice and subvert us with its promises. But it is a false story and will lead us to destruction.

The other is the gospel framing story... We have a chance as individuals and as a nation to begin to re-build our house. On what foundations will it be built?

Some quotes -

You don't have to dig too deeply to see the very real consequences that have flowed from 216 years of injustice since white settlement in Australia. On any social measure of health and well-being, Indigenous people, my people, are hugely over represented at the wrong end of the scale. No matter whether you look at life expectancy, health profiles, custody figures, educational outcomes, unemployment, substance abuse, domestic violence, suicide — you name it — the trend is the same. An Indigenous underclass is developing in Australia. And there is a very real danger that this underclass will become permanent, a monument to deprivation, poverty and ill health perpetuated by neglect, institutionalised racism and the tunnel vision of governments.

Lowitja O'Donoghue

Despite the suffering and trauma expressed within the stories of the Stolen Children,

the responses of Aboriginal people have been extraordinarily generous.

This is a time when we need that spirit of generosity.

It is a time to feel the connections of a shared past.

It is a time to guard against things that fragment us.

And it is a time to cherish

- those things which bring us together
- those things which have helped us to survive,
- those things that will create a better future for us all.

Lowitja O'Donoghue

quoted in *Why Prayerline* compiled by Jon Inkpin on behalf of the *Decade to Overcome Violence initiative* in Australia with the support of the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Ecumenical Commission.

Parts of the following liturgy provided for churches at the time of the Prime Minister's apology to the Stolen Generations might be used....

The Uniting Church and the Synod of South Australia is on a journey of reconciliation with Aboriginal Australians.

We believe that restoring human relationships is part of God's reconciling mission in our world.

Through forgiveness God's grace works to provide all with hope and a new way of living.

This journey of reconciliation is a response to the Bible's call to care for all people including the marginalised and vulnerable.

In 1997, recognising its past mistakes, the Uniting Church made a formal apology to the Stolen Generation.

We give thanks that our government has now committed to an apology for the Stolen Generations.

Let us pray:

We confess that what has happened in the past in this nation has not always been done in accordance with the hopes and possibilities that God had for us.

We confess our hardness of heart and lack of compassion. Cleanse us from the racism that lurks in the dark corners of our souls.

We pray for healing, forgiveness and restoration for all peoples who call Australia home.

We resolve that by the grace of God we shall strive to make good as much as we are able and to live differently so that our Aboriginal brothers and sisters may share equally with us in the bounty of this land.

We pray that we will support in any way we can the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress, its ministers, elders and congregations as they minister to the spiritual, social, mental and emotional well being of Aboriginal Australians.

May the power of your Spirit move us to acts of true reconciliation and change us so that we might make a difference.

Amen.

A Matter of Prejudice

I was in the second year of my plumbing apprenticeship with the New South Wales Public Works Department when an Aboriginal apprentice first joined the day labour staff. According to the rumours, the Department had employed him expressly because of his aboriginality. It had done so under the provisions of an Aboriginal employment assistance scheme. Mutterings began when it was found out that Bobbie, apparently under the conditions of this scheme, was entitled (unlike his white colleagues) to a reimbursement of all relocation costs incurred from his home at Bourke to the Public works Department depot in Wagga, and that he was given an upfront tool allowance of \$900. I remember how news of his preferential

treatment was greeted with acute resentment, particularly among the other apprentices. I recall one particularly angry electrician saying, 'I believe in giving everyone a fair go, but we're all battlers here – who do the Abos have to get special treatment?' It seemed unfair to us that an Aboriginal who was doing exactly the same work as us should be treated so much better, simply because of the colour of his skin.

Some months later Bobbie told his story. The previous year he had enrolled at Bourke TAFE in a pre-apprentice carpentry course. There were 14 students in the class, 2 Aboriginal and 12 white. At the end of the year, 12 of the 14 students had found jobs in the construction industry. Only Bobbie and the other Aboriginal student had failed to gain employment. This was despite the fact that Bobbie and his friend had studied hard and achieved first and second in their course! When asked how it could be that the two top students could be the only two without jobs, Bobbie answered – with just a tinge of bitterness in his voice – 'I guess a lot of people just don't want a blackfella working for them.'

I have recalled the above incident for several reasons. The first is to introduce my own micro-context within the larger context of the Australian experience. As a white, Anglo-Saxon, sixth-generation Australian, I know that, as a member of the dominating cultural grouping this country; I have a tendency to universalize my own life situations, experiences and assumptions. I render them normative. Those values taken from my own cultural group become the standard experience of life in Australia. To my own shame I have to admit that I also initially felt resentful regarding the 'preferential treatment' received by Bobbie; at the time, I also considered the support which he was given to be inappropriate and unnecessary. Along with most – if not all – of my white European workmates, I was operating out of the assumptions of a cultural worldview that gave uncritical acquiescence to the commonly held belief that affirmed Australia as the land of the 'fair go'. This was a place where anyone who wished to enjoy the benefits of the 'Australian dream' could do so. All that was required was hard work and the rest would follow. For myself, the hearing of Bobbie's story began a process of questioning the validity of the cultural assumptions that underpinned the belief.

from 'An/Other Australian Theology' by Brett Furner in Clive Pearson (ed) *Faith in a Hyphen: Cross cultural Theologies from Down Under*, Open Book 2004, pages 110-110 (used with permission)

Furner goes on to talk about our reluctance as individuals and as a nation to acknowledge that we have not given Aboriginal people a fair go and are still not doing so. Though this may now be changing our dis-remembering is part of a forgetfulness of Aboriginal history and could be seen as "unacknowledged sin". It is perhaps a sin of our white culture and we are all caught up in it, like it or not.

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.

In South Australia (2008) the Congress has three congregations; Salisbury in Adelaide, Port Augusta and Kalparrin near Murray Bridge.

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. 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: prussell@sa.uca.org.au**

Children's Story

The Old Woman and her Lost Children

(A datashow of this story narrated by Aunty Denise will be available later on the website – downloadable .pps file. An alternative .ppt file without the narration can be used with the story notes Word file, also downloadable later)

This story is told by Denise Champion, an Adnyamathanha (Ud-nya-muth-unna) woman from the Flinders Ranges in South Australia.

There's a place just north of Copley. It's a little hill, a very small mound that is all very white and yellowy ash in colour that just sticks out on its own because the surrounding earth is very different to it.

That's a place called Nguthunanga Mai Ambatanha. (Ng-ooth-unna My-i Umba-tunna)

It means 'the dreamtime spirit cooking the damper'. Nguthunanga (Ng-ooth-unna) is our Adnyamathanha (Ud-nya-muth-unna) word for "maker". The dreamtime spirit is our maker.

The story is all about an Old Woman who, during a time of famine, went looking for food and took her two children with her.

We call her Virkathanha (Vilka-thunna) in Adnyamathanha (Ud-nya-muth-unna) - Old Woman.

They went on a journey and came to this place, a camp. The old woman said to her two children, "Go out now and find some wirti (wirti: short vowel i after w) sticks for the ardla (udla – short vowel u) campfire."

While the Old Woman was preparing the campsite the two children went out to look for wood.

The children split up and went in two different directions.

After a while the Old Woman realised that her two children had not returned.

She became worried.

And so she set about trying to find them because the sun was going down and she was getting quite anxious.

She thought to herself, "My children have been away all day, they'll be hungry. Maybe the smell of cooking will bring them home."

So she cooked this giant damper, a huge damper in a ground oven.

The damper rose and made this little mound. The little hill north of Copley called Nguthunanga Mai Ambatanha (Ng-ooth-unna My-i Umba-tunna) is symbolic of that giant damper.

The smell of the damper didn't bring the children home so she set about doing something else to find her children.

She made some steps in the side of a hill near Nepabunna.

She thought she would be able to get up on top of the hill so she could see her children. So she did that but when she got to the top she couldn't see them at all.

By this time she became very worried as any parent would do. She became very anxious, very afraid as the sun was going down and it would soon be dark.

After she had done everything possible she could think of to find her children the song of the Bellbird came to her.

The Song went like this. . . . ([play soundfile vakuvaku.mp3](#))

The song of the bellbird led her to where her two children were.

The girl was found up at Lake Lettie – (Valdha Marti Nipanha), and the boy was found at Mount McKinlay – (Wyanha).

When my children were little I always told the story to teach them not to go too far from the camp and always let people know when you are going to return home.

It's also a good story to remind parents to always be watchful for your children. My rule is always keep them in eyesight.

This story is very relevant to us as Indigenous people because we have had to go through one of the most traumatic periods for us in the history of this nation and that was when children were removed from their parents and many of them were lost to their parents forever. Some are only making their way home now but some will never be reunited with their families.

Another way to look at the story is that the camp is God's camp (the Church) and for one reason or another people have gone away from the camp and found themselves lost. As in the story, God as a loving parent has done everything possible to find those who are lost.

And so this is a good story to tell to talk about feelings of being lost, of going away and not being able to find your way home, and it is a good story to tell about the fact that God, through his spirit, the Holy Spirit, pursues us until we are found and we are brought back home.

Adnyamathanha Words: (Pronunciation in brackets)

Adnyamathanha (Ud-nya-muth-unna)

Nguthunanga Mai Ambatanha (Ng-ooth-una My-i Umba-tunna) – a rounded hill in the shape of a big damper

Ng is pronounced as ng in sing; a is pronounced u as in cup

Virkathanha (Vilka-thunna) – old woman

Wirti (wirti – make sure the r is sounded) sticks Ardla (udla) fire

i is pronounced i as in bit

Yanmarri-apinha – a hill near Nepabunna with big steps

Valdha Marti Nipanha – where the girl went - Lake Lettie towards Maree

Wayanha Virngartinha – where the boy went – Mt McKinley

Vakuvaku bellbird

Wayanha yanarunga In the shadow of Wayanha

Vakuvaku winmiririmanda The bellbird is whistling

Note for story-tellers:

Some of the sounds in Adnyamathanha are not found in English. Try your best to use the Adnyamathanha words (using the pronunciation guides) in the story but feel free to leave a few out if that will help the story to flow better for you. Key words however should be attempted like Nguthunanga Mai Ambatanha and Adnyamathanha. Also wirti and udla are simple words which could be taught to/ repeated by the children.

References

Brian D McLaren, *Everything Must Change*, Nelson 2007

Clive Pearson (ed) *Faith in a Hyphen: Cross cultural Theologies from Down Under*, Open Book 2004

Judith Raftery, *Not Part of the Public: Non-indigenous policies and practices and the health of indigenous South Australians 1836-1973*, Wakefield Press, 2006

Henry Reynolds, *The Law of the Land*, Penguin (2nd ed) 2003

Songs for Pilgrims, Pilgrim Uniting Church, 2006

Music accompaniment in pdf format may be downloaded for the songs indicated above in the Order of service. The download file is **songs-080601.pdf**

Additional Resources may be found at the Covenanting website, including a sound file **vakuvaku.mp3** for the children's story and worship resources from last year.

Please explore other parts of the site for news and additional information about the covenant and the Congress.

<http://sa.uca.org.au/goto/covenanting>

Some other Sources:

Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress – South Australia

Address all correspondence to:

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P: (08) 8281 1614 F: (08) 8281 1577

Resource Officer: Ian Dempster P: (08) 8281 1614 E: iand@sa.uca.org.au

UAICC Websites

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

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

Reconciliation Australia

<http://www.reconciliation.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>

This soundtrack has just been revised by Paul Kelly & Kev Carmody

In Australia, From Apology, a Hit Song Grows

(excerpt from New York Times, April 29)

SYDNEY, [Australia](#) — A song about racial reconciliation with the Aboriginal minority has become the fourth-biggest-selling recording in Australia, even though it is available only as a download from the Web.

The song, which also takes lines from comments made by indigenous leaders after Mr. Rudd's apology, combines hip-hop rhythms with more conventional instrumentation. It is a remake and rewording of a song written about 20 years ago to celebrate one of the most famous of Australia's campaigns for racial equality, the drive for equal pay for indigenous farm workers.

The new version of the song was designed by the Internet-based political action group GetUp, along with Paul Kelly and Kev Carmody, "In the past, every time indigenous affairs hits the front pages, it disappears almost immediately," said Brett Solomon, the executive director of GetUp, which offers the song on its Web site for download for \$1.69 in Australian dollars (about \$1.60). The song is also available on the iTunes online music store.

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

Racism makes me sick

Racism has recently been recognised in a number of key reports as a threat to public health in Australia. A range of health problems including high blood pressure and heart disease, depression, anxiety, low birth rate and premature birth can all be caused directly by people's personal experiences of racism.

Get the facts and support the campaign - <http://www.antar.org.au/racism>

Acknowledgements

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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>

NATSIEC Website – Worship Liturgy

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

Robin Mann

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Clive Pearson

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Pilgrim Publishing

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<http://www.pilgrim.org.au/publishing/index.htm>