



Artwork by Inkatja

An occasional newsletter for Covenanters

July 2011

No. 31

Dear fellow covenanters,

I have been thinking about this years NAIDOC Theme **Change: the next step is ours** and I have asked myself the question What does this mean for me? Opportunities to make a real difference in this world come - and then they go. This is an opportunity not to miss! To be a history-maker requires us to take on a challenge to change.

John 4 tells us the story of a Samaritan woman who had an encounter with Jesus at the well. There was truth-telling and she was challenged to change. She did and so did her whole community.

The time is now right to consider another change, constitutional recognition of Aboriginal Australians.

The Uniting Church has already taken this historic step with the inclusion of the Preamble.

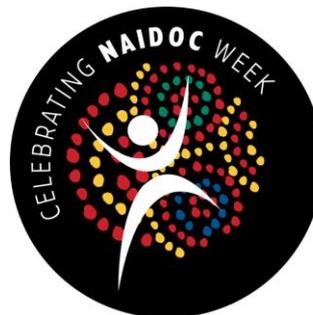
You may find the following link helpful information. www.youmeunity.org.au/be-informed/discussion-paper

Peace be with you.

Denise

NAIDOC WEEK 3 – 10 July

NAIDOC Week provides another opportunity for churches that have missed celebrating Reconciliation Sunday to pay respects to the 'first peoples' of this nation and re-affirming the Preamble to our constitution as the Uniting Church in Australia.



3-10 JULY | **Change:**
2011 | the next step is ours

Paul Kelly Tribute

Friday 8th July, 7.30 pm. Christ Church, 26 King William Road, Wayville

Featuring – *The Wanted Men* and friends. Sean Gilbert is the lead singer of *The Wanted Men* who are all avid fans for Paul Kelly's music.

This cabaret style evening will support the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress.

Tickets \$20 / \$15.

Bookings essential: ELC office 8271 0329. The office, is open Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 10.00am - 3.00pm. Tickets for the Paul Kelly Tribute are available from our Office, or we can post them out direct to you for an extra \$1. The Concession price of \$15 is available to Pension Card Holders or Friends of the Effective Living Centre. Further info <http://www.christchurch.net.au>

YUDUM Premiere screening at Tandanya: Tuesday, July 5 - 6:00pm & 7:30pm

Yudum is based on the stories of Aaron Stuart, an Arabana/Luritja/ Adnyamathanha man. As a health worker in suicide prevention with Centacare Catholic Family Services in Port Augusta, Aaron began writing stories to share with his community. As a child Aaron learnt about his Aboriginal culture from the stories that his parents shared with him and his sisters.

When the elders from the remote South Australian community of Oodnadatta heard that Aaron's stories were to be made into a movie, they pleaded with him to film it in their township.

And so Yudum the movie came into being... the story of a young man who heads north in search of a girl, but who discovers much more than he ever expected. A true community movie for all... starring the people of Oodnadatta and Oodnadatta itself!

There will be two screenings on Tuesday 5 July, 2011:

5.40pm Welcome to Country and brief speeches for a 6.00 pm Official Screening and a 7.30pm Public Screening.

YOU MUST BOOK. Seating is limited. To reserve a seat email: adminfr@centacarecdpp.org.au or phone (08) 8641 0432 by Thursday 30 May, 2011.

Your chances to learn from Aboriginal people

. "We tend to think we know an awful lot, only to discover there is so much more to learn." Cynthia Gifford



AboutFace is giving you and your friends two chances this year to spend time with Aboriginal people, build friendships and break down barriers.

Flinders Ranges 'Stepping Stone' Event -

Friday 22nd – Sunday 24th July 2011

See amazing rock art, visit Wilpena Pound, hear dreaming stories around the campfire & learn about Aboriginal cultures.

Cost \$150 (covers food, accommodation, GST incl.)

Camp Coorong 'Stepping Stone' Event -

Friday 2nd – Sunday 4th September 2011

Learn the art of Ngarrindjeri basket weaving using local materials, see the Coorong at its best & learn about Aboriginal

cultures. Cost \$150 (covers food, accommodation, GST incl.)

Get away and experience something new

For more information or to register your interest contact Katrina Levi, Youth & Young Adults Administrator, Uniting Church SA E: klevi@sa.uca.org.au, P: 8236 4266. Visit www.aboutface.org.au

A covenanting initiative of the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress & the MRN Youth and Young Adults team

About FACE 2012

About FACE in 2012 will be about visiting Australian Aboriginal communities around Australia.

This may be a 'life-changing' opportunity for young people from your congregation so please bring the following information to the notice of your church leaders or young people who may be interested.

Key Dates

- Applications open **Wednesday 1 June**
- Early bird registration closes **Friday 12 August** (\$200 off total cost)
- Applications close **Friday 30 September**
- First payment of at least 50% due **Friday 28 October 2011**
- Interviews will be held through **November 2011**
- Final registration payment due **Friday 9 December 2011**
- About FACE is run from **7- 27 January, 2012**

Costs

All program costs include food, accommodation, transport to host communities, briefing & debriefing resources, insurance, and all administration costs. Cost does not include travel to/from Melbourne (arrangements for this need to be made by delegates themselves), personal spending money, or any medical costs (eg personal medication).

- **Early bird** registration if applying by Friday 12 August – \$1,900 total (deposit \$950.00)
- **Full registration** if applying by Friday 30 September – \$2,100 total (deposit \$1,050.00)

A payment of at least 50% of the full cost is to be paid by **Friday 28 October 2011**. The final payment for the program will be due by **Friday 9 December 2011**.

Suggestions of ways you can fundraise for About FACE 2012 can be found here (link to fundraising document). The About FACE 2012 team does not want costs to be a barrier for anyone interested in applying for About FACE so if you are having trouble raising the program costs, please talk to your Synod About FACE contact or contact us at info@aboutface.org.au or on 9251 5271.

Racism still a problem

Racism is still a problem in our community and in the church. How many times have we heard the comment, "I am not racist, but ..." which almost ensures that the person is going to make a racist comment. When we allow people around us to get away with this sort of behaviour then we are implicated. It is too easy to remain silent.

Recently, South Australian Aboriginal Affairs Minister, Grace Portolesi, [said racism is still a problem in Australia](#). She said that research from across the world shows that racism not only affects people's mental and physical health, but can also significantly reduce people's opportunities.

Portolesi said, "Aboriginal people continue to tell of discrimination and prejudice in their daily lives, and that **research backed their stories**."

"Comprehensive national research released this year by the University of Western Sydney showed that more than a quarter of Australians polled expressed anti-Aboriginal sentiments," she said.

"One-in-five Aboriginal people polled said they were often treated with disrespect and mistrust."

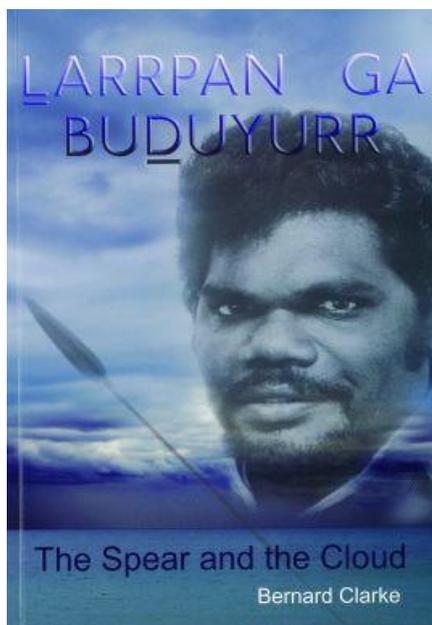
"I believe we, as a community, will continue to struggle with closing the gap of Aboriginal disadvantage until we acknowledge that Aboriginal people are confronted with racism and its consequences on a daily basis."

"The minister said the SA Aboriginal Advisory Council had welcomed the opportunity to develop strategies designed to tackle the problem, with members keen to make it a priority of their current term."

<http://news.smh.com.au/breaking-news-national/racism-still-a-problem-portolesi-20110527-1f786.html>

Larrpan ga Buduyurr: the spear and the cloud

Bernard Clarke, *Larrpan ga Buduyurr: the spear and the cloud*, MediaCom Education Inc, 2010 - \$29.95.



Rev Bernie Clarke's biography / memoir of Gätjil Djerrkura (1949-2004), former head of ATSIC and a man of considerable political vision and accomplishment, is also a history of Yolngu-Balanda relations in Arnhem Land from the times of first contact. The commentary quoted below is taken from Will's Blog: *Aboriginal Art & Culture: an American eye* (reference below)

Bernie Clarke's "retelling of the story is well worth the reading, for he approaches it with sympathy and from a perspective of great respect for men who are family to Gätjil and for other Yolngu leaders through the years."

Bernie Clarke "brings to his discussion of this era an exposition of some fine points of distinction that are too often lost in the heated arguments over Aboriginal policy. Chief among these is the difference between self-determination, which the Yolngu desired but did not achieve, and self-management, whereby "the Government gave them control over the very domain they had never sought to control, that is, education, health care, and management of the township and the mission. These were areas over which Wonggu had ceded control to the mission many years ago (Clarke, p. 92). The shift that occurred in the 1970s and 1980s sacrificed Yolngu values that ought to have been

enshrined in a policy of self-determination to a Balanda bureaucracy imposed through a regime of "self-management that was never in fact managed, nor meant to be managed, by the Yolngu themselves. The Yolngu wanted consultation, not intervention."

Bernie Clarke's "association with the people of Arnhem Land began in 1964 when he arrived in Darwin to work as a minister and social worker for the Methodist Overseas Mission. Two years later, realizing that a close ally

and cultural guide from among the Yolngu was essential to the understanding upon which any success might rest, he became friends with young Gätjil. Their active partnership lasted for fifteen years; their friendship until Gätjil's premature death of a heart attack twenty-five years after that. The two men had envisioned *Larrpan ga Buduyurr* as a jointly authored project, but Clarke carried it out as a tribute to his friend and to the Yolngu spirit of reconciliation and partnership ("walking side by side" in Gätjil's formulation) that characterized their relationship and, indeed, in Clarke's view, the history of the Mission at Yirrkala from its earliest days."

"*Larrpan ga Buduyurr*" is more than a biography or the story of a friendship, it is a history of Yolngu attempts to work with the missionaries and within the larger frame of black and white politics."

However it is even more than this because it traces the cultural knowledge that is enshrined in **Yolgnu law** and **Balanda (European) law** which explains the failure of current and past interventionist policies. "Balanda law can not function as a replacement for Yolngu Law in Arnhem Land and is thus an ineffective means of making decisions and implementing solutions. What the Yolngu seem to have sensed since Wonggu's time is that when two cultures come into contact, their laws and customs must accommodate to one another if there is to be a continuing, successful integration and reconciliation. This is a vision of a "shared responsibility agreement" that exposes the hollowness of Liberal political agendas that persist to this day."

This book "is a reminder that in Australia there are parallel universes and the Yolngu inhabit a universe of their own that they treasure and which gives profound meaning to their lives....It is full of clues about what we need to do...." Hon Fred Chaney, AO. (quoted from the Foreword)

<http://aboriginalartandculture.wordpress.com/2011/05/15/side-by-side-yolngu-and-balanda/>

Frank Brennan speaks about the NT Intervention

"Remember the Northern Territory Intervention of 2007. The Howard Government regularly trotted out Noel Pearson as a respected Aboriginal leader as a supporter of this intervention. And yet one month ago, Noel Pearson finally distinguished his own North Queensland Intervention from the NT proposal. Writing in *The Australian* he said:

Commonwealth legislation underpinning the Northern Territory Intervention and Cape York welfare reform was passed at the same time in mid-2007. While the reform objectives are similar, there are fundamental differences. The first difference is that in Cape York the reform agenda has been the initiative of Aboriginal leaders and the policy proposals have come from the Cape York Institute, not from government. The Northern Territory policy is unilaterally decided by government. A second difference is that in Cape York the reform agenda is being implemented in large part by Aboriginal leaders and organisations. State and commonwealth governments work in partnership with our organisations, whereas in the Territory it is almost exclusively a government-run show.

Many government critics were saying as much three years ago. But they were identified as trendy lefties who were out of touch, not understanding tough love.

Like many welfare groups, Jesuit Social Services has been very wary about the income management programs introduced by the Howard Government, maintained by the Rudd Government and now expanded by the Gillard Government. Once again to quote Noel Pearson:

Cape York income management occurs only in cases where welfare recipients have failed to fulfil their conditions for receiving income support. Where welfare recipients fail to send their children to school or fail to look after their children and abide by their housing tenancy obligations and the law, a group of local elders appointed to the Family Responsibilities Commission, established under complementary Queensland legislation, is empowered to ensure mutual obligations. The Family Responsibilities Commission has the discretion to decide what proportion of income is managed and for what duration.

The difference from the (Northern) Territory is that the Cape York scheme encourages community members to take up their responsibilities. If people are being responsible, they are not affected by income management.

These same points were been made eloquently by national welfare groups including Jesuit Social Services three years ago. But we were not being heard amidst the din of bipartisan tub thumping against long term welfare recipients. Once again there is no substitute for a grounded presence and a concerted research and national advocacy program."

quoted from Eureka May 01, 2011 = *Eyeballing Injustice*
text is from the "2011 Costigan Oration" at the Jesuit Social Services Dinner, Melbourne, on 30 April 2011.

Fr Frank Brennan SJ is Professor of Law at the Public Policy Institute, Australian Catholic University and Adjunct Professor at the College of Law and the National Centre for Indigenous Studies, Australian National University.

Free Poster for NAIDOC Week

The 2011 National NAIDOC Poster is now available for order.

Order your free copy from our website www.naidoc.org.au

Calling Young Leaders

UCA President, Alistair Macrae, and UAICC Chairperson, Ken Sumner, are hosting the **President's Young Leaders Conference, 2nd - 7th February 2012**. If you have young people who may be interested alert them to these dates. More information about this will be coming soon.



Prayer Points

- Pray for the restoration of the Racial Discrimination Act in the NT and for **fair treatment of all Aboriginal Australians**. Pray that governments stop forcing "reforms" against Aboriginal people's rights and against the evidence (e.g. bi-lingual education). Pray that **that true listening will occur** when consulting.
- Pray for the Congress in South Australia, its leaders and communities of faith; Kalparrin (Murray Bridge), Oodnadatta, Port Augusta, and Salisbury (Adelaide).
- Give thanks for all those who have contributed to the '**Pilgrimage of Healing**' Appeal. Pray for the program on 'healthy lifestyles' at Salisbury and all those attending and leading.
- Pray for all Aboriginal children going to school or not going. Pray that **equitable funding is provided for ALL schools** and that solutions may be found for those children not attending.
- Pray for justice and a 'fair go' for Aboriginal people and the 'unfinished business'.
- **Pray for a Treaty.**

Shalom,

Denise

May 2010

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Note: The Covenanting Coordinator position is only half time. Office hours are usually in the first half of the week, Tuesday to Wednesday when not out and about. The Covenanting Coordinator is able to preach at Services, and talk to Church Councils, Bible Study and Fellowship Groups. For further details contact the Covenanting Coordinator. This and past copies of this newsletter may be downloaded from the website:

<http://mnrn.sa.uca.org.au/covenanting/covenanting-whats-new.html>

If this newsletter has been forwarded to you and you wish to be included on the regular Covenanter's Email Newsletter List please email me (Peter Russell: prussell@sa.uca.org.au) your request.

The resources, events and conferences listed in this newsletter are not necessarily officially supported by the Uniting Church. Information is provided as presented by the relevant organisations. The views expressed in this newsletter may not necessarily reflect the policy of the Uniting Church.