

Worship Resources for Reconciliation Sunday

Pentecost May 27, 2012

Dear colleagues in Ministry,

The Presbytery and Synod of SA agreed in November 2006 to “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.” (P06.11)

At the Presbytery Synod AGM in 2010 it was decided to adopt the national Lent Event program. Therefore it was decided that the Presbytery and Synod of SA would:

3. APPROVE an annual appeal for a Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress (UAICC) project in South Australia during Reconciliation Week to replace the UAICC component which is part of the current SA Lenten Appeal.

Presbytery & Synod Meeting – Minutes – Session 8 - 30 October 2010 Page 3

It was determined to centre this appeal on Reconciliation Sunday. In planning worship for this day congregations are asked to take up a special collection or have a retiring offering for the UAICC Project in SA. Details & poster will be circulated in the mail. **Please make your congregation aware of this appeal before Reconciliation Sunday and support this appeal. The poster is also available to download.**

This is the sixth year that we have prepared worship resources for use on Reconciliation Sunday. Some of the resources we produced in previous years have been used to produce this resource. Please refer to these resources for additional information. They may be downloaded from the Mission Resourcing SA Website. Go to **Covenanting** and click on **Reconciliation Sunday**. <http://mrn.sa.uca.org.au/covenanting/reconciliation-sunday.html>

Please feel free to use 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. Suggested hymns
3. Some material for consideration when sermon writing
4. General information on the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress and Covenanting
5. Suggestions for Parents or Playgroups.

Denise Champion	Covenanting Coordinator & Co-chair Covenanting Committee
Ian Dempster	Resource Officer, UAICC SA
Peter Russell,	Secretary, Covenanting Committee
Dr Di Russell	Covenanter

27/4/2012

Order of Service for Reconciliation Sunday, 29 May, 2011

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)

Decorate your communion table with some branches from a gum tree. 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. 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 for 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 and Pentecost.

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.

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 and the power of your Spirit. **Amen.**

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

Welcome to OR Acknowledgement of 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 for Acknowledging Country:

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)

Note: Welcoming to Country can only be done by an Aboriginal elder from the country on which your church is situated. Other Aboriginal people and anyone else Acknowledges Country.

Hymn: Filled with the Spirit's Power

AHB 328 TIS 411

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 separate notes – download from Covenanting website

Hymn: Creator God, you made every race

May be sung to the tune: *Living Lord*, AHB 451; TIS 526

Creator God, you made every race
giving each your law,
good and true.

We are to worship you, O God,
care for creation in your name,
love and forgive as you love us,
Holy God.

Lord Jesus Christ, you have made us one,
binding each to you,
making peace;
healing the wounds our hands have made;
asking for truth and grace to rule,
justice, respect and loyalty,
Covenant Lord.

Spirit of Christ, present from all time,
guiding, shedding light,
giving life;
Counsellor, make us strong to fight,
Free as the wind to do the right,
ready to follow all the way
yet untrod.

One God in three, bonded strong in love,
reaching out to all,
giving God!
Build in this land community -
black, white and brown, one family-
serving the world your love has made,
God of grace.

*© John P. Brown: Permission is given to copy for free distribution
with these words attached.*

To be sung to the tune "Living Lord", AHB 451; TIS 526

Scripture readings set for today:

Acts 2: 1-21

Ezekiel 37: 1-14

Psalms 104: 24-34, 35b

Romans 8: 22-27

Witness: see sermon notes below

Hymn: Come, Holy Spirit, Come!

TIS 422

(Verse 5 is one to keep if others are omitted; recommend Verses 1, 3, 4, 5)

Intercessory Prayers:

Holy Spirit you make all things new;
Renew us in will and deed
To work together with you.

Loving Creator, we pray for our wide island continent:
its forests, deserts, rivers, billabongs and mountains,
its coastlands, lakes islands and seas, its unique marsupials and birds,
its reptiles, fish, coral reefs, dugongs, turtles and great whales.

Loving Parent, whose likeness we share, bless our people.
Bless the First Peoples of this land and the more recent migrants.
Bless the descendents of European convicts and settlers,
the Asians, Pacific Islanders, new refugees and asylum seekers arriving from
far lands.

Loving Jesus, give wisdom and grace to our nation.
We pray for the prime minister, premiers, ministers, parliaments, councils and
courts.
For service organisations and welfare groups.
We pray for those who represent us overseas: ambassadors, exchange
students, athletes, tourists, aid workers, peacekeeping forces and
missionaries.

Loving Spirit, continue your ministry through the churches of this wide and
diverse land.
Bless the old denominations and the new, the rigid and relaxed, the high
church and charismatic, the large and the small.
Bless the Uniting Church, its synods, presbyteries, networks, congregations
and assembly.
Bless the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress, its
congregations and communities of faith.
Strengthen us all, that we may be reconciled with each other and united in
your service of evangelism, social justice, pastoral care, education, worship,
witness and fellowship.

Spirit of God
Gift of Pentecost
Remake us in the likeness of Christ
That we may live in your glory,
from here to eternity.
Amen.

*© Bruce D Prewer, Australian Prayers, revised and expanded, Openbook, 2002 pp 26, 64
Adapted with permission*

The Lord's Prayer – listen to the Lord's Prayer in the Kurna language

(Download sound file from the Covenanting website)

Yeowa-rna Marngari-tti

Jehovah-'s request / pray-thing

'The Lord's Prayer'

Ngadluko yerli karralika tikka-ndi;

Our father on high sits

'Our father sits in heaven'

Ninna narri tampi-rna, kuinyunda kumarta-ppi-rna;

You name acknowledge-let sacred apart-cause-let

'Let your name be acknowledged, let it be kept sacred.'

Ninko yerlti-yerlti-nya pintya-rna;

Your advice/command create-let

'Let your rule be established'

Ninko padloni-tti yerta-ngga wappi-rna

Your want-thing earth-on do-let

'Let your want be done on earth'

Karra-ngga nammutannaintya-ndi

High-on resemble-ing

'As it is on high'

Ngadluko mai yunggu-ndo!

Our food give-you!

'Give (us) our food.'

Ngadluko wakkinna kumba-ppi-ndo!

Our sin remove-make-you!

'Take away our sin.'

Ngadlu tangka waia-re-ndi kumarta-nna-ityangga wakkinna wappe-ndi

We liver move-itself-is separate-pl-with wrong do-ing

'Have compassion for those who do wrong.'

Wakkinna-anna warti-tti

Sin-to draw-don't

'Don't draw us into sin.'

Wakkinna-unangko tirra-tirga-ppi-ndo

Sin-from protect make-you!

'Save us from sin.'

Ninna mattanya, taingi, wilta, burti burti tarkari tundarri.

You owner strength power gladness future forever

'You are the boss, the strength, the power, the glory for ever and ever.'

Wappi-rna!

Do-let! (i.e. let it be done)

'Amen.'

An Affirmation of Faith:

We say God created the universe,
and the world we live in,
and every living thing on this earth.

We believe the Creation shows us the power and presence of God,
and makes us want to praise and give thanks to God,
and take good care of the earth God has made.

We are full of joy that across the world
different peoples have their own culture and language,
and that in God we are all united together as one.

We say God is Spirit,
breath of life,
who is always working to bring people to life in God.

We believe the Spirit has been alive and active in every race and culture,
getting hearts and minds ready for good news:
the good news of God's love and grace that Jesus Christ revealed.

We are full of joy that from the beginning the Spirit was alive and active,
revealing God through the law, custom, and ceremony
of the First Peoples of this ancient land.

We say Jesus is Saviour and Lord,
and that he began the church,
and prayed that the church might be together as one.

We believe that in the risen Jesus we are all brothers and sisters in the one great
family of God,
and that God calls us to live in faith, hope, and love
for the sake of the Kingdom of God here on earth.

We are full of joy that we can learn, grow and serve together
as a pilgrim people
in the name of Christ.

Affirmation for Reconciliation Sunday approved by UCA National Worship Working Group

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.
In South Australia please support the UAICC Special Project Appeal – Download the
Appeal Poster from the website.)*

Prayer of Dedication:

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 and prejudice that lurk 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, the descendants of the First Peoples, may share equally with us in the bounty of this their land.

We pray that your Spirit will show each one of us how we can support 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 the First Peoples of this nation.

Bless and use these gifts and through the power of your Spirit move us to acts of true reconciliation, and change us so that collectively and individually we might make a difference.

Amen.

Prayer adapted from the liturgy provided by the Uniting Church SA at the time of the Prime Minister's apology to the stolen generations

Hymn: Great God, your Spirit, like the wind

TIS 416

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

For Children, Parents & Playgroups for Reconciliation Week

At Home

Reconciliation Week is a time to build mutually respectful relationships between Indigenous and other Australians. Achieving reconciliation involves raising awareness and knowledge of Indigenous history and culture, changing attitudes that are often based on myths and misunderstandings, and encouraging action. 1yr+ Help children to trace around other children's hands with crayon or texta onto a large sheet of paper or multiple sheets stuck together. The children colour the pairs of hands different colours: brown, black, pink and yellow. Talk about God's love for all people no matter what their appearance or colour.

Out and About

3yr+ Visit a local site of Aboriginal significance or a cultural centre. Explore the local Council library for some picture books with Aboriginal themes for reading to young children. Ask the librarian for suggestions.

Some Sermon Notes

The Spirit of God has always been around. In the Old Testament, the Spirit was there from the beginning, creating and moving, often portrayed as being like the wind, the breath and power of God. The Spirit descended upon Jesus like a dove when Jesus began his ministry. In John 20:22, the risen Christ breathes the Spirit into his disciples. "...*he breathed on them and said, 'Receive the Holy Spirit'...*"(NIV). The Spirit has never been absent. Aboriginal Christians also attest to this when they say that God's Spirit was in this land, Australia, before the arrival of Captain Cook.

This is recognised in the Preamble to the Uniting Church Constitution which says in part:

3. The First Peoples had already encountered the Creator God before the arrival of the colonisers; the Spirit was already in the land revealing God to the people through law, custom and ceremony. The same love and grace that was finally and fully revealed in Jesus Christ sustained the First Peoples and gave them particular insights into God's ways.
(part text from the Revised Preamble to the UCA Constitution)

Bill Loader said:

So, whatever historical event lies beneath Luke's story in Acts 2:1-21 - and there probably is one - we have to recognise that he is writing a symbolic narrative which wants to tell us of something much more than a once-off historical event. He is celebrating the presence of the Spirit in the early Christian movement. He does so with a slight sense of humour. He alludes to the phenomenon of speaking in tongues, which Paul also mentions, and gives it also a symbolic twist. It makes people sound like drunks to those who do not know what is going on. But to those who do know, here is a language miracle, which reverses the curse of Babel. Communication is restored! Luke nowhere follows his creative innovation through to its logical conclusion at a literal level, namely, that Christians filled with the Spirit don't have

to learn languages! How often people have wished that they could! So here, too we have symbolism.

Like a movie director, Luke creates a scene with wind and fire. The scene is a commentary on the whole movie to follow. The God of Sinai and the Law is acting again. The promise of an abundant flow of God's Spirit is being fulfilled. God's Word, God's Law, is being declared. These people with flames shooting from their heads are again the true Israel, committed to obey God's Word. History is repeating itself, but in a new way. The focus on Israel is reinforced when we realise that Luke is talking here about people from all parts of the empire: all Jews! This is a celebration of God and God's people. In Acts 10 the same blessing becomes available to people of other nations.

We are not left with a good and inspiring memory, but a promised presence. That presence promises we stay in touch with the divine word, we learn to communicate in love, and we can celebrate being a community in true continuity with God's people of all ages.

(Reference: <http://wwwstaff.murdoch.edu.au/~loader/BEpPentecost.htm> April 2012)

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Language is one of the most amazing things that we do. It separates us from the animals, it gives us theatre, poetry, songs, it shapes our identity and allows us to express emotions. It makes us laugh, it makes us cry. It allows us to record our histories and imagine our futures.

- Stephen Fry, *The Planet Word*.

Language's physical incarnation, our greatest invention, writing.

- Stephen Fry, *The Planet Word*

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With the myriad of translations that we enjoy or even, if for us there is only that great work in English literature that is the King James version, we probably do not really appreciate what we have. This was not always the case for those of us as English speakers. Scripture in our mother tongue was once either not available at all or was a possession that could be terminal. To possess a copy of scripture in English was once punishable by death.

In 1517 it is recorded that 7 people were burned at the stake for teaching their children to say the Lord's Prayer in English rather than in Latin.

(Ref: <http://www.greatsite.com/timeline-english-bible-history/> April 2012)

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With respect to the Pitjantjatjara speaking people of northern South Australia, Rev. Bill Edwards, who was Superintendent of the Ernabella Mission from 1958-72, said, "Of the 51 parables in the gospels, 5 had some relevance to Aboriginal life but not very close relevance; although unrelated to everyday happenings, 30 referred to aspects of life introduced through culture contact, including shepherding and gardening of the mission's program; 16 had little or no relevance. So the parables as presented didn't have much relevance to Pitjantjatjara life. I sought to find analogies from familiar features such as hunting, tracking, dingoes, ant lions and eagles.... In addition to the selection of culturally relevant elements of the scriptures, one must find cultural parallels which will make possible [comprehension] of biblical truths within the context of contemporary life. The Pitjantjatjara

preachers were able to take these suggestions to a deeper level and use them really effectively.”

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Difficulty in communication can go even deeper. Despite real efforts to understand each other, problems in mutual understanding still occur in cross-cultural communication between Westerners and Aboriginal people for whom English is not their first language because there are major differences between Aboriginal and Western cultures. Margaret Bain provides a variety of examples of such misunderstandings in her book, “White Men are Liars”. Here is one:

On one occasion paint was spilled while the (Pitjantjatjara speaking) workers were away at lunch. On the resumption of work, a man was asked to clear up the mess, but he took great offence, threatened to start a fight and left his job. In this...example, a request was [understood as] tantamount to an accusation.

(Margaret Bain, 2006, “White Men are Liars”)

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In 2002, Bible Society UK researcher Martin Robinson said, "In western Europe we have succeeded in producing a generation that knows nothing about the Scriptures. So serious is this lack of knowledge that in some departments of Fine Arts in our universities they are having to run courses in the Bible so students can understand medieval art and English literature. Whether we like it or not, we are living in a society that knows increasingly less and less about the Bible."

His answer was that Bible Societies world-wide needed to present the story of the Bible in a way that is **culturally relevant**. THE AUSSIE BIBLE and now MORE AUSSIE BIBLE seek to do this in Australia. Both books present the story of the Bible and Jesus in a relevant way so the readers will have their interest aroused and then read the whole story in a New Testament or complete Bible. (Published by the Bible Society)

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Recently Auntie Denise Champion, the Covenanting Coordinator in the SA Synod of our Uniting Church and an Adnyamathanha woman from the Flinders Ranges, attended a Kurna language workshop at Adelaide University. Run under the auspices of the Kurna Warra Pintyandi and led by Dr Rob Amery and Mary Anne Gayle the workshop looked at *Reclaiming Languages: A Kurna Study*. The course explores issues around the reclaiming of languages by reference to the case of Kurna, the South Australian indigenous language spoken in what is now known as the Adelaide region. The course gives a fascinating insight into the ways in which Kurna sources are being used to forge a new Kurna identity and develop an associated language which is being used to address contemporary needs. This course will allow you to: learn some Kurna language; develop an understanding of the structure of the Kurna language; understand the context (or ecology) in which the Kurna language existed at the time of colonisation in the 1830s and 1840s; and appreciate the circumstances under which the Kurna language is being revived. Parallels and contrasts will be drawn between efforts to re-introduce Kurna and similar efforts in neighbouring languages, elsewhere in Australia and overseas.

(Ref: <http://www.adelaide.edu.au/kwp/> April 2012)

Prof Ghil'ad Zuckerman, Professor of Linguistics and Endangered Languages at the University of Adelaide. was reported in the Advertiser (Wed 11 April). Samula Harris reports: He wants the Government to commit \$100 million towards reviving extinct Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages.

Once there were 250 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages. Now only 15 are in use. "In other words, 94 per cent of Australian languages are dead or dying," he says, adding that because of Aboriginal sensitivities towards death, he tended to call them "sleeping beauties".

There needs to be a language shift, he says. By returning their lost languages to them, he believes the Aboriginal people would regain immense cultural ground and self-respect. "A loss of language is a loss of cultural autonomy and a loss of heritage," Prof Zuckermann says. And the investment of those millions would save the country much more in the future.

His associate, Dr Rob Amery, concurs. Dr Amery has long been involved in the recovery of the Kaurna language in Adelaide - a mission that has taken many years and is associated with the teaching of it to Kaurna students. Now there has emerged a move towards teaching Kaurna at all Adelaide Plains schools.

Just this month (April 2012), the Standing Committee on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs was told that including non-Aboriginal students would promote cultural understanding.... The "happy by-product" of language reclamations would be generations of Aborigines with "educational empowerment" who felt more connected to their culture and thus better about themselves. "There would be more employability since they would acquire literacy, numeracy, computer skills," he enthuses. And he lists the massive savings on health, mental health, police and jail costs.

"Just turning around one life would be valuable," Dr Amery adds.

(Reference: <http://www.adelaidenow.com.au/professor-pushes-to-save-endangered-languages/story-e6frea6u-1226324316841> April 2012)

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Auntie Denise has also reported: As well as the Lord's Prayer (which you may hear spoken in Kaurna later in today's service), the Holy Communion liturgy has just been translated into Kaurna. The importance of this cannot be overemphasised. As this process of translation was happening Kaurna speakers doing the work were greatly moved. But how can that be different as they always spoke and wrote in English!? Those words in English were not unknown. Those of us who are monolingual cannot appreciate the power of words that beat close to the liver. Liver, not heart! For Kaurna and a number of other cultures, the seat of emotion and feeling is the liver not the heart.

Ngadlu tangka waia-re-ndi kumarta-nna-ityangga wakkinna wappe-ndi
We liver move-itself-is separate-pl-with wrong do-ing
'Have compassion for those who do wrong.'

(Extract from the Lord's Prayer in Kaurna in the order of service – sound file available on the website)

When gospel words come close in mother tongue they have power and the Spirit speaks and moves.

Kaurna people are grateful for the efforts of the early German Lutheran missionaries, Pastors Christian Teichelmann and Clamor Schürmann, who published their work *Outlines of a Grammar, Vocabulary, and Phraseology of the Aboriginal Language of South Australia*. They recorded the language of the Kaurna people for the English speaking colonists to read and began teaching Kaurna children to read and write in their mother tongue until forbidden to do so by the government.

(Ref: <http://kaurna.tripod.com/> April 2012)

..... the Evangelical Lutheran Mission Society of Dresden had been approached by [Pastor A. L. C. Kavel](#) and [George Fife Angas](#) about missionaries for South Australia. On 1 September 1836 Teichelmann and Schürmann entered the society's seminary, where they received additional tuition, including Hebrew and Greek, and were ordained as Lutheran pastors on 4 February 1838. They reached Adelaide on 12 October in the *Pestonjee Bomanjee*, which also carried [Governor Gawler](#).

With little financial support, the two missionaries soon established the first school for Aborigines in South Australia, initially in the open air, then at Piltawodli (possum house) near Adelaide gaol. Teichelmann and Schürmann published *Outlines of a Grammar: Vocabulary and Phraseology of the Aboriginal Language of South Australia, Spoken by the Natives in and for Some Distance Around Adelaide* (1840), including some 2000 words of what is now known as the Kaurna language. Their work became an invaluable resource for modern Kaurna language reclamation..

(Ref: <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/teichelmann-christian-gottlieb-13213> April 2012)

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Aboriginal students who learn their traditional language become more confident, have more pride in their identity and find a passion for learning, according to Kaurna teacher, Jack Buckskin. And wherever mother tongue is taught in Aboriginal communities, "It's like you are pouring in strength, identity, culture and power, says Dr Alitya (Alice) Rigney, who is a Narrunga Kaurna woman and a retired school principal."

(Reference: <http://www.adelaidenow.com.au/news/south-australia/call-to-teach-kaurna-at-every-city-school/story-e6frea83-1226316875456#> April 2012)

"It is widely regarded that the most effective education for Aboriginal students was the mission days when the teachers learnt the local language and used it to teach English," said Syd Stirling, Northern Territory Education Minister in 2005

(Reference: <http://www.creativespirits.info/aboriginalculture/language/> April 2012)

Father you gave us the Dreaming

'Father, you gave us the Dreaming...' Aboriginal Theology and the Future'

by

Djiniyini Gondarra

in

From Here to Where? Australian Christians owning the past – embracing the future, 1988

edited by Andrew Dutney, Uniting Church Press, Melbourne.

EXCERPTS FROM THIS ARTICLE

In the world in which we live, there are many tribes, cultures and traditions of people. Each one of us expresses the definition and terminology of dreaming in many different ways... To me as a tribal Aboriginal...dreaming is reality, because it takes in all the Aboriginal spirituality. When the religious tribal elders say, 'This mountain is my dreaming' or 'that land is my dreaming', they are really saying to us that this mountain or that land hold very sacred knowledge, wisdom and moral teaching, passed on to us by the spirit of the creator, who has created for us the holy sacred sites and the sacred mountains which exist today.

Therefore the Aboriginal dreaming is based on three fundamental areas in Aboriginal life systems. They are religious, social and political. One cannot be divided from the other, because if it is destroyed or interrupted, it takes away the uniqueness of what was designed and entrusted to us by our creator spirit.

Australian Aborigines are spiritual people... Aboriginal people practise their religious life in such ways to love, respect and honour their creator in whom they believe, just as the Hebrews practised their religious life to love, respect and honour their god, Yahweh. Discipline, self-respect, pride and dignity are part of the religious behaviour of Aboriginal people... All that is expressed in the religious manner is practised in the social life-cycle of the Aboriginal people.

Is the God of the Bible active in Aboriginal history and the Aboriginal dreamtime? This is the question that is asked by the Christian churches today. Aboriginal Christians are convinced and believe that the God of the Bible was with us and our people in the dreamtime. He was very active in our history. He has come to us in many different ways and many different forms to reveal his presence. He spoke to us through his creation, the beauty of the nature that clothes itself in God's glory that convinced us and made us believe that he is also the God of the Aboriginal race in Australia.

Our Aboriginality is God's gift to us as a people, of which we are very proud... He spoke to my people in history in our traditional language so that they understood and related to him... We believe that the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob is also the God of our forefathers.

In him we have survived and maintained our true Aboriginal spirituality through our religious ceremonies and social life. We are prepared to throw away any wrong interpretation of the creator spirit which the Holy Spirit now reveals to us.

[I have previously written*] *some missionaries came and saw the totems of Aboriginal people and jumped to the wrong conclusions. Encountering unfamiliar art forms of a sophisticated kind, some early missionaries wrongly decided they must be idols. Theologians are today quite clear that... 'totems' are not idols as the Bible defines them...totems and sacred sites serve to retain the law in a way analogous to that of the ark of the covenant... Israel did not worship the ark. It was not an idol; rather it was a sacred object placed in a sacred place to remind Israel of the Law and of the mighty deeds of Yahweh in history.*

There have been two hundred years of contact in this country. We cannot only celebrate the settlers and those who have been born and lived in this country as Australian citizens since 1788. It is time to listen to Aboriginal people. It is time to appreciate our spirituality, to hear our cries and see our oppression, and to share in it. It is time to respect and honour our spirituality completely and without reservation – just as we are willing to respect your roots.

We, the Aboriginal people, are a gift to the land and to the people who come here. You who have come here these last 200 years are also a gift to us. Justice, honesty and genuine reconciliation is the result when we have respect and honour for one another.

God is seeking Australian leaders, whether white or black, who have a new heart, a new mind, and a new spirit who will lead our nation to the kind of unity which is built on justice and love.

*In the book *Human Rights, a Dialogue between the first and third worlds*, 1983, edited by Robert A Evans and Alice F Evans, Orbis Books, New York.

Apology to the stolen generations

February 13, 2008

Here is the full text of Australia's apology to the stolen generations, read by Prime Minister Kevin Rudd.

"Today we honour the Indigenous peoples of this land, the oldest continuing cultures in human history.

We reflect on their past mistreatment.

We reflect in particular on the mistreatment of those who were Stolen Generations - this blemished chapter in our nation's history.

The time has now come for the nation to turn a new page in Australia's history by righting the wrongs of the past and so moving forward with confidence to the future.

We apologise for the laws and policies of successive Parliaments and governments that have inflicted profound grief, suffering and loss on these our fellow Australians.

We apologise especially for the removal of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children from their families, their communities and their country.

For the pain, suffering and hurt of these Stolen Generations, their descendants and for their families left behind, we say sorry.

To the mothers and the fathers, the brothers and the sisters, for the breaking up of families and communities, we say sorry.

And for the indignity and degradation thus inflicted on a proud people and a proud culture, we say sorry.

We the Parliament of Australia respectfully request that this apology be received in the spirit in which it is offered as part of the healing of the nation.

For the future we take heart; resolving that this new page in the history of our great continent can now be written.

We today take this first step by acknowledging the past and laying claim to a future that embraces all Australians.

A future where this Parliament resolves that the injustices of the past must never, never happen again.

A future where we harness the determination of all Australians, Indigenous and non-Indigenous, to close the gap that lies between us in life expectancy, educational achievement and economic opportunity.

A future where we embrace the possibility of new solutions to enduring problems where old approaches have failed.

A future based on mutual respect, mutual resolve and mutual responsibility.

A future where all Australians, whatever their origins, are truly equal partners, with equal opportunities and with an equal stake in shaping the next chapter in the history of this great country, Australia."

Preamble to the UCA Constitution

UCA first church in Australia to officially acknowledge Aboriginal and Islander peoples as first peoples of Australia

- Friday, 26 November 2010 13:12

The Uniting Church is the first church in Australia to constitutionally acknowledge Aboriginal and Islander peoples as the First Peoples of Australia Uniting Church President Rev. Alistair Macrae says the change to the preamble signifies the natural and rightful extension of the covenantal relationship that the Uniting Church has with the Indigenous people of the church, and by extension of this land.

“As a church we entered into an agreement with our Indigenous brothers and sisters to foster more just, inclusive and equal relationships in the Church that recognise the place of First Peoples,” Rev Macrae said.

“We have worked closely with the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress (UAICC) in developing the preamble and we are proud that, as a church, we have chosen to take this important step,” he said.

“It gives us a bigger and deeper understanding of who we are as an Australian church. First and second peoples belong equally together in this great land. Hopefully this new acknowledgment might provide a strong basis to work for greater understanding, reconciliation and justice.”

The Chairperson for the UAICC Rev. Ken Sumner said, “For members of the Congress, this acknowledgement places the foundation of our relationship in truth. It also, perhaps for the first time, makes Aboriginal and Islander people feel included in this church. For the first time, our covenantal relationship is founded on truth and not the lingering denial of our historical past. This is our story. The way the Congress has experienced our

relationship is now enshrined in the introduction to the law of the church of which we are all a part.”

<http://assembly.uca.org.au/news-media/news/assembly-news-2010/uca-first-church-in-australia-to-officially-acknowledge-aboriginal-and-islander-peoples-as-first-peoples-of-australia>

Text of the Preamble

THE REVISED PREAMBLE TO CONSTITUTION

The Uniting Church in Australia was formed on 22 June, 1977 by the union of the Congregational Union of Australia, the Methodist Church of Australasia and the Presbyterian Church of Australia after the approval of “The Basis of Union” by the Councils and Courts of those three churches, guided by the belief that they had been called by God into this union.

The Church in accordance with the Basis of Union accepts that the responsibility for government in the Church belongs to the people of God by virtue of the gifts and tasks which God has laid upon them and so organises its life that locally, regionally and nationally, government is entrusted to representatives, men and women, bearing gifts and graces, with which God has endowed them for the building up of God’s Church and that therefore the Church shall be governed by a series of inter-related councils, each of which has its tasks and responsibilities in relation to the Church and the world.

The Church in accordance with the Basis of Union acknowledges that the demand of the Gospel, the response of the Church to the Gospel and the discipline which it requires are partly expressed in the formulation by the Church of its law, the aim of which is to confess God’s will for the life of Christ’s Church.

As the Church believes God guided it into union so it believes that God is calling it to continually seek a renewal of its life as a community of First Peoples and of Second Peoples from many land, and as part of that to

RECOGNISE THAT

1. When the churches that formed the Uniting Church arrived in Australia as part of the process of colonisation they entered a land that had been created and sustained by the Triune God they knew in Jesus Christ.
2. Through this land God had nurtured and sustained the First Peoples of this country, the Aboriginal and Islander peoples, who continue to understand themselves to be the traditional owners and custodians (meaning ‘sovereign’ in the languages of the First Peoples) of these lands and waters since time immemorial.
3. The First Peoples had already encountered the Creator God before the arrival of the colonisers; the Spirit was already in the land revealing God to the people through law, custom and ceremony. The same love and grace that was finally and fully revealed in Jesus Christ sustained the First Peoples and gave them particular insights into God’s ways.
4. Some members of the uniting churches approached the First Peoples with good intentions, standing with them in the name of justice; considering their well being, culture and language as the churches proclaimed the reconciling purpose of the Triune God found in the good news about Jesus Christ.
5. Many in the uniting churches, however, shared the values and relationships of the emerging colonial society including paternalism and racism towards the First Peoples. They were complicit in the injustice that resulted in many of the First Peoples being dispossessed

from their land, their language, their culture and spirituality, becoming strangers in their own land.

6. The uniting churches were largely silent as the dominant culture of Australia constructed and propagated a distorted version of history that denied this land was occupied, utilised, cultivated and harvested by these First Peoples who also had complex systems of trade and inter-relationships. As a result of this denial, relationships were broken and the very integrity of the Gospel proclaimed by the churches was diminished.

7. From the beginning of colonisation the First Peoples challenged their dispossession and the denial of their proper place in this land. In time this was taken up in the community, in the courts, in the parliaments, in the way history was recorded and told, and in the Uniting Church in Australia.

8. In 1985 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander members of the Uniting Church in Australia formed the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress.

9. In 1988 the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress invited the other members of the Church to join in a solemn act of covenanting before God.

10. After much struggle and debate, in 1994 the Assembly of the Uniting Church in Australia discovered God's call, accepted this invitation and entered into an ever deepening covenantal relationship with the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress. This was so that all may see a destiny together, praying and working together for a fuller expression of our reconciliation in Jesus Christ.

AND THUS the Church celebrates this Covenantal relationship as a foretaste of that coming reconciliation and renewal which is the end in view for the whole creation.

1. Amend the Constitution by adding the following definitions to Clause 3

Covenantal relationship is the relationship which exists between the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress and the Assembly, which began in the invitation of 1988 and response of 1994, in which both groups commit themselves to developing more just, inclusive and equal relationships in the Church that recognise the place of First Peoples, the difficult history of this nation since invasion, and the particular responsibility of the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress for ministry with and among Aboriginal and Islander peoples.

First Peoples are the Aboriginal and Islander peoples of Australia who are the indigenous peoples of this land. These peoples are a diverse group with many languages and communal identities.

Second Peoples are all those peoples who have come after the First Peoples and who are beneficiaries in some way of the invasion and dispossession of the lands of the First Peoples. Among Second Peoples within the Church are many whose racial, cultural and linguistic backgrounds, experiences and expression of Christian faith are not those originating in Western forms of thought and theological expression.

<http://assembly.uca.org.au/resources/assembly-update/revised-preamble>

-ooOoo-

Some quotes -

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.

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 association 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.

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.

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 (2012) the Congress has two congregations; Salisbury, in Adelaide, and Port Augusta, and two faith communities, Kalparrin near Murray Bridge and Oodnadatta.

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 waiting on the leading of the Spirit is needed. How to begin? It might mean learning language, it might mean going on a ‘Stepping Stone’ or ‘About FACE’ experience; it might mean learning about Aboriginal history.

It is a journey for people of the congregation and a journey the congregation takes with Indigenous people. This means that it is important that there is an educational process and a process of developing relationships with your local/regional Congress folk and your local/regional Indigenous community.

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

“Aboriginal people are looking for the practicality of the Gospel that will reach my people and pull them up.”

Rev. Charles Harris, First President of the Congress

References

Some other Sources:

Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress – South Australia

Address all correspondence to:

PO Box 1044

Salisbury SA 5108

Resource Officer: Ian Dempster M: 0417 217 320 E: idempster@sa.uca.org.au

UAICC Websites

National: <http://www.uaicc.org.au/>

Note: South Australian data for Salisbury and Port Augusta is out of date

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

Other sites:

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

Acknowledgements

Material has been sourced from:

The Covenanting Website of the Uniting Church SA

<http://mrn.sa.uca.org.au/covenanting/reconciliation-sunday.html>

NATSIEC Website – Worship Liturgy

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

Week of Prayer for Reconciliation

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

Bruce Prewer: prayers used with permission

Bill Loader: <http://wwwstaff.murdoch.edu.au/~loader/BEpPentecost.htm>

Margaret Bain, **White Men are Liars, Another Look at Aboriginal-Western Interactions**, AuSIL, 2006

The Kurna Language of the people of the Adelaide Plains

C Watkins et al, **The Kurna Alphabet Book** (& CD) with an Introduction to the Kurna Language, Kurna Plains School, 2006

Lord's Prayer from **Kurna Palti Wonga - Kurna Funeral Protocols** written and compiled by Rob Amery & Alice Wallara Rigney with Nelson Varcoe, Chester Schultz and Kurna Warra Pintyandi, Adelaide, 2006

Lord's Prayer translation & sound recording used with permission, Kurna Warra Pintyandi,

<http://www.adelaide.edu.au/kwp/>

The Kurna language is the cultural property of the Kurna people. Users are urged to use the language with respect. This means making every effort to get the pronunciation, spelling and grammar right. For assistance see contact above.