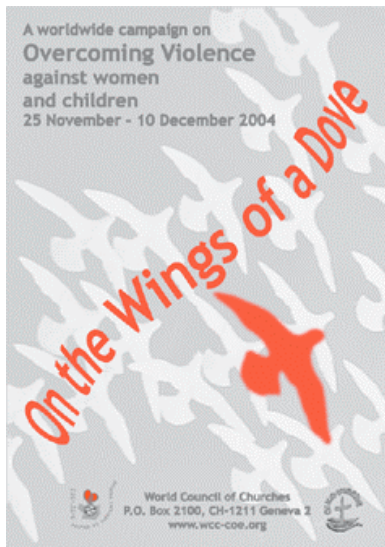


'On the Wings of a Dove' - Prayerline

WHY PRAYERLINE? What this resource is for

Prayerline has been produced as a contribution to the work of the *Decade to Overcome Violence: Churches Seeking Reconciliation and Peace*, the worldwide churches' initiative for the years 2001-2010, running concurrently with the United Nations *Decade for a Culture of Peace for the Children of the World*. Within Australia, the *Decade to Overcome Violence* has been taken up by the National Council of Churches in Australia as the underlying focus for all its work, with a commitment to addressing Indigenous needs as the most fundamental of all the issues of violence within Australia.



Prayerline is thus a resource to encourage prayer and action in solidarity with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, taking up the hand of friendship offered to others by Australia's Indigenous peoples. In particular, as part of the worldwide *On the Wings of a Dove* campaign, it seeks to pray with and encourage those Indigenous Christians already giving a powerful lead in addressing violence against women and children.

Like the *Decade to Overcome Violence* initiative of which it is a part, the *On the Wings of a Dove* campaign has been promoted by the World Council of Churches to encourage Christians across the world to pray and work for the overcoming of violence against women and children. Within Australia, priority must be directed to the pressing needs of Indigenous women and children who feel the brunt of continuing violence (whether direct, institutional or cultural/covert racist), as indicated in this resource.

As Professor Lowitja O'Donoghue (a patron of the Decade to Overcome Violence in Australia) has put it:

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.

Prayerline is however not merely a challenge to all Australians to share with their Indigenous sisters and brothers in overcoming violence, but also a celebration of the continuing courage and commitment of Indigenous Australians in doing so. For by the grace of God, as Lowitja O'Donoghue has also rightly proclaimed:



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.

Overcoming Violence against women and children

'On the Wings of a Dove' - Prayerline

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Jen O'Hanlon and the NATSIEC Women's Network
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Prayers for each day – the Revd.Penny Jones, except where otherwise indicated

Weblinks to further information and resources

www.ncca.org.au/dov/on_the_wings_of_a_dove	NCCA 'On the Wings of a Dove'
www.overcomingviolence.org	Decade to Overcome Violence (WCC website)
www.ncca.org.au/natsiec	NATSIEC
http://www.ainetwork.org/	Anglican International Indigenous Network
http://www.natsicc.org.au/	National Aboriginal and Islander Catholic Council
http://www.lca.org.au/action/mission/abmin/	Lutheran Aboriginal Ministry
http://nat.uca.org.au/uaicc/	Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress
http://www.covenanting.unitinged.org.au/	Uniting Church Covenanting
http://www.antar.org.au	Australians for Native Title and Reconciliation
http://www.reconciliationaustralia.org.au	Reconciliation Australia
http://www.hreoc.gov.au/social_justice/sjreport03	Human Rights & Equal Opportunity Commission
http://www.healthinfonet.ecu.edu.au	Australian Indigenous Health <i>Infonet</i>
http://www.adac.org.au/	Aboriginal Drug and Alcohol Council (SA)
http://www.austdvclearinghouse.unsw.edu.au/	Domestic and Family Violence Clearinghouse
http://www.law-lib.utoronto.ca/Diana/fulltext/andr.htm	Violence Against Aboriginal Women paper

Other Reference materials

NSW Ecumenical Council World Council of Churches	<i>Unfinished Business: a resource kit on Treaty</i> (2003) <i>Transformative Justice: Being Church and Overcoming Racism: Resource guide</i> (2004)
Australian Institute of Health and Welfare	<i>The Health and Welfare of Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples</i> (2001)
ed.Justin Healey ed.Justin Healey	<i>Aboriginal Disadvantage</i> (Issues in Society vol.175, 2002) <i>Aboriginal Health & Welfare</i> (Issues in Society vol.129, 2000)

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Overcoming Violence against women and children