

social justice sunday 2003 subverting racism

COPYRIGHT

Subverting Racism: Social Justice Sunday 2003

Published 2003

Anglican materials: © rests with the original authors as acknowledged
for unacknowledged material © 2003 The Social Responsibilities Commission, Anglican Province of Western Australia

Catholic materials © rests with the original authors as acknowledged
for unacknowledged material © 2003 the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference

Uniting Church materials © rests with the original authors as acknowledged
for unacknowledged material © 2003 UnitingJustice Australia

Action and Reflection Kit © Social Justice Sunday 2003 Team

All Bible quotations are from the *Holy Bible New Revised Standard Version* (1993) Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zandervan Publishing House

This document is published for use by congregations and church groups and we encourage reproduction with proper acknowledgement.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Subverting Racism was produced by a team which included John Ferguson (Australian Catholic Social Justice Council), Theo Mackaay (The Social Responsibilities Commission, Anglican Province of Western Australia), Peter Lewis (Covenanting, Uniting Church in Australia), Rev. Elenie Poulos and Tanya Richmond (UnitingJustice, Uniting Church in Australia), Rev. Helen Richmond (Multicultural Ministry, Uniting Church in Australia), Rev. Dr Ann Wansbrough (Social Justice Network, National Council of Churches in Australia).

The team would like to thank the following people for their invaluable help with this project: Rev. Dr Robert Bos, Adele Horin, Rev. Dorothy McRae McMahon, Monica Morgan, and Rev. David Pargeter.

Artwork by Rick Bull.

Design by Geoff Pritchard.

Printed in Australia by Lindwall & Ward Printing Pty Ltd, Marrickville, New South Wales, Australia on 100% recycled Australian made paper and board using soy inks.

This kit is available on the UnitingJustice Australia website @ <http://nat.uca.org.au/resources/socialjusticesunday/2003/>



contents

MESSAGE FROM THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF CHURCHES

LITURGICAL AND THEOLOGICAL RESOURCES

Ecumenical Prayers

Anglican Resources

Catholic Resources

Uniting Church Resources

ACTION AND REFLECTION KIT

How to Use this Kit

All About Racism

Black and White

Sticks and Stones

A Level Playing Field?

International Relations

Fear and Loathing in Australia

Find out More



racism /'reɪzɪzəm/, n. 1. the belief that human races have distinctive characteristics which determine their respective cultures, usu. involving the idea that one's own race is superior and entitled to dominate or oppress others. 2. offensive or aggressive behaviour or treatment of another race or group of people on the basis of such a belief. 3. a system of government or social organization based on such a belief. 4. a system of government or social organization based on such a belief. — racism, n., adj.

social justice sunday 2003 a call for racial justice

MESSAGE FROM THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF CHURCHES

In a world so full of fear and distrust, it is timely that Social Justice Sunday 2003 addresses issues of racism.

Christians believe that all human beings are created in the image of God. In Jesus Christ the divisions that separate people from each other are broken down - people are reconciled and a new unity is created among us.

Racism separates us from God and from each other and is incompatible with the Christian gospel. Together with Christians all over the world, we affirm that racism is a sin.

It is a sad fact that racism has been a part of Australia's history. It is evident in the life of individuals, communities, and churches and enshrined in government policies. Responses to recent events throughout the world indicate that we have not rid ourselves of the racism which has defined so much of our history. Racism has always been a form of violence, damaging the lives of those who experience it and violating their human rights.

In seeking to understand how racism works we need to listen to the experiences of others and reflect on differing perspectives. We need to consider what is happening to Indigenous Australians, how authentic our multicultural identity really is, the assumptions that underlie our resort to warfare in recent times, and the lack of safety which people of some religious and ethnic groups experience everyday. We need to examine what is happening in sport, the workplace, politics, the media and in our own congregations and churches.

While racism may at times be subtle and well disguised, it is always a powerful force of oppression and injustice. We condemn the continuing racism in our country which is evident in the behaviour of individuals and communities and which is still

evident in our churches. We condemn the racism which is hidden in the systems and structures of our society.

We believe that the cultural and racial diversity in Australia today is a reflection of God's gift of diversity in creation. It is to be treasured and nurtured, regarded as a blessing for us all.

We call for racial justice - an acknowledgement in word and deed that all people are created equal and that the lives of all people are equally valuable. We seek a community in which strangers are welcomed and differences are celebrated; we seek a society where the systems, structures and policies of governments and institutions are racially inclusive; and we seek a country in which all people are valued and can worship according to their own faith tradition.

We encourage members of our churches to use the opportunity provided by Social Justice Sunday 2003 to reflect on our own lives and the lives of our churches; to seek God's transformation of our lives and healing of our communities; and to work for racial justice so that we may be faithful agents of God's transforming mission in our society.

This statement has been endorsed as a public statement and for inclusion in the Social Justice Sunday Kit by the following churches of the National Council of Churches in Australia:

ANGLICAN CHURCH OF AUSTRALIA
ANTIOCHIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH
ARMENIAN APOSTOLIC CHURCH
ASSYRIAN CHURCH OF THE EAST
CHURCHES OF CHRIST
CONGREGATIONAL FEDERATION OF AUSTRALIA
GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH
LUTHERAN CHURCH OF AUSTRALIA
RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS
ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH
ROMANIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH
SALVATION ARMY
SYRIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH
UNITING CHURCH IN AUSTRALIA

a call for racial justice



liturgical and theological resources

ecumenical prayers

IT'S HARD TO FEEL WE BELONG¹

Voice of a newly arrived migrant

It's hard to feel we belong,
we've been uprooted and replanted in foreign soil.
Our roots are shallow and sometimes it feels like a
strong and gusty wind will blow us away.

In a borrowed language
it is hard to share the pain and hope
or whisper our fears and prayers.

It's hard to find our way,
and to feel we can have a say
in the way things are done around here.

We learn your language. You don't know ours.
If you take the trouble to sit with us, long enough,
we will open our hearts to you,
then we may belong to you
and this church that has accepted us,
but not yet opened its heart to us.

Response

God may your church have ears to listen
and hearts to feel,
that together we might find ways
to cross the divide that lies between us,
that bridges of justice, understanding
and love can be built.

PRAYER FOR THE JOURNEY OF HEALING²

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
afflicted 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.

ecumenical prayers

RUNE OF HOSPITALITY

I saw a stranger yestre'en:

I put food in the eating place,

drink in the drinking place,

music in the listening place;

and in the blessed name of the Triune

he blessed myself and my house,

my cattle and my dear ones,

and the lark said in her song

often, often, often,

goes the Christ in the stranger's guise

often, often, often,

goes the Christ in the stranger's guise.

AN OLD GAELIC RUNE

¹Mission Prayer Handbook, Uniting Church in Australia, 1996, p. 60

²© 2003 National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Ecumenical Commission of the National Council of Churches, used with permission



EVER NEW BEGINNINGS³

God of all people,
My forebears came from England,
Ireland and Scotland;
Some because they were transported,
others to escape the poverty of agricultural life,
all to seek new beginnings.

Thank you for those who were faithful.
Thank you for those who loved greatly
and built strong family and community ties.

If any contributed to the pain
of the first people of this land:
I am sorry.
If any knew of oppression and did nothing:
I am sorry.
If any knew of dark deeds and remained silent:
I am sorry.

**Lord, grant us reconciliation:
the ever new beginning of new beginnings.**

In more recent times others have come,
as refugees from war and famine,
as those seeking a new beginning
in their promised land.
My doctor is Indian, my accountant Chinese,
my minister Korean.

Help us all together, the people of your love,
the indigenous people of this land,
the people of the British Isles, of Europe and Asia,
of Africa and the Americas
to build a reconciled people in Australia.

**Lord, grant us reconciliation:
the ever new beginning of new beginnings. Amen.**

A PRAYER FOR NATIONAL ABORIGINAL SUNDAY⁴

Holy Father, God of Love,
You are the Creator of this land
and of all good things.
We acknowledge the pain and shame of our history
and the suffering of our peoples,
and we ask your forgiveness.

We thank you
for the survival of indigenous cultures.
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.

Give us the courage to accept
the realities of our history
so that we may build a better future for our nation.
Teach us to care for our land and waters.
Help us to share justly the resources of this land.
Help us to bring about spiritual and social change
to improve the quality of life for all groups
in our communities, especially the disadvantaged.
Help young people to find true dignity
and self-esteem by your Spirit.

May your power and love be the foundations
on which we build our families,
our communities
and our nation
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

THE CARJ PRAYER⁵

Heavenly God, we praise your name and thank you for your glorious goodness and mercy.
Lord Jesus, we pray a blessing for all those actively engaged in the struggle for racial justice.
Holy Spirit, we beseech you to enter into the minds and hearts of all those in authority in the Church.
Grant that they may hear the voices cry out for justice
Engage in developing a better understanding
Act to bring about change
Lead and inspire others by their good example.
We ask this through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. The love of God is greater than all evil.
We pray for racial justice: in our own lives in our parishes in our dioceses in our land. Amen.

³Mission Prayer Handbook, Uniting Church in Australia, 1999, p. 29

⁴Wontulp Bi-Buya Indigenous Theology Working Group, Brisbane, 1997, used with permission

⁵CARJ is the Catholic Association for Racial Justice, England. Please feel free to change the words 'parishes' and 'dioceses' if they are not appropriate for your own church (reproduced from One Race The Human Race, Racial Justice Sunday Kit 2002, Churches Together in Britain and Ireland, Churches' Commission for Racial Justice)



THE CURSE OF AN ETHNOCENTRIC GOD? A THEOLOGICAL RESPONSE TO RACISM

If a generalised description of 'race' refers to a 'group of persons connected by common descent, blood, or heredity', and an ethnological definition suggests 'a subdivision of a stock', then racism is understood as 'the belief that human races have distinctive characteristics which determine their respective cultures, usually involving the idea that one's own race is superior and has the right to rule or dominate others.' Racism as an attitude or as an ideology usually tends to generate negative social behaviour such as genocide - extermination of a racial group, prejudice, discrimination, oppression, lack of recognition of the 'other', exclusivity, self-absolutisation, stereotyping and xenophobia - dislike of foreigners.

Race prejudice usually involves positive attitudes towards one's own race and negative attitudes towards other races. It assumes some segments of humanity to be defective on the basis of natural superiority over another. Racism when institutionalised can help to further such assumptions with the inevitable consequence of the dissolution of a sense of community and the diverse experiences of alienation. Evidence of this could be detected in certain socio-economic movements such as colonialism and the more recent phenomena of globalisation that manifest a mind-set implying their absolute right to determine the destiny of others. As Lee Snook puts it, 'The historical development of modern civilization includes the history of colonial conquest, the domination of others, which the colonisers justified on the basis of an assumed cultural superiority.'

An Indian theologian M.M. Thomas states that, 'the core of any religion is the nature of the response of the people to the pressure of the Ultimate Reality on their spirit.' The *Macquarie Dictionary* describes religion as 'the quest for the values of the ideal life.' Ultimate Reality or God or the values of the ideal

life contains the notion of an archetypal reality that gives a sense of meaning to the story of the human race. The diverse pursuits to relate, comprehend and respond to this archetypal reality contribute to the plurality of religions that we see today.

An ethnic group can sometimes further shape its identity by claiming ownership to a system of belief. Thus Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam and Christianity have over a period always enjoyed a sense of autonomy and protection when each of them were owned and jealously guarded by specific ethnic groups in various geographical regions of the world. But, wherever the distribution of ethnocentric religion was used as a subsidiary tool of colonialism or invasion, it can be argued that the 'pressure of the Ultimate Reality on their spirit' was in fact the pressure of the religion of the colonisers or the invaders. Wherever religious institutions of the colonisers tended to be influenced by their own ethnicity, God is more likely to be seen as an ethnocentric God of the triumphalistic race who seeks to assert superiority over the rest. Thus we come across a 'white God', and 'black theology' as a reaction; a God of the Muslims who seem to be different to the God of the European Christians; a Hindu or a Buddhist nation with a desire to claim their monopoly over their space.

Elements of racism described earlier could then be detected in the mind-set of religions wherever religion complemented by a particular ethnic group seeks to dominate and deny the rightful existence of others who live with their own particular identities. In this context, one wonders whether a statement such as 'your God is not my God' can ever be justified. If God is conceptualised as The Ultimate Transcendent Absolute, God's earthly presence or God's immanence cannot be the sole property of a particular ethnic group. Pure Transcendence defies any claim to exclusivity and The Infinite cannot be limited by the finiteness of human endeavours. Yet, it is with our finite minds that we need to search for possible solutions to the sins of an ethnocentric God.



racism /ˈreɪzɪzəm/, n. 1. the belief that human races have distinctive characteristics which determine their respective cultures, usu. involving the idea that one's own race is superior and has the right to rule or dominate others. 2. offensive or aggressive behaviour to members of another race stemming from such a belief. 3. a policy or system of government or society based upon it. *racist*, n., adj. *racism*, -ism, n., adj.

In spite of its own history of intolerance and exclusivism, one of the meaningful ways by which Christianity could provide an answer is through its concept of the image of God. This is derived from the faith statement 'So God created humankind in his image; in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.' This creation motif suggests that God and the human race enjoy a deep sense of intimacy and are inseparable from the beginning.

The Christian understanding of God rests on a Trinitarian concept of internal relationality and movement between Father, Son and Holy Spirit. This doctrine of the Trinity understands God as intrinsically relational. Relationality assumes that first there should be multiple component or plurality and secondly that these multiple components need to relate to each other. Within the Godhead the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit exist as separate and distinct identities. Yet they enjoy a certain qualitative relatedness, which is best described as 'perichoresis'.

Perichoresis expresses the idea that the three divine persons mutually inhere in one another, draw life from one another, and 'are' what they are by relation to one another. Colin Gunton explains that, 'In its origin the concept was a way of showing the ontological interdependence and reciprocity of the three persons of the Trinity: how they were only what they were by virtue of their interrelation and interanimation, so that for God to be did not involve an absolute simplicity but a unity deriving from a dynamic plurality of persons.' He describes this qualitative relationality as a 'dynamic mutual reciprocity, interpenetration and interanimation' of the three persons 'so that one is not one without the other two.'

Let us try to put these together. God then is a community of persons, a plurality of beings where their distinctive identities are preserved. Yet, they also relate with each other in a manner that enhances each other without violating each

other's distinctiveness. The Trinitarian concept of community envisages diversity in unity from the very outset. Is this an example of the image that is supposed to be imposed upon humanity? John Yung Lee an Asian theologian says that, 'In our ethnically and radically pluralistic society, the Trinitarian implications of plurality and unity seem to be important in our community life. Almost every activity in the world can be understood as a Trinitarian act.'

Racism in fact works against the social implications of the Image of God. Self-absolutisation, which fosters a destructive and prejudicial form of individualism as a characteristic of racism, does not permit that dynamic mutual reciprocity that is evident in the image of God. In this sense Adam and Eve should not only be seen as representative humanity. Together with the rest of creation the Genesis faith statements convey the notion that God doesn't desire uniformity but distinctive identities living in harmony with their names and categories.

Jesus entered a world where God seems to have been owned and institutionalised by Judaism. The concept of being 'chosen' can help reflect an absolutisation of a status and of one's group history rather than a function to exercise. Religion can open the way for intolerance by its focus upon the exclusivity of membership and often stressing the element of the 'chosen people.' Jesus demonstrated that the 'kingdom of God' that he came to establish was predominantly theocentric and not ethnocentric. In this theocentric kingdom it is possible for a Roman, a Greek, a Samaritan, and a Syrophenician to be recipients of God's blessings without having to lose their ethnic identity.

So is the event of Pentecost, described by Welker as 'the representative world in its differentiation into many peoples.' He also states that, 'it produces a powerful public in which there is the possibility and the reality of diverse experiences of the removal of isolation and of individual and collective separation



racism /ˈreɪzɪzəm/, n. 1. the belief that human races have distinctive characteristics which determine their respective cultures, usu. involving the idea that one's own race is superior and has the right to rule or dominate others. 2. offensive or aggressive behaviour to members of another race stemming from such a belief. 3. a policy or system of government or society based upon it. **racist**, n., adj. **racism**, -racist, n., adj.

coupled with the preservation of cultural, historical and linguistic diversity.' The Holy Spirit, with the Father and the Son is also the Spirit of Creation. The theme of diversity and particularity existing in harmony is therefore maintained through the work of the Holy Spirit. The post-Easter community's confessions expressed the belief that Jesus is the new Adam and that through Jesus and the advent of the Holy Spirit life has been given an opportunity to re-programme itself and make a U-turn towards the Creator-God so that the primary intention of living in the Image of God is re-established. The restoration to the Image of God through the work of Jesus Christ issues a challenge to all of us that in God's world efforts towards unity that respects diversity are non-negotiable.

Ethnic and religious diversity therefore is a gift to be shared rather than a menacing threat. Due recognition is not a courtesy we owe people but a vital human need. All people created in the image and the likeness of God, have the same origin and are called to the same destiny. And the community that grows towards that image reclaims the journey towards that dynamic and mutual reciprocity within plurality.

An ethnocentric God seems to be a human necessity as our collective finite minds conditioned by our particular and diverse ethnicities attempts to express The Infinite. The Trinitarian model of relationality suggests that theocentric diversity does not defy ethnocentrism, but only the absolutisation of an ethnocentric God. The recognition of a theocentric God of eternity will also help absorb the weight of history so that communities need not remain prisoners of past injustices of the absolutisation of an ethnocentric God.

The Revd Sathi Anthony
Diocese of Perth



SERMON NOTES

Lectons: As set for sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost in Year B.

Esther 7: 1-6 and 9-10 and 9:20-22

James 5:13-20

Mark 9:38-50

The lessons today deal with the exclusion from communities of those who are different. The first reading deals with the conqueror and the conquered, the second reading deals with the rich and the poor and the third reading speaks of the orthodox and the unorthodox.

William Sydney Porter was a popular American author in the early 1900s who wrote under the pen name O. Henry. What made Henry famous was the ending of his stories. He always ended in an unconventional way and gave his readers a surprise. One particular story tells of a little girl whose mother had died, and would wait all day for her father to come home from work. She desperately wanted to sit on his lap and to receive some sign of his affection. But every night her father followed the same routine. He would eat his meal and flop in his favourite chair, light up his pipe and read until it was time for bed. When the little girl came to sit on his lap he would always reply in the same way. 'Can't you see that your daddy is tired? Why don't you go outside and play?' The little girl would go outside and amuse herself as best she could. Eventually the inevitable happened. As the girl grew older she began to accept expressions of affection from any one who offered them. And instead of playing in the street as it were, she took to the street and became a prostitute. One day the girl died and approached the gates of heaven. Peter saw her coming and said to Jesus, 'Here's a bad one, Lord. She is a prostitute and there is only one place for her'. Then comes the surprise ending of the story Jesus says to Peter, 'Let her come into heaven and when her father comes, hold him responsible for her life'. The point O. Henry

makes is very clear. God will be merciful to those who through no fault of their own are excluded. But God will be demanding of those who are responsible for the exclusion. We might well add that the way we exclude people is not usually by doing something to them, but more often than not by failing to do something for them. For example, if we fail to show them love or affection as the father failed to do in the story we may be making outsiders of them.

The concern of the world today is not with the lot of the Jews in the Ancient Empire of Persia but with the outcome out of the war being waged by the so-called Coalition of the Willing - namely the United States, Great Britain and Australia - and the people of Iraq. Whatever our political point of view, we can all appreciate there may be gains for the world in that the so-called weapons of Mass Destruction may no longer be a threat to world peace. On the other hand, we should all be thinking about the long term results of this conflict in terms of international relations. Australia has long been one of those middle-ranking powers between great Western powers and smaller Asian and Pacific nations. We are now, in the eyes of many in the Islamic world, throwing our lot in with the super powers, taking sides with the rich and powerful against the poor and powerless. Some see this as an unavoidable outcome of the present conflict, and one with possibly terrible consequences. As a nation we must engage in some hard thinking about our future place in the world.

The second reading today highlights another kind of conflict. The first Christians looked at riches and wealth with a degree of fear and distrust as they seemingly led to a false security and to a measure of oppression. James leaves his readers in no doubt as to the outcome of being caught up in the corrosion of our own wealth. It is not only the question of what we have done with the resources God has put at our disposal, but what has happened to those we have excluded by multiplying



racism /ˈreɪzɪzəm/, n. 1. the belief that human races have distinctive characteristics which determine their respective cultures, usu. involving the idea that one's own race is superior and has the right to rule or dominate others. 2. offensive or aggressive behaviour to members of another race stemming from such a belief. 3. a policy or system of government or society based upon it. **racist**, n., adj. **racism**, -racism, n., adj.

our own wealth. But the gospel reading gets to the heart of the matter. The gospel of Jesus Christ turns worldly values upside down. We are to love our enemies. We are to give to the marginalised without limit. We are to follow the example of Jesus himself.

In a book called *The One and Only Me*, Irene Champernowne recalls a moving story. She finds herself walking along a beach and coming across a group of small children throwing stones at a seagull. One of the gull's wings was broken and it couldn't fly. She was shocked by what she saw. She stopped and talked to the children about how much better it would be if instead of hurting the gull, they were helping it. The children seemed to understand and stopped throwing stones, and when Irene later returned she found the same group of children gathered around the same bird and instead of throwing stones they were feeding it and building it a shelter. Irene Champernowne was amazed how her words had transformed the behaviour of the children and at the degree of influence she had in modifying their behaviour.

As we contemplate the evils of racism and ageism and all the other isms that seek to categorise people and exclude them, we need to heed the call of Jesus to stand apart from those who see evil and complain about it but don't do a single thing to change it. For evil to abound it is only necessary that good people do nothing. The truth is that each of us has a significant degree of influence.

In recent years Australia has become a nation of very diverse peoples who come from very different cultures and races and political systems. Food Halls throughout our nation are a reminder of how this diversity enriches us all. There is so much more we can receive from people who are different from us, but we will not enjoy such benefits unless we receive those who bring them to us.

The disciples in today's Gospel were perturbed that a non-disciple was able to heal by invoking the

name of Jesus. The challenge to us Australians today is not to let political power nor material wealth nor our own opinions and convictions cause us to exclude those whose backgrounds are different.

Those involved in the reconciliation movement between indigenous and non-indigenous Australians have been impressed with the concern of our newer Australians for the dignity and rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians. Archbishop Desmond Tutu often talks of the Rainbow People of God - of a many splendoured God. Those who follow the other great world religions, or have no religion at all, so often express a dedication to the common good which is a witness to our many splendoured God. God cannot be coerced or restrained in sharing goodness through people. The presence of our Lord Jesus Christ in the ministry of the Word and in the sharing of the Eucharist constantly reminds us of the many other ways in which God manifests his presence in every day life. As Australian Christians we must not allow the privileged life we enjoy blind us to the light of God that shines in the lives of others, who belong as we do, to the Rainbow People of God.

Bishop Brian Kyme, Diocese of Perth

SUGGESTED HYMNS

Kneels at the feet of his friends (Together in Song No 640)

In Christ there is no east or west (TiS No 459)

Jesus calls us here to meet him (TiS No 477)

When I needed a neighbour (TiS No 629)



racism /ˈreɪzəm/, n. 1. the belief that human races have distinctive characteristics which determine their respective cultures, usu. involving the idea that one's own race is superior and has the right to rule or dominate others. 2. offensive or aggressive behaviour to members of another race stemming from such a belief. 3. a policy or system of government or society based upon it. *racist*, n., adj. *racism*, -*racist*, n., adj.

1978 LAMBETH CONFERENCE OF ANGLICAN BISHOPS

RESOLUTION 3, HUMAN RIGHTS

The Conference regards the matter of human rights and dignity as of capital and universal importance. We send forth the following message as expressing our convictions in Christ for the human family world-wide.

We deplore and condemn the evils of racism and tribalism, economic exploitation and social injustices, torture, detention without trial and the taking of human lives, as contrary to the teaching and example of our Lord in the Gospel. Man is made in the image of God and must not be exploited. In many parts of the world these evils are so rampant that they deter the development of a humane society. Therefore, 1. we call on governments to uphold human dignity; to defend human rights, including the exercise of freedom of speech, movement, and worship in accordance with the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights; the right to be housed, freedom to work, the right to eat, the right to be educated; and to give human value and worth precedence over social and ethnic demarcations, regardless of sex, creed, or status; 2. we thank God for those faithful Christians who individually and collectively witness to their faith and convictions in the face of persecution, torture and martyrdom; and for those who work for and advocate human rights and peace among all peoples; and we assure them of our prayers, as in penitence and hope we long to see the whole Church manifesting in its common life a genuine alternative to the acquisitiveness and division which surround it, and indeed penetrate it; 3. we pledge our support for those organisations and agencies which have taken positive stands on human rights, and those which assist with refugee problems; 4. we urge all Anglicans to seek positive ways of educating themselves about the liberation struggle of peoples in many parts of the world; 5. finally we appeal to all Christians to lend their support to those who struggle for human freedom and who press forward in some places at great personal and corporate risk; we should not abandon them even if the struggle becomes violent. We are reminded that the ministry of the Church is to reveal the love of God by faithful proclamation of his Word, by sacrificial service, and by fervent prayers for his rule on earth.

© Anglican Communion Office, UK



racism /ˈreɪzɪzəm/, n. 1. the belief that human races have distinctive characteristics which determine their respective cultures, with the idea that one's own race is superior and has the right to dominate the other. 2. offensive or abusive behaviour towards people of another race viewed as a result of such a belief. 3. a system or system of government based on such a belief. 4. a system of government based on such a belief. — racism, n. — racist, n. — racist, n.

liturgical and theological resources

catholic resources

catholic resources

A GENEROUS HEART IN THE LOVE OF CHRIST SOCIAL JUSTICE SUNDAY STATEMENT 2003

A summary of: A Generous Heart in the Love of Christ: Challenging Racism in Australia Today.

A History of Welcome and Exclusion

In Australia, as in other nations, there have always been groups whom people have found it difficult to welcome and easy to exclude.

Such relationships of welcome and exclusion - between the first Australians and white settlers, then later, between white Australians and people of other races and among older settlers and immigrants after World War II - eventually moved us towards a multicultural Australia where people were able to accept the challenge of living in a society where cultural diversity can be treasured and celebrated.

There have been times, however, when the shame of racism and the unfair treatment of cultural minorities have emerged with force in the community.

Sadly, the events of 11 September 2001 and the consequent military action in Afghanistan and Iraq, the tragic bombing in Bali and further terrorist attacks have caused distress and anxiety, not only among the general Australian population, but also among Arab and Muslim communities in Australia.

If the public face of Australia has been harsh and unwelcoming, however, many Australians have passionately expressed their desire for a more welcoming society. The Churches and their leaders have also been among those who have persistently called on Australians to welcome refugees and immigrant groups into the community.

Jesus and the Stranger

From his earliest years, Jesus experienced what it was to be a stranger. The Gospel account of the flight into Egypt portrays a family facing persecution

and seeking safe haven in a foreign land. That Jesus and his parents were displaced persons - refugees seeking asylum - reminds us of the threats and hardship faced by many families in today's world.

In his life and teaching, Jesus stressed God's love for strangers, particularly people excluded because of their race or background. He insisted that God's Kingdom had a place for all. Jesus insisted that all were invited because God loved them and invited them to conversion.

The Gospels often praise foreigners. Today the term Good Samaritan is commonly used for a person who shows kindness to strangers in need. Samaritans were members of a despised race and religion, and to hear them held up as models shocked Jesus' hearers. In John's story of the woman by the well, we meet another Samaritan. She is surprised that Jesus would speak to her. In his stories and actions Jesus meets strangers, looks into their faces, engages them in conversation and reveals a God who loves all human beings.

In his teaching, too, Jesus addresses the anxieties that make us exclude people. To dispel the anxiety that makes us see strangers as competitors, he invites his hearers to consider the flowers of the field. He also praises the goodness of the hated Samaritans, Romans, Gentiles and tax collectors. He urges them to love their enemies, imitating God who makes the rain fall on the good and the evil alike.

Jesus' insistence on God's universal hospitality made him a stranger in his own land. He was taken outside his own city to be crucified as an outsider. But the early Christians recognised that it was by Jesus' exclusion that they had been invited to be God's people.

Right from the start Christians were challenged to embrace difference. At Pentecost, the crowds heard the Apostles in their own languages. The Spirit united them in faith in Jesus Christ, but respected their differences of culture. They remained Greek



racism /ˈreɪzəm/, n. 1. the belief that human races have distinctive characteristics which determine their respective cultures, usu. involving the idea that one's own race is superior and has the right to rule or dominate others. 2. offensive or aggressive behaviour to members of another race stemming from such a belief. 3. a policy or system of government or society based upon it. *racist*, n., adj.

or Jew, male and female, slave and free, but were all welcomed by Christ. St. Paul later insisted that Jewish religious customs not be imposed on Gentile Christians, who were to be received with acceptance of their own cultures, languages and histories.

The Call to Hospitality

The Gospel urges us to welcome strangers because we are all precious in God's sight. Our worth does not depend on the colour of our skin, our customs, or our religion. We are made in God's image, each deeply loved by God, and that is finally the source of our human dignity. Because each of us is infinitely precious, no one may be treated as a thing or used to achieve some grand goal. When we welcome the stranger, we welcome Christ:

How can the baptised claim to welcome Christ if they close the door to the foreigner who comes knocking? 'If anyone has the world's goods and sees his brothers or sisters in need, yet closes his heart against them, how does God's love abide in him?' (1Jn.3.17. Pope John Paul II, Message for World Migration Day 2000, no. 5.)

Respect for persons demands respect for their cultures and our differences reflect the variety and inexhaustible beauty of God. Churches can nourish the spiritual and cultural life of immigrants and help them feel at home in their adopted land.

We can all take small, effective steps to help strangers find a welcome in our neighbourhood, our parish and our schools. In public life, church groups can and must help to define acceptable political behaviour, and refuse to allow vulnerable groups, such as immigrants, Indigenous Australians and refugees to be used as political targets.

May Christians, in the love of Christ, set an example of openness and generosity towards our sisters and brothers of every race and background.

The Australian Catholic Bishops' Social Justice Sunday Statement, *A Generous Heart in the Love of Christ: Challenging Racism in Australia Today*, can be downloaded from the following website: www.socialjustice.catholic.org.au

LITURGY NOTES

Social Justice Sunday - September 28, 2003: 26th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Racism continues to exist in Australia. We live in a time of national and international divisiveness and bitterness, often based on racial and religious differences. The challenge for us as Catholics is to recognise the dignity of every human person, and to welcome and accept all cultural and ethnic groups. The positive experience of multiculturalism in this country can assist us to continue to welcome with a generous heart the refugees and immigrants who come to our land.

READINGS

The Readings for 26th Sunday in Ordinary Time can be linked with the concept of social justice. Being committed to social justice is about living in relationship with God and living a life of influence for good. It is about recognising and respecting the human dignity of all people.

Numbers 11: 25-29

Joshua complains to Moses that the gift of prophecy had been given to many. Moses does not take offence, but wishes that all the people would prophesy.

Psalm 18: 8, 10, 12-14

Response: The precepts of the Lord give joy to the heart.

James 5: 1- 6

James speaks harsh words to those who are wealthy, living in comfort and luxury, and unwilling to share their wealth with those in need.

Mark 9: 38-43, 45, 47-48

True disciples of Jesus will follow him without compromise, eradicating from their lives any cause of sin.



racism /ˈreɪzɪzəm/, n. 1. the belief that human races have distinctive characteristics which determine their respective cultures, usu. involving the idea that one's own race is superior and has the right to rule or dominate others. 2. offensive or aggressive behaviour to members of another race stemming from such a belief. 3. a policy or system of government or society based upon it. *racist*, n., adj.

HOMILY NOTES

Perhaps the greatest cause of division is dwelling on one another's differences. On the cross, Jesus' outstretched arms embraced all. All human beings are equal in God's sight, making it wrong to discriminate against people on the basis of nationality, race or religion. Jesus Christ is more than any particular culture, social movement, political party or religious affiliation.

The Spirit can gift all people of good will, including those who do not know Jesus Christ or who do not recognise him as the Son of God. Moses wished that all the people would prophesy. Similarly, Jesus is not offended by people working miracles in his name.

Wealth is condemned if it is the fruit of injustice. As Christians, we are stewards of our gifts and our possessions, ready to share what we have with others. As Australians, we are stewards of a nation blessed with freedom and rich in resources and opportunities. Can we share our country with immigrants and refugees? With people who do not look like us? With persons of other faiths?

God's greatness of heart invites and challenges us to respond with a generous heart.

PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL

One or two of the following could be added.

We pray for the people of Australia.
May they be generous in their response to the stranger seeking refuge in Australia.

We pray for Australia
that it may continue to be blessed with freedom,
good leadership and responsible citizens.

We pray for all Australians
that we may continue to welcome with a generous
heart the refugees and immigrants
who come to our land.

THE EUCHARISTIC PRAYER

For Masses for various needs and occasions

D. Jesus the Compassion of God

For Reconciliation I

For Reconciliation II

NOTES FOR TEACHERS

For use with the Social Justice Sunday Statement,
*A Generous Heart in the Love of Christ: Challenging Racism
in Australia Today*

Australia has a proud tradition of welcoming families of many cultures and from all parts of the world. There have been times, however, when racism has emerged with force in the community. The Christian Church has a special concern for those who experience racist rejection and discrimination.

The 2003 Social Justice Sunday Statement explores the themes of racism and multiculturalism in Australia. It asks why our faith in Jesus Christ commits us to be hospitable to strangers, and suggests ways we can be ministers of Christ's hospitality in response to the challenge of racism.

The image of God
We believe that all members of the human family are children of the Creator and equal in God's eyes. This relationship is the foundation of our dignity. Our dignity does not depend on the colour of our skin, our customs, our religious beliefs and practices. Respect for the person demands a respect for their identity and culture. Our differences reflect the beauty of God.

Reflect on the image of the child described in the opening passage of the Statement. Discuss experiences of welcome that reflect our relationship with God and the human dignity we all share. Examine how racism is an affront to our relationship with God and undermines the dignity of victims and the identity of our multicultural society.

In the love of Christ
From birth, Jesus experienced what it was to be a stranger. The Holy Family's escape into Egypt portrays a family facing persecution and seeking safe haven in a foreign land (Mt 2:9-11). Jesus did not hesitate to break down the barriers and associate with the Samaritan woman and her community (Jn 4:4-42) or to heal the daughter of the Syrophenician woman (Mk 7:24-30).



racism /ˈreɪzɪzəm/, n. 1. the belief that human races have distinctive characteristics which determine their respective cultures, usu. involving the idea that one's own race is superior and has the right to rule or dominate others. 2. offensive or aggressive behaviour to members of another race stemming from such a belief. 3. a policy or system of government or society based upon it. *racist*, -racist, n., adj.

NOTES FOR TEACHERS cont...

There are many other stories in the Gospels of how Jesus extended the hand of friendship to those who were excluded or despised. Ask students to study their favourite story and share their reflections. How was he hospitable to the stranger? How did he challenge people to change? How does this relate to Australia today?

Who is my neighbour?

A lawyer once asked Jesus 'who is my neighbour?' Jesus answered with the parable of the Good Samaritan (Lk 10:29-37), where he challenged all of us to regard as our neighbour anyone struggling through difficult times. We are called to come to the aid of those in need as if they were our own sister or brother.

Are there particular communities in Australia today who are excluded or attacked because of their race, culture or faith? What about the Indigenous community, Asian, Arab and Muslim Australians, refugees and asylum seekers? How have they been portrayed in the media? What are their experiences of racism? They are our brothers and sisters - what can we do to protect and support them?

Racism in Australia today

While racism is a complex issue, it is based on the simple and mistaken belief that some people are superior to others because of their colour, race, culture or original nationality. Racism is expressed in many ways: as negative attitudes; the fear of immigrants; institutional racism; or racial hate crimes. Racism is destructive in all its forms. It is important to understand its nature in order to prevent it. It is also important to know what governments, community groups and schools are doing.

Visit the following websites for more information about racism and suggestions on how we can challenge racism in Australia today:

<http://racismnoway.com.au/>

www.socialjustice.catholic.org.au

<http://library.trinity.wa.edu.au/issues/racism.htm>

Celebrating our diversity

Over the past four decades Australia has adopted the policy of multiculturalism. The community has developed greater cultural tolerance and celebrated the diversity of our society. There has been a greater awareness that many peoples have come to this island nation from around the world. With the First Peoples of this land, we share our customs, traditions, languages, stories and food...

Invite students to share stories and cultural heritage of their families and how they came to Australia. An international food day is a wonderful way to share in the diversity of our country.

Other examples of hospitality

The greatest challenge to racism is acquaintance. Catholic schools are a treasure for learning the welcome that faith requires. Young people can confront the prejudices of society there and learn to find in their differences a source of richness.

After the anti-Islamic anger that followed 11 September 2001 and the Bali tragedy, some schools invited students from Muslim schools to speak with their own students. Other initiatives have involved the visual arts, music, film and public speaking. Visit the following website for a range of exciting projects schools are undertaking:

<http://www.racismnoway.com.au/news/breaking-news/index.html>



racism /ˈreɪzɪzəm/, n. 1. the belief that human races have distinctive characteristics which determine their respective cultures, with the idea that one's own race is superior and entitled to rule over other races. 2. offensive or abusive behaviour towards people of another race arising from such a belief. 3. a policy or system of government based on such a belief. 4. prejudice or hatred against people of another race or against a particular race. — racism, n., adj.

liturgical and theological resources

uniting resources: liturgy

uniting resources: liturgy

CREATING A SPACE FOR FRIENDSHIP CELEBRATING UNITY IN DIVERSITY

PREPARATION

- If possible, the service should be led by a group of people who represent diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds.
- The church should be arranged so that there is an open space in the centre. If this is not possible, see if you can create an empty space out the front or in the sanctuary with chairs arranged around it and the congregation forming the fourth side of a rectangle.
- Stories which invite grieving may be prepared or you may just omit that section and hold the silence followed by the readings of lament
- Flowers in a basket for the children to spread
- Children can be invited to bring pictures of friendship or poems
- If there are no children, adults can place the flowers and prepare images of beauty in diversity (photos, leaves, stones, colour etc)

You may like to share a meal together after the service.

THE GREETING

Christ be with you.

And also with you.

With respect and gratitude for the original custodians of this land, we are gathered together today to affirm in hope and faith that we can create a space for friendship and respect across our different races and cultures, across unrecognised divides and painful histories.

This is who we are, many people of great diversity, one community in the unity of humankind.

CALL TO WORSHIP

I now invite representatives of the diversity among us to come forward, give their names and the origins of their families and then to form a circle in this space (or to stand and face the congregation)

The people come forward

**We are all God's good creation.
Let us sing in praise to God.**

The people resume their seats after the hymn.

HYMN

CONFESSION

As we come before our God,
we know that we have much to grieve.
We have not loved our neighbour as ourselves
and we have not always gathered in the strangers.
This space has weeping within it,
tears of sadness and loneliness,
tears from rejection and hate,
tears of loss and shame.

*Stories may be told from the past and present
and/or a silence is kept*

Let us hear a lament from the Hebrew people:

Psalm 13 is read

Let us hear the grieving in other languages
Songs or poems of lament from different cultures can be offered

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

Our God grieves with us and offers us grace.
We are forgiven and called to a new day.
Thanks be to God.

LET US REMEMBER TRUST

I now invite the children to place flowers around this space as a sign of cherishing those who grieve.

The children do so

When we begin to destroy each other
in lack of compassion and rejection
in abuse and harassment,
in prejudice and hate,
in violence and war,
we end the childlike innocence
which is our birthright.
Through the eyes of our children of today,
let us remember trust.
Let us remember hope
and the dream of human friendship.



racism /ˈreɪzɪzəm/, n. 1. the belief that human races have distinctive characteristics which determine their respective cultures, usu. involving the idea that one's own race is superior and has the right to rule or dominate others. 2. offensive or aggressive behaviour to members of another race stemming from such a belief. 3. a policy or system of government or society based upon it. *racism*, -racist, n., adj.

The children are invited to bring their pictures or poems, hold them up and place them in the space

THE SACRED TASK

The sacred task for adults is to honour
the hopes of all the world's children
for their safety and security,
to care for them gently and deeply
- in body, mind, heart and soul.
What will the world hold in trust for its children?
What will we create here in this space
and in our country?
Let us hear the Gospel for us today:

BIBLE READINGS

May be read in several languages

SERMON

Or stories of hope and grace from the cultures present

HYMN

THE OFFERING

Let us give as though life will always be abundant.
Let us be abundant in our generosity to others
and to the work of God.

The offering is received

Dear God, we never really match your abundance,
but receive the gifts we bring today
and show us how to use them
for bringing life to others. Amen.

THE NEW COMMUNITY

Let us imagine the new community of humankind,
all peoples living in compassion
and respect for each other,
an end to violence and hate
the bringing in of equality and justice.
a great circle of friendship around the world
beginning here.

The diverse people gather in a circle in the space

In awe, in silence, let us reflect on this new world.

A silence is kept

LET US PRAY

Let us place around this dream
the power of our prayers,
our ways of connecting with love beyond ourselves,
with the energy for good
at the centre of all creation, which is God.
As we do this, let us feel the joining of our
friendship around this space
with the heart of God.

The prayers of the various communities of people are shared

Gather all these, our prayers, together O God.
Hold them close to you
and show us the beauty which you have made,
and the gifts which are given
in the variety of our differences.
Cross over the boundaries
of our fears and our prejudices
and join us in one great community of loving care
for the peace and renewal of all human life.
**May we only ever see each other as you have
already seen us, loving Jesus,
for we pray in your name, Amen.**

LORD'S PRAYER

HYMN

GO IN PEACE

Before we move, let us stand a little closer together
and look around the room
at the faces around the space:
Let us see the life that is written there,
see the beauty of the diversity of people,
see our strength and our vulnerability.
Together we will create a new place here
and a new world to come.

If a meal is to be shared

We will begin with the sharing of food
Food is carried into the centre and lifted high
We are thankful for this food which we will share
together in friendship.



racism /ˈreɪzɪzəm/, n. 1. the belief that human races have distinctive characteristics which determine their respective cultures, usu. involving the idea that one's own race is superior and has the right to rule or dominate others. 2. offensive or aggressive behaviour to members of another race stemming from such a belief. 3. a policy or system of government or society based upon it. *racist*, n., adj.

COMMISSIONING AND BLESSING

Go in faith to be part of
the new creation of human community.
Go in love to take the hand of those
who long for inclusion.

And may God the Creator speak to us
in all creation,
Christ Jesus bring all people to the table
and the Holy Spirit be our constant companion.
Amen.

ADDITIONAL WORSHIP RESOURCES

Suggested Hymns (from *Together In Song*)

God of many names 180
I am the church! You are the church! 467
We are your people 468
Help us accept each other 648
Jesus the Lord said 239
By the Babylonian waters 85
In Christ there is no east or west 459
Brother, sister let me serve you 650
Let us talents and tongues employ 537
(communion)
This is my will 641

Chants

Come, O Holy Spirit, come 711
Sing Amen: Amen 704
Lord, have mercy 734
Nothing can trouble 739
Thuma mina (Send me Lord) 749

Prayer of Invocation

Reveal your life among us, O God,
speak to us in ways beyond our imagining,
Christ Jesus
and be present to us in friend and stranger.
Come, Holy Spirit, come. Amen.

Confession

At such a time as this, O God,
we stand before your holiness in grief
and own that we have not always
loved our neighbour as ourselves.

We have failed to create a world
in which all people are loved and accepted.
We have found it hard to see beyond differences
into the common humanity which we share.

Silent reflection

Forgive us, loving God.
Forgive us and bring us to a grander hope.

Sometimes we have decided that we are superior
to people of races and cultures other than our own,
presuming to judge your handiwork
which is expressed in our diversity.

Silent reflection

Forgive us, loving God.
Forgive us and bring us to a grander hope.

Other times we have put boundaries on your call,
shutting out disturbing news of suffering,
telling ourselves that it is not our concern,
as though the community
which you invite us to enter
is narrow and confined
to those we find most comfortable.

Silent reflection

Forgive us, loving God.
Forgive us and bring us to a grander hope
that we may more truly be your people. Amen.

Prayers Of Intercession

How will we pray in such a time as this?
How will we bring our world before our God
for healing, justice and compassion?

Silent reflection

O God, we pray for those who believe
that they are lesser human beings
because of the way they have been treated
by other races of people
and whose culture has been crushed
because it was different to those in power.

Specific prayers may be offered

Make us part of your new world, O God.
Create in us brave hearts
to make the changes in ourselves
and to invite the changes in others.



racism /ˈreɪzɪzəm/, n. 1. the belief that human races have distinctive characteristics which determine their respective cultures, usu. involving the idea that one's own race is superior and has the right to rule or dominate others. 2. offensive or aggressive behaviour to members of another race stemming from such a belief. 3. a policy or system of government or society based upon it. *racist*, n., adj. *racism*, -racist, n., adj.

O God, we pray for those
who fear to walk the streets
because they may face abuse or violence,
and for children who do not feel welcome
in school playgrounds.
We pray for young people
who have become bitter and hurt
because they live between two cultures,
struggling to honour their history and their present.

Specific prayers may be offered

Make us part of your new world, O God.
Create in us brave hearts
to make the changes in ourselves
and to invite the changes in others.

And now we pray for ourselves, O God.
Open our hearts to receive gifts
from those who are different,
open our eyes to see you present within their lives,
open our ears to hear their stories
and open our mouths to be a voice
for those who suffer in silence.
May your church be a place
of open arms and open mind,
embracing all those for whom you came,
Jesus Christ.
We pray this in your name, Amen.

BENEDICTION

All people are made in God's image!

Creator remind us.

Beyond the barriers we erect

Jesus take us!

Called to live as God's reconciled people

Spirit make us!

CREDO

Written by the participants in the second Uniting Church Cross-cultural Relationship Workshop: Confronting Racism, Centre For Ministry, March 2002

We believe in God, Creator of Land
and of all people in God's own image.
We believe each person is valued
and equally loved by God.
We believe that God knows first-hand the depth of
human interaction and continues to be source of

life within our interactions.

We believe in Jesus Christ who has shown us the
way to reach across to one another.

We believe in the Holy Spirit who does God's
transforming work within us.

We believe that in God anything is possible.

We affirm our need of God to draw us together.

We affirm that Grace is the source of hope.

We affirm our need to be open to and disturbed by
God's vision of justice and peace.

We affirm that in living our life in fullness we are
drawn to embrace the joys and sorrow of each
human relationship.

We affirm the continuing work of reconciliation and
we will take steps in listening and making efforts
to build relationships so that we can celebrate
and rejoice in our diversity and acknowledge the
goodness of creation.

To achieve this vision we will take action steps to
work to eradicate racism in our church and society...

We will address the truth of who we are.

We will seek to understand the systems of
structural oppression in our society and the real
history behind it.

We will recognise our difference and be repentant
of our faults and the failures of our nations' history.
We will take actions to continue building
relationships.

We will attempt to eradicate racism
wherever we are.

We will seek to sit with some of the people of our
communities who've been pushed down
by oppression.

We will bring people face to face
to share their stories.

We will listen and share and be changed by our
encounters with others.



racism /ˈreɪzɪzəm/, n. 1. the belief that human races have distinctive characteristics which determine their respective cultures, with the idea that one's own race is superior and entitled to dominate or oppress others. 2. offensive or injurious behaviour or treatment of another race or group on the basis of a belief in the inferiority of another race or group. 3. a belief, attitude or system of government based on such a belief. 4. a policy of racial discrimination. — racism, n., adj.

liturgical and theological resources uniting resources

uniting resources

SERMON NOTES: A RACIST PLOT AVERTED

ESTHER: THE STORY

High drama! What a story! A great movie plot!

The most powerful man of his day, ruler of the vast Persian Empire, wealthy beyond measure, punishes his disobedient wife, arranges a beauty pageant, and chooses another queen. Meanwhile, an evil man becomes Prime Minister. But an upright member of a minority group refuses to prostrate himself before the vain and vengeful Prime Minister, who resolves, not only to have the man murdered, but to engage in 'ethnic cleansing', the extermination of the entire race.

The king is told lies and approves the massacre. For the rebellious man, the Prime Minister has a huge gallows erected.

Unbeknown to the king, the new queen is a member of the minority group which is about to be slaughtered. At great risk to herself, she approaches the king and receives his approval to arrange a sumptuous banquet for him and the Prime Minister. During the feast, she reveals that she and her people are about to be killed. The king is outraged. The Prime Minister is hanged on the gallows intended for his victim. The member of the migrant-ethnic group who refused to bow before the Prime Minister becomes Prime Minister himself, and the people are saved.

Can't you picture the exotic sets, the sumptuous eastern costumes, the elaborate settings of the banquets? Do you hear the orchestra play oriental music, sometimes light-hearted, sometimes sombre and dramatic? Don't you share in the tension, the sense of injustice and the satisfaction of the ending?

THE CHARACTERS

The drama is full of fascinating characters. Mordecai, a member of an exiled minority ethnic group, has walked the fine line between faithfulness

to his own people and customs on the one hand, and survival in the midst of a foreign culture on the other. By passing on overheard information to the queen, he is able to forestall the assassination of the king and a coup.

King Ahasuerus (Xerxes I) is portrayed as a weak fool, who is given to outbursts of extreme emotion and is easily led by his advisers. He readily believes all he is told and agrees to everything he is asked. Sumptuous parties, conspicuous wealth and beautiful women are his preoccupations, while he leaves others to manage the responsibilities of government.

Queen Vashti refuses to be paraded before a room of drunken gawking men to be ogled like some prized possession or pedigree pet. She has been commanded to appear wearing her crown (nothing but her crown?), so that the king can show off her beauty. When she will not be party to the indignity, the men of the royal court, fearing that the queen will influence other women to disobey their husbands, decide to make an example of her, and she is discarded and banished.

Commissioners are sent to all the provinces to find beautiful young virgins to undergo twelve months of expensive beauty treatment in a harem before spending a night with the king and then to be transferred to another harem. Eventually Esther is chosen to be the king's consort. She keeps her Jewish identity secret.

Haman is the evil character in the drama - proud, ambitious and entirely self-serving. He basks in the glories of high office. He gives orders in the king's name that people are to bow and prostrate themselves before him. His insecurity is evident. Enraged by Mordecai's refusal, he orders that Mordecai's whole race should be exterminated. He tells the king that there is an unassimilated race (read - 'those of different customs') who ignore the king's commands (i.e. the command to bow to the arrogant Haman).



racism /ˈreɪzɪzəm/, n. 1. the belief that human races have distinctive characteristics which determine their respective cultures, usu. involving the idea that one's own race is superior and has the right to rule or dominate others. 2. offensive or aggressive behaviour to members of another race stemming from such a belief. 3. a policy or system of government or society based upon it. *racist*, n., adj. *racism*, -racist, n., adj.

As is often the case with racism, a negative characteristic is attributed to a whole ethnic group. Here, an entire race is blamed for Mordecai's refusal. Edicts are issued for a mass annihilation. The longer Greek text has the contents of Haman's letter after 3:13, highlighting his outlandish exaggerations and lies. He accuses the Jews of 'continually defying the royal ordinances' and obstructing 'that form of government assured by us to the general good'. It further claims that the people are 'in complete opposition to all humankind from which it differs by its outlandish system of laws that is hostile to our interests.' He thus engages in his personal vendetta by presenting it as a matter of national security. (In actual fact, the customs of the Jews are not so different. Esther has no difficulty keeping her racial identity secret.)

The fact that Haman himself is also a member of a minority group, albeit a different one from Mordecai and Esther, does not mean he has any sympathy for Mordecai and his people.

Haman's pride is his own undoing. In an hilarious scene, the king asks Haman what should be done for one whom the king wishes to honour. Haman assumes the king is speaking of him and advises that such a person should be dressed in the finest clothes, paraded through the streets on the king's horse and loudly acclaimed. Little does Haman know that it is Mordecai the king wishes to honour for having previously prevented the assassination and coup. Haman suffers the indignity of having to parade the one he hates through the streets. We can feel him seething with anger!

In a dramatic palace scene (the passage for today), during Esther's banquet, Haman's murderous plot is exposed and he is condemned to die on the gallows he had built for Mordecai (7:1-10).

Along with Mordecai, Esther is the hero of the story. She is a seemingly powerless orphan and exile, an object of exchange between men, but, when it comes to the crunch, she is much more shrewd

than Vashti, her predecessor. At first she simply follows Mordecai's (and Hegai, her royal keeper's) directions, but later becomes proactive herself, going to the king unsummoned and even issuing commands to Mordecai. She wins the day. She goes along with some of the king's more foolish habits for the greater good. She knows that wining and dining the king (rather than straight-forward obstinateness, which was Vashti's strategy) is the most likely way to achieve her goal. The drunken, gluttonous king simply cannot refuse an invitation to yet another banquet. The trap she lays for Haman is superbly executed.

Esther then gains permission to issue another decree. The first decree issued by Haman with the king's full authority cannot be revoked (8:8 - the law of the Medes and the Persians). She and Mordecai therefore have a further irrevocable decree issued allowing the Jews to defend themselves, and they win the day. She has demonstrated tremendous courage in the face of great personal danger and so is the means by which thousands are saved.

WHERE IS GOD?

The Hebrew text (the basis of the Protestant versions) does not mention God. Yet there is no doubt that God's hand is in the course of events. The wise Mordecai recognises that Esther's coming to the throne has a purpose. Yet he also sees that God's purposes are not dependent on any one person doing God's will. He tells her, 'If you persist in remaining silent at such a time, relief and deliverance will come to the Jews from another place, but both you and the house of your father will perish. Who knows? Perhaps you have come to the throne for just such a time as this' (4:14).

In times of pogroms and persecutions, Jews over the centuries have taken comfort in the story, be it in the time of Antiochus Epiphanes (second century BC), during the twelfth century massacres in Europe or the twentieth century holocaust under



racism /ˈreɪzɪzəm/ n. 1. the belief that human races have distinctive characteristics which determine their respective cultures, usu. involving the idea that one's own race is superior and has the right to rule or dominate others. 2. offensive or aggressive behaviour to members of another race stemming from such a belief. 3. a policy or system of government and society based upon it. *racist*, n., adj.

the Nazis. The story of Esther is celebrated annually in the feast of Purim, when Jewish children take great delight in hissing and booing Haman (and, by implication, every other oppressor).

I well recall an Aboriginal preacher relishing the retelling of the story, finding in it a parallel for his people's own harsh and oppressive treatment under the government of the time.

To the rest of us, it is a salutary reminder that, as Mary's song of praise tells us, God 'has shown strength with his arm; he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts. He has brought down the powerful from their thrones, and lifted up the lowly; he has filled the hungry with good things, and sent the rich away empty' (Luke 1:51-53).

It is easy to identify with the courageous and noble characters in the story, Esther and Mordecai. But then we are reminded that Australia massacred its own Indigenous people until the 1930s, had a 'white Australia' policy until not so long ago, took children from their Aboriginal mothers until the 1970s and locks up those people in hot and remote detention centres who, at enormous risk, have escaped intolerable conditions in their own countries.

Perhaps we would be more honest if we did not make facile assertions about "not being racist", but recognised that there is a bit of Haman in us all.

Rev. Dr Robert Bos
National Director, Theology and Discipleship,
Uniting Church in Australia.

THE COVENANT BETWEEN THE UNITING ABORIGINAL AND ISLANDER CHRISTIAN CONGRESS AND THE UNITING CHURCH IN AUSTRALIA

**entered into at the Seventh National
Assembly of the Uniting Church, 1994**

COVENANTING STATEMENT

Covenanting Statement read by the President of the Uniting Church Assembly to the Chairperson, the Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress.

We meet in the presence of God who through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ has reconciled us to God and to one another in the power of the Holy Spirit. Our unity 'transcends cultural, economic, national and racial boundaries' (Basis of Union, Paragraph 2). In this sharing of bread and wine we recall God's gracious covenant with us and the whole creation, and anticipate the joyful celebration of the fulfilment of God's rule of love and justice among us. In the meantime, as people who share in this covenant, we are called to carry out faithfully Christ's command to love one another and to order our life in the church in truth and justice. We who are non-Aboriginal members of the Seventh Assembly, representing all members of the Church, make this covenanting statement.

Long before my people came to this land your people were here. You were nurtured by your traditions, by the land and by the Mystery that surrounds us all and binds all creation together.

My people did not hear you when you shared your understanding and your Dreaming. In our zeal to share with you the Good News of Jesus Christ, we were closed to your spirituality and your wisdom.



racism /ˈreɪzɪzəm/, n. 1. the belief that human races have distinctive characteristics which determine their respective cultures, usu. involving the idea that one's own race is superior and has the right to rule or dominate others. 2. offensive or aggressive behaviour to members of another race stemming from such a belief. 3. a policy or system of government and society based upon it. *racist*, n., adj.

In recent years we non-Aboriginal members of the Uniting Church in Australia have had the privilege of journeying with the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress and with other Aboriginal people. We have become more aware of the sad impact that in earlier times the church and our culture had on your people.

So on the one hand, we give thanks with you for those of our people who have lived among your people bearing faithful witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ which brings hope and liberation to all. We give thanks to God who has empowered and encouraged your people to stand firm and exercise moral leadership throughout these two centuries.

But on the other hand, we who are non-Aboriginal members of our church grieve with you, our Aboriginal and Islander brothers and sisters. We grieve that the way in which our people often brought the Gospel to your people belittled and harmed much of your culture and confused the Gospel with Western ways. As a result you and we are the poorer and the image of God in us all is twisted and blurred, and we are not what God meant us to be.

We lament that our people took your land from you as if it were land belonging to nobody, and often responded with great violence to the resistance of your people; our people took from you your means of livelihood, and desecrated many sacred places. Our justice system discriminated against you, and the high incarceration rate of your people and the number of black deaths in custody show that the denial of justice continues today.

Your people were prevented from caring for this land as you believe God required

of you, and our failure to care for the land appropriately has brought many problems for all of us.

We regret that our churches cooperated with governments in implementing racist and paternalistic policies. By providing foster homes for Aboriginal children, our churches in reality lent their support to the government practice of taking children from their mothers and families, causing great suffering and loss of cultural identity. Our churches cooperated with governments in moving people away from their land and resettling them in other places without their agreement.

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

In 1988, the Heads of Churches called for a secure land base for dispossessed Aboriginal people, an assured place in the political process for Indigenous people and an openness to get to know one another and learn from each other's culture and values. We commit ourselves to those objectives.

We rejoice in the promotion of understanding and commitment to change engendered by the Reconciliation Process and the High Court's native title decision and subsequent Commonwealth legislation. In the words of the International Year of the World's Indigenous Peoples, these changes presage: 'A New Partnership'.

We recognise, as was declared in the Assembly's 1988 Statement to the Nation, that the Australian people and this church continue to benefit from the injustices done



to your people over the past two centuries. We believe it is right for the Uniting Church to make reparations to you for land taken from your people and used by the churches which became part of this church.

The Church has already made transfers of property to Aboriginal people in recognition of our history. At this meeting the Assembly will determine its response to the further specific request from the Congress for the transfer of a proportion of the Church's assets to the Congress as reparation and as a means of supporting the Congress in its mission and service programs.

In 1988 you invited us non-Aboriginal members of this church to enter a covenant with the members of the Congress. We seek to journey together in the true spirit of Christ as we discover what it means to be bound to one another in a covenant. Christ has bound us each to himself, giving himself for us, and he has bound us to each other with his commandment 'Love one another as I have loved you'.

It is our desire to work in solidarity with the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress for the advancement of God's kingdom of justice and righteousness in this land, and reaffirm the commitment made at the 1985 Assembly to do so. We want to bring discrimination to an end, so that your people are no longer gaoled in disproportionate numbers, and so that equal housing, health, education and employment opportunities are available for your people as for ours. To that end we commit ourselves to work with you towards national and state policy changes. We commit ourselves to build understanding between your people and ours in every locality, and to build relationships which

respect the right of your people to self determination in the church and in the wider society.

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

I pray that this covenant will unite us all in a multi-racial bond of fellowship which will be a witness to God's love for us all and a constant challenge to the continuing racism which oppresses you and separates us in this land. I pray that it will thus help us all to move towards a united Australia which respects this land in which we live, values the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander heritage and provides justice and equity for all.

The Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Congress response to the Covenanting Statement is available at: <http://www.covenanting.unitinged.org.au/>



REMEMBERING THE JOURNEY WE'VE BEEN ON

This is an edited extract from the Confronting Racism Facilitator's Manual 2002, developed by Multicultural Ministry for the Confronting Racism Workshop Program

The Uniting Church since its inception has been involved in ministry in ways that affirm the dignity of all people, advocating for social justice and committed to combating racism and working towards an inclusive vision for Australia. At the inaugural Assembly in 1977 the Statement to the Nation included the words

We affirm our eagerness to uphold basic Christian values and principles, such as the importance of every human being, the need for integrity in public life, the proclamation of truth and justice, the rights for each citizen to participate in decision-making in the community, religious liberty and personal dignity, and a concern for the welfare of the whole human race. We pledge ourselves to seek the correction of injustices wherever they occur. We will work for the eradication of poverty and racism within our society and beyond...

In the mid 1980s the Uniting Church then Commission for World Mission produced a study guide entitled Justice and Love for all in Australia: How can the UCA Handle Issues of Racism, Land rights, Migration and Right Wing Opposition as Christians. The document was specifically responding to heated public debates on Land Rights and Asian migration. It is worthwhile reminding ourselves of the position in that document that called members of the Uniting Church to actively work against racism.

What sort of an Australia do we seek? What kind of world? It is a vision consistent with this vision of the Kingdom - a diversity of cultures and languages; justice and righteousness between them; love that gives cohesion and unity; celebration and joy in the diversity; affirmation of different lifestyles and no ghettos. The Uniting Church affirms with Christians of many nations that God is creator of all things; that the human race is one; that racism is a sin, is demonic and heretical; and that in combating racism we share in God's redemptive work, and personal and communal repentance.

A key aspect of our identity as the Uniting Church has been our commitment to stand alongside indigenous people, recognising that racism has deeply scarred relationships in this land. This has involved us in a journey of covenanting with the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress.

The journey to walk together as brothers and sisters, is an ongoing one. The call today is for a deepening commitment.

The vision of building a church based on justice and respect has also led the church to make clear its commitment to embracing cultural diversity. In 1985 The UCA declared "We are a multicultural church". We have been involved in ministry alongside migrants and refugees and spoken out on behalf of asylum seekers.

Australia is not only a multicultural society it is also a multi-faith society and in recent years we have recognised how important it is to build relationships with other faith communities. At times this has meant us speaking up for the rights of religious minorities in Australia.

As the people of God we pray that God will constantly renew and correct the church through the gift of the Spirit (Basis of Union paragraphs 3 and 18). On the way to the promised goal we meet each other and learn to embrace one another. This means racial superiority, a failure to understand other cultures and exclusiveness must not have a place in the life of the Uniting church.¹ Our diversity is not a problem to be solved, but a gift and a blessing.

As we reflect on the journey we have made there have been significant ways the Uniting Church has sought to live as a community that celebrates the rich diversity of God's creation. In different ways we have been seeking to live out the Gospel's call to transcend cultural and other barriers. This struggle continues.

In March 2000 Assembly Standing Committee resolved that courses on race and culture be developed for leaders in Presbyteries, Synod and Assembly. The result was 'Confronting Racism', a cross-cultural educational program developed by the NSW Synod's Board of Mission and Assembly Multicultural Ministry, in collaboration with other Assembly agencies. This resource is offered as part of the ongoing journey to build communities of justice and reconciliation.

¹The Vision of a Multicultural Church, 1997, page 21



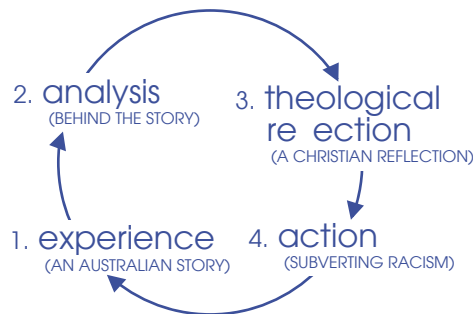
action and reflection kit

how to use this kit

subvert /səb'vɜ:t/, v.t. 1. to overthrow (something established or existing). 2. to cause the downfall, ruin, or destruction of. 3. to undermine the principles of; corrupt. [ME, from L. *subvertere*] – **subversion** /səb'vɜ:ʒən/, n. – **subverter**, n.

We are called today to a deeper commitment to combat the sin of racism in our land and beyond. This ecumenical resource is designed for congregations preparing for Social Justice Sunday. It can also be a useful educational resource for study groups to run over three or four sessions to identify the steps we need to take to build bridges of justice, peace and understanding and work with others to subvert racism within the Australian context and beyond. In the context of small group discussion dialogue enables each person to learn from others so that she/he can change and grow. If possible, bring people from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds to engage in dialogue as cross-cultural conversation can bring about constructive change in race relations within the church and our communities. The 'Pastoral Cycle' model (also known as the Action/Reflection model) is a method of doing theology that has guided the ecumenical team who has put this material together.

The diagram below describes this model:



SESSION 1

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the small group is to reflect on racism using the resources prepared in the Social Justice kit and also through sharing our own personal stories and perspectives. It is not easy to talk about this subject so we appreciate people's willingness to commit themselves to a group learning process.



Agree on ground rules to guide group sessions and how members relate to each other.¹

WARM UP EXERCISE

Go around the circle each sharing their name and what it means to them. Use the invitational model where each person, after sharing, invites another person in the group to speak.

GROUP DISCUSSION

What is racism? Refer to the section **All About Racism**

What are some ways racism has impacted our lives?

USING THE SOCIAL JUSTICE SUNDAY RESOURCES

The Leader selects two of the stories in the kit as the focus of group discussions. For example, in Session 1 you could focus on Black and White and Sticks and Stone.

After hearing the story, read the notes **Behind the Story** which offer an analysis. What additional comments would you want to add?

The group is then invited to do some biblical and theological reflection on the story.

From this story, what reinforces gospel values and what destroys these values?

How does our Christian faith relate to the experience that has been described?

¹ You might, for example, agree to attend each of the 4 sessions; to speak your mind freely but not monopolise the conversation; to value each other's experience and listen to one another (giving each person full attention as they speak); to respect each person's journey and each person's place on that journey even when it differs from our own; you may disagree but you will not undermine or attack one another; you will keep confidential what is said in trust to the group; you will speak only for yourselves and not attempt to speak for or answer for any other person or group.



Are there biblical or theological insights that could be related to this situation?

(The leader may draw on the resources in **A Christian Reflection**)

The final part of the process is to look at what **actions** could make a difference.

What actions could be taken in the situation that could subvert racism?

SESSION 2

WARM UP EXERCISE

Share how you would describe yourself in terms of cultural identity.

Name one or more advantage of having this identity.

Name one issue you've faced by having this identity.

After each person has shared they invite someone else in the group to speak.

Follow the same process as the first session looking at the stories: A Level Playing Field and Fear and Loathing in Australia.

SESSION 3

WARM UP EXERCISE

When did you first become aware of someone who was culturally different from yourself?

How often do you now come in contact with people of different ethnic backgrounds?

Under what circumstances? How would you describe these interactions?

Look at the story International Relations and follow the same process of reflection and action steps.

Close the evening with prayer naming places in the world where there is ethnic conflict and violence.

SESSION 4

This final session is an opportunity to reflect on what you have gained over the previous sessions and think about the actions you wish to take individually and as a group.

THINKING ABOUT OUR COMMUNITY:

Where is racism evident in your local community and what actions could you take to subvert racism?

THINKING ABOUT OUR CONGREGATIONS:

How inclusive is our congregation of people who are culturally diverse? What changes are needed?

Write up, first individually and then as a group, the steps you can take to subvert racism in your communities.

Your group may be able to contribute what you have learnt in a Sunday service or be involved in planning the Social Justice Sunday order of service in your congregation.

Close by reading your steps and using the worship resources in the kit.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR A RACIALLY JUST SOCIETY

The journey to walk together as brothers and sisters is an ongoing one.

The call today is for a deepening commitment to combat the sin of racism in our land and beyond.

All people are created in the image of God, and have inherent dignity and inalienable human rights.

All people are equal, but not all people are the same. Difference and diversity are gifts from God to be nourished and cherished.



WHAT IS RACISM?

Racism is primarily about power. It is about one racial group using its power to maintain cultural, economic, political and social power over another, and to denigrate, discriminate against or destroy that other group.

Racism may be personal or structural. Personal racism is our individual attitudes and actions towards people who we view as different. Structural racism is the racism that is built into the policies and processes of our nation. It affects the way public policy works in Australia and it effects our relationships with other nations and peoples.

Personal racism is found in our values, assumptions, attitudes, words, and behaviours.

Structural racism is contained in the values, presumptions, structures, and processes of social, economic, cultural, and political institutions.

These two forms of racism overlap. Public policy is shaped not only by government, but by the

electorate. The personal racism of Australians can affect our nation as a whole, as well as people beyond the borders of Australia. Structural racism is intertwined with ethnic, cultural and religious discrimination.

In post-1788 Australia, racism has been prevalent and even foundational. Land, sea and waters were taken from the Indigenous peoples of Australia through a process of dispossession based on the racist myth of *terra nullius*. The 'White Australia' policy was a key national policy for the vast majority

racism /'reɪsɪzəm/, n. 1. distinctive characteristic of cultures, usu. involving a sense of superiority and hostility towards others. 2. offensive or hostile attitude or system of government based on racial prejudice. – racist, n., adj.

DEFINITIONS

Racism is an ideology that gives expression to myths about other racial and ethnic groups, that devalues and renders inferior those groups, that reflects and is perpetuated by deeply rooted historical, social cultural and power inequalities in society. (Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission)

Another definition is RACISM = RACIAL PREJUDICE + POWER + PRIVILEGE

Institutional Racism: The collective failure of institutions whereby people because of their colour, culture or ethnic origin experience discrimination and disadvantage. It can be seen or detected in processes, attitudes or behaviour which amounts to discrimination through unwitting prejudice, ignorance, thoughtlessness and racist stereotyping which disadvantages minority ethnic people. The dominant group has established and maintains the institutions and is able to insist that others conform. It is based on the assumption that the racially dominant group is superior to the others.

Individual racism: When an individual makes a negative judgement about someone based only on the colour of their skin or ethnicity.

Prejudice: A set of negative beliefs, generalised about a whole group of people.

Discrimination: When individuals or groups act upon a prejudice by using personal power to deny someone access to services, goods or opportunities.

Ethnocentrism: The belief in the inherent superiority of one's own group and culture accompanied by a feeling of contempt for other groups and cultures.

Xenophobia: Fear of strangers



of this nation's history. Racism is still prevalent – systemically and through discriminatory attitudes and practices – in today's Australia.

Signs of individual racism in Australia include:

- name-calling and racial slurs used in sport and in social settings;
- racially identified gangs and vandalism of property identifiable with religious or cultural groups;
- comments that Muslim women shouldn't wear religious dress in case they conceal weapons.

Racism can be expressed in many ways including:

- abusive, offensive, or inappropriate language;
- discriminatory treatment and exclusion;
- assumptions, stereotypes, or dislike of someone on the basis of their accent, language, skin-colour, origin, culture, beliefs, religion etc.

Signs of structural racism in Australia include:

- the continuing belief in *terra nullius* (that before white settlement the land was empty or belonged to no one) denying land, compensation for theft, or negotiation of treaties with its owners;
- failure to recognise Aboriginal rights and the steps backward in Government policy from self-determination to self-management and from reconciliation to 'practical reconciliation';
- the attitude that we will look after ourselves, as Australians, even if that harms other people, including valuing the lives of Australians above the lives of other people;
- double standards regarding international law and human rights – Australia will pressure other countries to uphold international human rights law and other international agreements but chooses to ignore them when it does not suit us;
- an assumption that every other nation or cultural group should have the same economic and social agenda as us.

Racism often arises where there is ignorance (misunderstanding), fear, poverty/unemployment (also fear of deprivation), or as a result of political opportunism (laying blame on specific people or

groups for societies problems or difficulties).

Racism fosters fear, resentment and anger, undermining community relationships and fuelling war, human rights abuses and inequality.

Racism has been a powerful force in modern societies, but the word 'race', itself, is misleading. It is derived from a belief that humans are divided into sub-species. Nowadays, when people talk about racism they are often talking about discrimination based on cultures, ethnicity, skin-colour, nations, regions, and religions rather than a sub-species!

Some racism is direct and outwardly offensive, but many people are racist without the intent of being harmful to other people. Often, this is the result of a tendency to view the world in terms of a person's own culture, experience, or side of the globe.

For a racially just nation and world, this needs to be balanced by consideration of others, respect for differing opinions, a willingness to listen to the experiences and stories of others, and a desire to speak and act in ways that promote harmony and that respect the inherent dignity of all people.

RACISM DERIVES FROM FEAR

Racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance have not gone away. We recognise that they persist in the new century and that their persistence is rooted in fear: fear of what is different, fear of the other, fear of the loss of personal security. And while we recognise that human fear is itself ineradicable, we maintain that its consequences are not...Instead of allowing diversity of race and culture to become a limiting factor in human exchange and development we must refocus our understanding, discern in such diversity the potential for mutual enrichment, and realise that it is in the interchange between great traditions of human spirituality that offers the best prospect for the human spirit itself. For too long such diversity has been treated as threat rather than gift. And too often that threat has been expressed in racial contempt and conflict, in exclusion, discrimination and intolerance.

Vision Declaration for the United Nations World Conference Against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance (WCAR), Durban, 2001



CENTRAL TENETS OF CHRISTIANITY AGAINST RACISM

This section has been slightly adapted from 'Confronting Racism: Facilitators Guide', a Uniting Church Multicultural Ministry resource. Used with permission.

Working to overcome racism and building up human communities of justice and love is an integral part of how the Christian faith proclaims the inclusive love of God. Christians regard racism as a sin. The World Council of Churches has expressed it in this way:

...racism is a sin, not only because it separates us from God and from our fellow human beings; or because it is a blatant denial of the Christian Faith and thus incompatible with the Gospel; or because it is a flagrant violation of human rights. Its sinfulness is not only because it is contrary to Galatians 3:28, in that racism assumes human beings are created unequal before God, or even yet because racism is a denial of basic justice and human dignity. Racism is primarily a sin because it destroys the very source of humanity – the image of God in humankind.¹

All human beings are created by God in the image and likeness of God

God is creator of all things and we are all part of the wholeness and goodness of God's creation, connected to one another. The human race is one and at the same time we are diverse. Our diversity is a gift from God. To discriminate is to deny the creatorship of God. (Genesis 1: 26, 10: 32)

Care for the stranger

Israel was required to exercise justice and compassion. God comes to us often in the form of 'divine stranger'. We are called to extend the hospitality of God to one another. (Exodus 22: 21, 23:9; Leviticus 19: 33; Deuteronomy 24: 17-18)

THE HUMAN RIGHTS TRADITION

In the Christian tradition, we believe that all people are created in the image of God and should be treated accordingly. In democratic society this understanding of humanity is found in the knowledge that all people are human and have inalienable rights that must be upheld.

The United Nations Charter is based on the principles of the dignity and equality of all human beings, and all Member States have pledged themselves to take action to promote and encourage universal respect for and observance of human rights.

Racism is an attack on human rights. Racism undermines basic principle of human rights law, including that all members of the human family have inherent dignity and equal and inalienable rights¹, that everyone is entitled to rights and freedoms without distinctions such as those based on race, colour, language, religion, national or social origin², and that all are equal before the law and entitled to protection of the law against any discrimination and against any incitement to discrimination³.

¹Preamble and Article 1, Universal Declaration of Human Rights

²Article 2, Universal Declaration of Human Rights

³Preamble, International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination

God is the God of Exodus, the one who hears, sees and knows the cries of people and who comes to deliver

The history of Israel began when they were an oppressed racial minority and God rescued them (Exodus 3: 7-12). The cry of the Aboriginal people for land justice is like that. In Nathan's parable to David (2 Samuel 12:1-16) we see God's concern for the poor man who was being exploited. Through the course of the Old Testament, God sent prophets and others to remind the people of what God wants for human community 'to do justice, love mercy and walk humbly with our God'.

We have become alienated from God, from one another and from right relationships with the earth

There is a groaning within creation (Romans 8). All around us we can see the evidence of our

¹ Understanding Racism Today: A Dossier, 1999, World Council of Churches



separation from one another and from nature. In the church we name this brokenness and separation as 'sin'. We have sinned by our domination over nature and by living within systems of domination over one another. We are part of systems that benefit some at the expense of others, creating inequality, suffering, and injustice.

Jesus broke down the barriers of ethnicity, class, gender and age

Jesus lived out what it means to be fully human. Jesus shows us what it means to live with one another as God intended in creation. He ate and sat with those his society named as outcasts. He calls us to welcome the stranger and the child; to cross the barriers that society and religions create; to not allow fear to determine relationships.

In Christ we are a new creation, we are reconciled to God and one another

In the New Testament God is said to have commenced a new creation with Jesus Christ, the old divisions are broken down and a new unity is created. To practise racism, therefore, is to deny the efficacy of the salvation wrought in Jesus Christ. It is to say that nothing has changed, we are still not reconciled, there is no new humanity (1 Corinthians 15, Ephesians 2: 11-19). In Jesus new relationships are possible, learning trust and love and forgiveness rather than fear, suspicion and enmity. The risen Christ moves us to open locked doors to share the good news. Jesus leads us to continue his work of breaking down barriers.

The church is called to witness to the values of God's kingdom

The kingdom values of justice and love call us to respect the diversity of cultures and languages; ensure justice for all; celebrate diversity and work for unity and reconciliation. Our differences can be seen not as a problem but as a gift and part of God's good creation.

'When one part suffers, all suffer'

In I Corinthians 12 Paul spoke of the interdependence of the body of Christ. When the human body is out of joint, as in a dislocated shoulder, there is great pain. When we become disconnected from one another as members of God's human family, there is fear, pain, brokenness and isolation. To practice racism is to break the unity of the Body of Christ, to fracture the Church. It is to deny the doctrine of the Church as the Body of Christ.

God has sent the gift of the Spirit to enable us to celebrate our diversity

The first experience of the Church began with the experience of diversity (Acts 2:1-13). As people of the Pentecost we are to build cross-cultural communities of justice, reconciliation, respect and love. Mission then and now is set in a multi-ethnic, multi-cultural community and the Spirit enables us to cross the barriers of ethnicity and language. The Spirit's gift enables us to celebrate our diversity and to experience oneness. With the Spirit's help we step into newness of life, build communities of justice, reconciliation, respect and love.

Diversity is a gift from God

The Book of Revelation (7:9-12) offers a vision of an innumerable multitude of every nation, tribe, race and language each speaking in their own language.

AS CHRISTIANS WE BELIEVE THAT THERE IS ONLY ONE HUMAN RACE AND OUR DIVERSITY IS A GIFT FROM GOD.



AN AUSTRALIAN STORY

I am the sixth generation to Undarningy, a Yorta Yorta woman who was present at the time of colonisation of our territory by the English in the early 1800s. Since that time until today, our people have struggled to survive the attempt at genocide by all the instruments of oppression made possible by the coloniser, men who held a self-righteous, ethnocentric, possessive and controlled view of the world. The suppression of Yorta Yorta people occurred by way of massacres, poisoned water holes, introduced diseases, dispersal, the abduction and systematic rape and torture of women and children. These and many more acts of violence led to the great land theft by the British. This theft is today entrenched within Australian law...

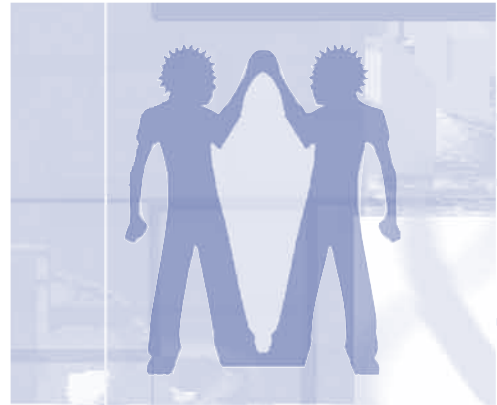
What makes the life of my people a special case is the result of the Yorta Yorta Native Title Application in which a single Judge to the Federal Court of Australia, assessing evidence from 56 Indigenous witnesses out of a total of 250 witnesses who were represented by 5000 respondents and which produced 10,000 pages of transcript and took fourteen months of court time, made a ruling on the 18th December, 1998 that the:

Evidence does not support a finding that the descendants of the original inhabitants of the claimed land have occupied the land in the relevant sense since 1788. The tide of history has indeed washed away any real acknowledgement of the traditional laws and any real observance of their traditional customs.

It is ironic that the interpretation of history as told by the Yorta Yorta people, as one of survival resulting from an adaptation to the effects of colonisation should be used as the reasoning for denying our identity and existence...

The Yorta Yorta will continue the struggle for recognition and to be afforded the rights to land and self-determination...There is recognition in many streams of Australian society today that justice, peace and the continuance of humanity lies in recognising, respecting and advancing the rights of the Indigenous or First Peoples. Only by writing a history of a country that is honest, reflective and inclusive can society hope to achieve laws that are made for all and rooted in equality.

Extract from a keynote speech delivered by Monica Morgan, at the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission's National Conference on Racism, Beyond Tolerance, 12-13 March 2002. Used with permission.



BEHIND THE STORY

With the settlement or invasion of the continent and islands we now call Australia, the land and waters were declared *terra nullius* – that is, ‘empty land’ or ‘land belonging to no one’. The doctrine of *terra nullius* meant that questions of Indigenous prior ownership were ignored by our legal system. Until the Mabo Decision in 1992 our legal system determined that questions of sovereignty and possession of land were subject to this understanding of empty land.

The High Court’s Mabo Decision in 1992 declared that the doctrine of *terra nullius* was no longer valid due to the operation of the *Racial Discrimination Act 1975* (RDA). The legal effect of the RDA meant that the law could no longer discriminate on the basis of race. *Terra nullius* is a racially discriminatory doctrine, therefore any decisions based on this idea became invalid.

However, the centuries of *terra nullius* were not washed away by the Mabo Decision. What also emerged from the decision was a notion of ‘native title’ based on English common law principles. Land which had not been taken away before the proclamation of the RDA could therefore be subject to a native title claim. Native title rights remain where there is a ‘continuing connection’ with the land based on the customs and traditions of the particular indigenous group making a claim though it is extinguished by valid grants of land which give exclusive possession - for example, freehold title.

The Yorta Yorta High Court Decision reminded us that, when it comes to native title, *terra nullius* still retains its power. One of the problems with the native title legislation is that Indigenous peoples have to prove a continuing connection to the land in order to prove their claim. As many were forcibly removed from their land, it’s hardly a just system! The ruling made by the judges in the Yorta Yorta decision was that the claim could not be upheld because the observance of traditional customs had

not survived the impact of white settlement - that is, because of dispossession, the connection to land wasn’t continually maintained.

Australia still has a lot to do to correct the sin of *terra nullius*. The idea that Australia was an ‘empty land’ is known to be false, yet *terra nullius* still remains as the basis for our national identity, our governance and legal systems, and the distribution of resources and wealth.

A CHRISTIAN REFLECTION

Our relationship with the liberating God of Exodus and the suffering God of the Gospel demands that we see history and reality from the perspective of the marginalised. The radical solidarity of God, which the scriptural covenants assert through God’s partnership with the slaves in Exodus and Jesus’ solidarity with the marginalised in the Gospels, necessitates a solidarity response by the church.

The churches are therefore called to be in solidarity with the dispossessed of this land.

Our remembering of God’s covenant with us leads to a resonance with the remembering of the victims of colonisation. The liberated slaves of Egypt maintained their sense of identity by defining themselves in opposition to Pharaoh. The prophets reminded the Kings and rulers of Israel that they were once slaves seeking liberation and therefore not to act without justice and copy the ways of empire.

The challenge for the church in Australia is to recognise that its remembrance of the Gospel and Christ’s ministry binds it to the struggle of Indigenous people for liberation from the ongoing effects of the colonial myth of *terra nullius*. By participating in this struggle for justice the non-indigenous will also find liberation and the church may find a new resolve for witness and mission.



RAINBOW SPIRIT THEOLOGY

The story of Naboth's vineyard in 1 Kings 21 is often cited by Christian Aboriginal people as a precedent and parallel to what has happened to Aboriginal people in Australia. Ahab, a rich and powerful king, wanted to acquire the vineyard of Naboth, an Israelite peasant. Naboth refused to sell, on the grounds that the vineyard was his ancestral land. He said: 'God forbid that I should sell my ancestral heritage' (verse 3). Jezebel, Ahab's wife, devised a plan: Naboth was executed and Ahab acquired the land.

In a similar way, the powerful Europeans took the lands from us. These lands, too, are our ancestral heritage. They were given to us in trust by God, through our ancestors. Our lands, for which we are responsible, are the lands of the Creator Spirit. They are our lands; it is our responsibility to care for them. The Europeans who took our land are as guilty as Ahab.

The prophet Elijah confronted Ahab with his crimes: murder and dispossession of ancestral lands. We, like Elijah, are called to confront European Australians with their crimes, the crimes of dispossessing indigenous peoples by force and murdering those who resisted.

Now that the land is dispossessed, our people who once cared for our ancestral lands have been deprived of their very reason for being. Our identity as custodians of the lands once given to us by our ancestors has been violated. As one workshop participant said: 'We now feel like strangers in our own land.'

From *Rainbow Spirit Elders, Rainbow Spirit Theology: Towards an Australian Aboriginal Theology*, (1997) Blackburn: Victoria, p. 64

SUBVERTING RACISM

For over 200 years relationships between Indigenous and non-indigenous people in Australia has been based on the dominance and racism of the invaders. For over 200 years dispossession, misunderstanding, prejudice and oppression has divided our peoples. While there have been many occasions where Indigenous people have provided hospitality to non-indigenous people to help in the process of mutual understanding and respect,

non-indigenous attempts, more often than not, have been based on dominance, welfarism and paternalism.

One example of a different approach is that of the Indigenous Hospitality House (IHH) in North Carlton.

Indigenous Hospitality House is a communal house, run by non-Indigenous people, that offers two rooms for Indigenous families who have come from out of town to support a family member in hospital. The house is run by a small group of volunteers as part of their response to Christ.

The philosophy underlying this project is that of mutual respect and acting in partnership. The community seeks to offer hospitality without domination and its members act as volunteers and supporters for the project but the project itself is accountable to the Indigenous community. For the community, it is a question of creating a space for mutual contact, awareness and sharing.

The house has been operating since 2001. In that time, more than 145 Indigenous people have stayed at the house, coming from places like Arnhem Land, Bairnsdale, Mildura, Townsville, Perth, Cummeragunja, Balranald, Halls Gap, Warmambool, and Echuca. The length of stay varies from one night to the recent record-breaking stay of five weeks! Most of the volunteers who run the house live on-site, so the place operates as a home rather than a hostel. Guests are invited to join the evening meal, and to relax and feel at home. The sort of hospitality that is offered aims to provide a feeling of peace and recuperation - guests can sit and chat over a cuppa, or take time out as they feel the need.

The idea for the project began with a Bible study group made up of Uniting Church people. The group started to discuss ways to give back something of the hospitality they had all received



at different times from Indigenous people. One of the group members had read a report by hospital Koori Liaison Workers, which spoke of the absolute scarcity of appropriate accommodation for Indigenous people visiting family in hospital. The group talked with Koori agencies and Koori church groups who have encouraged the development of the project.

A Uniting Church manse was located in Carlton, in close proximity to hospitals. The connections with the Church of All Nations (CAN), a Uniting Church Congregation in Carlton, which owns the property, have developed to the stage where the Indigenous Hospitality House has become a project of CAN mission. This relationship involves one of the CAN elders, who provides support for the volunteer team. Nearly 30 Uniting Church congregations in Victoria support the project in various ways including donations and cooked food, and in return receive a visit from a member of the Indigenous Hospitality House who will share, with permission, some of the stories of triumph and injustice from our Indigenous guests.

The rhythm of the house seems to suit the guests – a few families have returned to stay several times, and they talk about the house as a haven which gives them significant support whilst they deal with the complexities of hospitals and doctors, alongside their concerns about their sick relatives. A recent story is of a young couple who stayed whilst supporting their first baby, born premature at 26 weeks. They found it a great help to be able to come home after a day at the hospital, to have a rest, share dinner with the others at the house, and then be refreshed to return to the hospital in the evening. Having a friendly place with some rudimentary support took a little of the burden off their shoulders.



AN AUSTRALIAN STORY

When our adopted five year old began attending the local small and cosy primary school I thought I would 'sense' any racial taunting that might take place and that I would be able to address it. However, when it happened I was not told. At recess time our little boy was repeatedly called 'ching chong' and other names because of his appearance. This was during his prep year.

His older brother (not adopted) would go and put his arms around him at play-time to reassure him. In later years while playing sport the name-calling intensified, especially when he became a Junior Football Umpire. My child has grown up with continual reminders that he is different, and that being different isn't a good thing.

I knew something was wrong at school but my children never volunteered information, in fact, they kept it hidden from me. Having come from a Southern European background myself and having been on the receiving end of negative comments, innuendoes and body language, I had hoped all this behaviour belonged to the past, that a more enlightened society would have emerged by now!

It's hard to describe how a mother feels when the person they love is being hurt simply because they look different. I still feel angry and frustrated and powerless in the face of such cruelty.

From 'Through the Eyes of the Vilified', Justice and World Mission Unit, Uniting Church Synod of Victoria, 2001, reproduced with permission.

BEHIND THE STORY

This section has been adapted from 'Sticks and Stones - Racial and Religious Vilification', Rev. David Pargeter, Director, Justice and World Mission, Uniting Church Synod of Victoria & Tasmania, with permission.

'Sticks and stones may break my bones but names will never hurt me'. So runs a piece of misguided schoolyard wisdom. Of course, the opposite is true. Words are powerful weapons. Broken bones heal. Psychological abuse can scar for life.

'Name-calling' is designed to hurt; it's intended to cut and bruise more deeply than any stone or stick. Many people have been brought to tears and bullied into submission through fear of being ridiculed or made to feel different. This is especially the experience of the migrant - suffering in silence (mostly) as their accent, or their food, or their name or their place of birth becomes the source of fun in



the brew-room. More tragically, and more obviously, the experience is far worse if you happen to have skin that is not a lighter shade of pink.

Here-in lies the destructive power of vilification: using a person's natural identity as the raw material for abuse; taking what makes someone different and using it against them. Coercion and exclusion of this kind takes many forms but vilification on the basis of race, religion, gender etc, is extremely destructive for individuals and society alike.

Serious incidents of racial (and religious) hatred do happen in Australia. However, news of these incidents is not well publicised and many incidents go unreported, often because victims feel powerless.

- Aboriginal Ministers in the Uniting Church have reported being the victims of racial hate mail.
- A flier was produced in Victoria which insulted Christianity and vilified Aboriginal people by



claiming that the Bible identifies whites as God's chosen race and that Aboriginal people are ungrateful dogs and swine.

- A group of skinheads handed out fliers in front of a Synagogue in Victoria stating that Jews were vermin that spread disease and urging others to 'Clean them out'. One passer-by was a survivor of the Holocaust. When the police were called they responded that it is not illegal to hand out fliers.
- In 1998 a radio announcer in Australia referred to a sporting team as 'all those filthy, dirty Maoris'.

There are many groups propagating racial or religious hatred on the basis of religious belief. Religious communities committed to building the pre-conditions for peace must condemn racial or religious vilification, not make it possible.

A CHRISTIAN REFLECTION

The New Testament book of James goes much farther in its treatment of that most destructive of all weapons - the tongue. The writer likens the tongue to the rudder of a large ship or a small fire that sets a forest ablaze. Listen to this!

the tongue - a restless evil, full of deadly poison. With it we bless the Lord and Father, and with it we curse those who are made in the likeness of God.

The writer goes on to ask, 'Does a spring pour forth from the same opening both fresh and brackish water?' (James 3)

The writings of James have a very practical application. We are urged not to speak evil against one another (James 4: 11). Community relations are important to James and inseparable from the character of our Christian witness.

Anti-vilification legislation supports something that lies at the heart of our faith. Through the ages, in its rhetoric and often through its actions, the church has tried to defend, protect and empower the most vulnerable in society. At this present moment in history, who is more vulnerable than

a minority ethnic group struggling to exist on the fringes of a strange community?

Some groups, including some within the Christian community, have raised concerns about Anti-vilification Legislation. The fear is that such legislation cuts across the right to freely proclaim one's religion. It does nothing of the sort. We need to remember that the right to free speech does not include the right to vilify, or encourage hatred of others based on their race or religion. 'Rights' are always held in balance and tension. Freedom comes with responsibilities, and the right to free speech surely must be balanced with the right of others to live free from vilification on any grounds.

Regretfully, some people exert their right to speak freely to release their venom and vent their fear. Free speech is often the tool of the powerful and dominant. The 'protection' available under this right is used to sow seeds of evil in communities that are ethnically diverse and religiously plural.

Dominant groups that are part of dominating cultures seldom know what it is like to be vilified. They have the power to defend themselves with all the social and legal mechanisms at their disposal. The right to hold and express personal opinions must be respected but it is not immune from limitations placed upon it by other important and equally valid rights.

SUBVERTING RACISM

In Victoria, proposed anti-Vilification legislation sparked off a fear campaign in which the experiences of the victims of racial and religious vilification were largely ignored. People who supported the legislation were subjected to verbal abuse. At the same time, many individuals, church, and community groups spoke out in favour of the proposed legislation. When the Act was passed, the Minister cited this strong community support as the buoy for its introduction.¹ All states in Australia now have vilification legislation in place.

¹ Minister for Multicultural Affairs (Vic), Media Release 26 February 2002: Strong Community Support for new Legislation



AN AUSTRALIAN STORY

He is considered all over the world as one of the most dangerous predators in his profession. Before the Sydney Olympic Games, he was the only Aboriginal male to win an Olympic medal. That was a bronze at the Atlanta Games. At 21, Queensland born Baeden Choppy had already represented the Australian men's hockey team in over 60 internationals, roaming the globe and bringing glory to the country.

Choppy's achievements put him on the list of the hottest talents in men's hockey, not just in Australia, but in the entire hockey playing world. Baeden first took up a hockey stick when he was 3 years old, primarily because both his parents played A Grade hockey. By 11 he was representing Queensland at Junior State level. By 18 he was playing at national level.

'I told myself, and I still do, that if I have the talent I might as well use it, why abuse it? So I decided to get in there and do what's good for me. And thankfully I stuck to reaching my goals,' says the world's most feared hockey forward.

Adapted with permission from *The Aboriginal Independent*, Perth, 1997

BEHIND THE STORY

Australia is regarded, rightly, as a nation which has produced wonderful competitors in numerous sports. Our sporting prowess seems to be out of all proportion to our population. Whether we look at the medal tally at the Olympics or the Commonwealth Games, or our record in cricket, tennis and (even!) soccer, we have great achievements to celebrate.

Many sports provide opportunities for Aboriginal people and migrants to make their mark in a highly visible and public way. Clubs are unlikely to overlook a potential champion because she or he is Aboriginal. Great names come readily to mind – Cathy Freeman, Nova Perris, Evonne Goolagong, Polly Farmer, Michael Long and Eddie Gilbert.

Anyone who follows Australian Rules Football will be familiar with countless names which indicate that migrants have made an enormous contribution to the game. Likewise, Rugby League has its share of players who came from other parts of the world. The same can be said of numerous sports.

But at every level of sport in Australia, it seems that the racism which exists in the wider community, spills over onto the field and into the grandstands.

In sport, as in other fields of human relations, racism relies on treating 'the other' as 'object' rather than knowing the person. It is much more difficult to yell abuse at someone when we know them as a person first, and competitor (or opponent) second. The view from the grandstand makes 'objectification' easy. It becomes racist when we ascribe negative traits to someone because of their ethnicity. An example which comes to mind is commentators describing Evonne Goolagong as 'going walkabout' if she lost a set in a tennis match.

In team sports, players endure racial slurs from both players and spectators. Who would forget Nicky Winmar walking off the footy field raising his shirt and proudly pointing out his Aboriginality to those in the crowd who had been taunting him?

Aboriginal players have had an enormous impact on Australian rules football, but there is more going



a level playing field



on than meets the eye. In 1996, a sports columnist in Western Australia wrote that the coach of the Fremantle Dockers, Gerard Neesham, had broken one of the 'unwritten laws of AFL football' by using more than three Aboriginal players in a match. The columnist pointed to a belief among AFL clubs and coaches that 'too many (Aboriginal players) in a team is too much flair and not enough care'¹. Even though the journalist himself clearly disagreed with such thinking, (Neesham has broken these conventions and has formed a club where "black power" and youth are an integral part of his formula.) the fact that he had raised the issue at all indicates that a racial stereotype was clearly at work, and possibly still is, at this elite level.

Australians play their sport hard, they play to win, and will take any advantage available. This is demonstrated among our top level cricketers, who are known throughout the cricketing world as readily resorting to the tactic of 'sledging' – on field talk ranging from what would be regarded as funny banter through to hard-edged abuse directed at the opposition. This is aimed to distract, to intimidate and to add to the pressure on the field.

Taunting the opposition is a strategy designed to gain the upper hand, but when it relies on racist slurs it is no different to any other form of vilification and should be stamped out.

A level playing field is one on which the measure of every competitor is their skill and their commitment to excellence. In such an atmosphere, racism would be seen for what it is: demeaning for the victims and dehumanising for the perpetrators.

A CHRISTIAN REFLECTION

God is relationship. The relationship of the Trinity refuses all attempts at division or separation into 'one and the others', 'most honoured and less honoured' or 'us and them'. This is to be the model for all human relationships, and we are to honour all people as being of the utmost value as creations of the One Creator God.

Racism is a denial of this truth, because it treats 'the other' as less worthy because of characteristics attributed to their ethnicity. Racism treats the person - the subject - as an object. In God's sight, all people are first person subjects, created by and for love.

The writer of the Epistle of James used the example of the dinner host who relegated someone to a lowly place at the table because their clothes were not considered suitable. The host devalued the person and decided they were unworthy of his attention because of external appearances. God's people, says the writer, are not to exercise judgement by showing deference to some while shunning others.

SUBVERTING RACISM

The Australian Football League (AFL) adopted a code of conduct for players to try to stamp out on-field racial (and religious) vilification in 1995. This has been positively received and appears to be achieving results. In one memorable case, St Kilda player Peter Everitt admitted to racially vilifying Melbourne's Scott Chisholm during a game. As a result of the mediation and conciliation process, Everitt stood himself down from competition for four weeks and took part in counselling sessions to better understand issues facing Aboriginal people.

At a local level, the example of a basketball competition in Perth shows another way forward. An Aboriginal club fielded teams in a range of age groups, starting with primary school age children, through to veterans. At first there was considerable tension in games involving Aboriginal teams. Slowly, things began to change as players came to know each other by name. Then adults playing against each other started to find themselves sitting side by side when watching their children play. Tension levels dropped and friendships formed. Simple, local reconciliation was effected and the basketball courts became a place of meeting, rather than one of continuing separation.

¹ Adrian Barich, "Neesham broke two rules" in *The West Australian*, July 1996



AN AUSTRALIAN STORY

SURE, WE'LL SAVE IRAQIS - IF THEY REMAIN IN IRAQ

AdeleHorin

In the hubbub of war it can be forgotten that the Howard Government has 152 Iraqis locked up in detention centres. And while the Government wages war with its mortal enemy, it subjects a further 4000 Iraqis, found to be genuine refugees, to the miserable and uncertain life of “temporary protection”...

Take Hassan Sabbagh. He has been in detention, first in Woomera, then Villawood, for almost 3 years. You would have to commit a violent crime and have a criminal record to be jailed for such a period. His crime was to flee Iraq and arrive in Australia by boat at the end of 1999. He is 58, a former accountant, who has lost two children and a brother under Saddam. Because of the alleged political activities of his brothers, Sabbagh was detained, interrogated and tortured before he managed to flee to Syria with his family. After Syria started to repatriate Iraqis, he struck out alone for Australia. His application for protection was rejected in 2000 on the grounds he had “effective protection” in Syria. He is a broken man, unable to sleep, suffering depression, easily moved to tears.

As Australians fight to liberate Iraqis on the other side of the world, the Government keeps Sabbagh and the others under lock and key...

Even the 4000 Iraqis who have met the refugee criteria have been treated abominably by the Australian Government. Since John Howard introduced the three-year temporary protection visa in 1999, these Iraqi refugees have lived a half-life... Just in case repatriation might be possible one day, they should not be allowed to get too comfortable...

It seems the Government can't wait to force the Iraqis back into whatever society emerges after the war. The sight of a Prime Minister who moralises on the world stage about Iraq but executes unnecessary cruelties towards the Iraqis in his own backyard is nauseating.

Tyranny, terror and weapons of mass destruction are fine words. But let's not forget Hassan Sabbagh, serving an indeterminate sentence in Australia for the crime of fleeing Saddam Hussein.

This is an edited version of the article which appeared in the *Sydney Morning Herald*, 22 March 2003. Used with permission.



BEHIND THE STORY

Australia went to war on Iraq in 2002-3. This war is now being described as a war of liberation and justified on the grounds that Saddam Hussein ignored international law.

Liberation, however, was not the initial reason for the war, nor the primary motivating force. George W Bush and John Howard made it clear that the main reason was to ensure the safety and security of the citizens of the USA and Australia. To achieve that, our nation was willing to invade Iraq, although Iraq has never attacked or harmed Australia.

We joined with the USA, the nation with by far the greatest number of weapons of mass destruction and the means to deliver them anywhere in the world, to fight a nation that had, at most, only minimal quantities and no effective means of delivering them.

In going to war against Iraq, Australia ignored the United Nations charter and the rule of law. The proper course of action would have been to let inspections take their course, and to ask the Security Council to refer Saddam Hussein to the International Criminal Court, for crimes since July 2002, and to a special international tribunal for his other crimes. Australia also ignored the fact that the USA and the UK, in the 1980s, provided Saddam Hussein with weapons, technology and loans and silenced journalists who drew attention to his human rights abuses at that time.

The churches believe that war is never the way to peace and freedom. The real tests of whether this war was liberative is not the statues that toppled in the first few days of occupation. The tests are several, and they are all about how we treat Iraqis as people.

Do we treat them as well as we would want to be treated, or do we accept whatever is done to them?

Do we treat them as fellow human beings and

citizens of the world, or as people to be sacrificed to our agenda or to be controlled by military might?

Australia's support of a pre-emptive strike on Iraq has undermined the role of the United Nations and international law in a way that puts the whole world at risk. How can we expect other nations to find peaceful resolutions of disputes and non-violent ways to hold rogue governments accountable, when we ourselves rely on war?

If we expect other nations to refrain from using force, when we ourselves use it, we are being racist.

AUSTRALIA, HUMAN RIGHTS AND THE UNITED NATIONS

Australia is critical of the human rights abuses which occur in many other countries. Australian governments often talk as if we have no human rights issues at stake in Australia, and reject criticisms from United Nations bodies. This attitude undermines the authority of the United Nations, and the reporting processes by which nations are held accountable for human rights. Australia's self-righteousness is misplaced. The reports of the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission, and a number of other organisations and inquiries, show that Australia does violate the human rights of many people, especially Indigenous people, people with mental illness or with physical or intellectual disabilities, children in government care, and people of non-English speaking background. In an affluent nation such as Australia, poverty is itself a violation of human rights.

Australia is now well-known for its disregard for the rights of asylum seekers. How can we reconcile our treatment of Iraqi asylum seekers in Australia with our war on the Government of Iraq from which they fled? When the war is justified on humanitarian grounds, the inhuman nature of policies that have seen Iraqi asylum seekers detained or denied the support they require as refugees is exposed.



A CHRISTIAN REFLECTION

Australia is a democracy. We Australian Christians have a responsibility to let God shape our lives and our society. As citizens, we have a responsibility to contribute to Australia being a just and peaceful nation, which respects the human rights of its own people and of all other peoples in the world. The Australian churches are large institutions that have some power and influence. We have a responsibility to ensure that we use that power for the sake of all human beings. It is disturbing that national leaders in Australia, the USA, and the UK have invoked God as part of the justification for their actions. The churches and their members have a responsibility to challenge this misuse of God's name and authority, the misuse of prayer to serve nationalistic ends, and the misuse of religious language to justify war and exploitation of other peoples.

The Christian response is not vengeance, nor is it striking out in fear.

- In the Old Testament, Israel is often challenged as to where it puts its faith. Idolatry is about putting one's faith in objects made by humans rather than in God. We are idolatrous when our faith is in weapons.
- Jesus is a peace-maker himself and blessed all those who are peace-makers. There are times when the question "What would Jesus do?" is worth asking. Do we think that Jesus would support people launching a war, in the name of God, against any poor nation, no matter how belligerent its leader?
- Jesus condemned the Pharisees because they imposed rules on people that they themselves found ways of avoiding themselves (for example, responsibility for parents). Those who claim the right to judge others and to impose supposed 'justice' upon them by forceful means, have a responsibility to live by the same standards that they impose on others.
- God created all human beings. Christ died for all

human beings. All lives, of whatever nation and race, are equally valuable. We cannot consider the lives of people of other races or nations less valuable than the lives of people of our own race or nation.

The Christian faith does not involve putting demands on people of other races, nations and cultures that we do not accept ourselves.

Racial justice is about insisting that our Government acts in a way that treats all human beings as equally valuable and applies the same standards to all nations, including our own nation and our allies.

Racial justice is about recognising when our nation is untrustworthy or belligerent in the eyes of other nations and changing our behaviour when it is wrong. Racial justice is about assuming that we are not always right, and that we do not have the right to have protection or security at the cost of the lives of people of other nations.

SUBVERTING RACISM

Christians take action for change because we have faith that God loves this world and its people, and is always at work for peace with justice. If we work for peace, if we insist on peace-building and human respect, if we support international laws that hold all nations equally accountable for violence and human rights abuses, we work with God.

Be informed by reading widely and listening wisely. Use materials from the NCCA, your own church, and community coalitions in which the churches participate. Discuss the issues with your friends, family members, and members of your local church.

As a group, try answering the questions: did we view the loss of Iraqi lives as a loss as great as that of Australian, or even US lives? if not, did we view them as less than human? could we be violent if we didn't de-humanise others? do all wars involve a form of racism?



subvert /səb'vɜ:t/, v.t. 1. to overthrow (something established or existing). 2. to cause the downfall, ruin, or destruction of. 3. to undermine the principles of; corrupt. [ME, from L. *subvertere*] – subversion /səb'vɜ:ʒən/, n. – subverter, n.

Advocate for changes in Australia's foreign affairs policy. Write to or email your local member of parliament expressing your concern about the effects of racism in Australia on the well-being of people in other countries.

Participate in peaceful protests for peace.

Pray: that peace and justice may be restored; that as we await God's healing of the world, our nation might act with compassion and work to build a just and lasting peace.

WEB RESOURCES

National Council of Churches in Australia

http://www.ncca.org.au/dov/htmls/iraq_response.html

Catholic Bishops - Statements

<http://www.catholic.org.au/media/index.htm>

Anglican statements

Archbishop Peter Carnley http://www.perth.anglican.org/archbishop/media_2003/pressrelease_030320.htm

Discussion paper from the Social Issues Executive, Sydney Diocese <http://www.anglicanmedia.com.au/files/sie/WAR%20PAMPHLET.pdf>

Uniting Church Statements

<http://nat.uca.org.au/unitingjustice/issues/peace/>

World Council of Churches statements

<http://www.wcc-coe.org/wcc/what/international/iraq.html>

WCC member churches statements

<http://www2.wcc-coe.org/iraqstatements.nsf>

Behind the News Bulletin Special Edition 16 March 2003

<http://wcc-coe.org/wcc/behindthenews/text24.html#1>

Decade to Overcome Violence

<http://www2.wcc-coe.org/dov> .

This includes a study booklet, Why violence, why not peace?, a series of four studies for congregations.

National Council of Churches in the USA

<http://www.nccusa.org/iraq/iraqlinks.html>

The Friends Committee on National Legislation, in the USA

<http://www.fcnl.org/issues/int/iraindx.htm> (Iraq) and

http://www.fcnl.org/issues/terror/war_indx.htm (terror)

Lutheran World Federation Discussion paper Armed Intervention to Defend Human Rights June 2000

http://www.lutheranworld.org/What_We_Do/OIAHR/Documentation/

Greek Orthodox (America) Violence and Christian Theology

<http://www.goarch.org/en/ourfaith/articles/>

Romanian Orthodox (America) Bishops' statement on Iraq

http://www.comp-help.com/article.asp?MID=35&Article_ID=1648&Issue_ID=20034

Antiochian Orthodox "Orthodox teaching on war and peace" The Word, June 2003

http://www.antiochian.org/Word_Magazine/

Sojourners <http://www.sojo.net/>



AN AUSTRALIAN STORY

When we were Afghanistan we were condemned because we were Hazaras. I lived in another country we were condemned because we were from Afghanistan. Since September 11 we have been discriminated everywhere I go – because I wear the Hijab. One case is the bus that did not pick me up. This what we are wearing – it is not that someone is forcing us to wear it – we like it – we like to do it from the bottom of our heart and we would like to keep it like this. But what can we do to change the opinion of the people – because the media is against us – they are not going to do anything to change the opinion of the people? What can we do to show we are not terrorists? Boat people is not equal to terrorists. We are also human beings, we are also mothers, we have children, we have the same feelings. So why is it that we are not accepted?

Community consultations, Ethnic Communities Council Qld Ltd, 2002 “Listening to Emerging Voices: Addressing collective needs”, p.48

BEHIND THE STORY

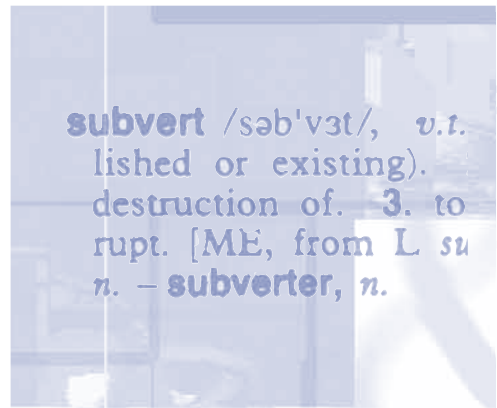
The voice of this Hazara woman tells us about the experience of a Muslim Australian who has felt isolated and scape-goated in our community following recent terrorist events around the world. These words were spoken in July 2002 – following the 11 September attacks in the United States in 2001 but well before the Bali bombing of 12 October 2002.

Australia has come to know a new and confusing reality resulting from terrorism. We have struggled in different ways to come to terms with the tragedy of Bali – the kind of tragedy we have become accustomed to seeing in other parts of the world. We have mourned the loss of innocent lives through prayer, memorial services, and fundraising efforts for victims both in Australia and in Bali.

Other reactions to this event have not been as admirable. It is now becoming clear that the bombing, attributed to the group Jemaah Islamiah, has motivated a dramatic rise in racial hate crimes, abuse, and discrimination against Muslims.

State Police Commissioners around the nation reported a sudden increase in racially motivated attacks following the Bali tragedy. At a meeting with the Prime Minister in December 2002, the Australian Arabic Council (AAC) discussed the impact of Australia’s campaign on terror including the rise in vilification, ASIO raids, and hate crimes, informing the Prime Minister that we have seen a 20-fold increase in reports of vilification and urging him to address the rising demonisation of Australia’s Arabic and Muslim communities. Religious sites have been vandalised and innocent people have been threatened and spat on. Individuals who are vulnerable and identifiable – such as Muslim women wearing the Hijab and Chador – have been a focus of racially motivated verbal and physical abuse.

The kinds of instances of racial hate crime listed above show the victims have been regarded as being ‘other’, a ‘threat’, potentially with ‘terrorist-links’ or even ‘to blame’ for recent terrorist acts. Because of their religion, because of their culture, because of their appearance, identifiable dress and



subvert /səb'vɜ:t/, *v.t.* 1. to overthrow (something established or existing). 2. to cause the downfall, ruin, or destruction of. 3. to undermine the principles of; corrupt. [ME, from L. *subvertere*] – **subversion** /səb'vɜ:ʒən/, *n.* – **subverter**, *n.*



rituals, they have been the easy targets of vilification and attack.

Racial hate crimes are usually directed towards a 'class' of people and the victim is rarely significant to the offender as an individual person. But the victim, his or her individual and cultural identity, as well as the broader multicultural community, suffer terribly as a result of these kinds of attacks.

The expression of racism does not emerge in a vacuum and is not unpredictable. Acts of racial hatred, the expression of racist sentiments, can emerge in the context of wartime nationalism, religious bigotry, economic insecurity and new immigration trends. Media reporting and political campaigning often inflame racially based fears and animosities in the broader community. In responding to the threat of terrorism, some sensationalist media reporting and political strategies for 'national security' and a 'war on terror' have inflamed racist sentiment in the community and have encouraged the racism of those who have acted out their fears or prejudice in the form of verbal or physical abuse.

The more 'extreme' expressions of racism are also fuelled by forms of racism such as discriminatory treatment and exclusion from the social and economic life of the wider community - like the bus that didn't stop for the Hazara women in the story above.

Racial discrimination corrodes the self-respect and humanity of those who discriminate. As racial hate crimes are an explicit form of racism or an 'acting out' of discriminatory attitudes, they can be regarded as a symptom of prejudice and based on a broader sentiment in the community. A society which allows this climate of racial discrimination to exist through fear or intolerance could be seen to condone acts of racial hatred - from the perspective of the perpetrator and in the eye of the beholder.

A SHARED STORY

Australians of Middle Eastern origin and Muslim Australians are, in fact, not alone in their experience of overt racism. Australians of other cultural backgrounds have also been subjected to racial hatred at other times of social upheaval in the life of the nation.

- For example, Chinese immigrants of the late 19th century were increasingly typecast as a serious threat to white Australia as the number of settlers increased.
- While images of the holocaust evoked a strong sympathy among the Australian community at the end of the Second World War, Jewish immigrants faced anti-semitism in some sections of the media and broader community as they settled in this country. Continuing attacks on Jewish people remind us that there has been a stream of anti-semitism that periodically reasserts itself in our society.
- The racism experienced by the Vietnamese community who came to Australia during the 70s and 80s was re-lived with the rise of the One Nation party in the late 1990s resulting in a wave of 'anti-Asian' sentiment among some sections of the community.
- During the allied NATO bombing of Kosovo in the 1990s, members of the Serbian community in Australia who protested against the bombing of their friends and families were variously portrayed as sympathisers of Milosevic and uncommitted to Australian ideals.

Racism towards Australians who 'appear' to be from a Muslim background shamefully merges together a variety of nationalities and cultures, combined with a misrepresentation of the Islamic faith, to target, abuse, and attack.

That the 'terrorism' hysteria and the 'war on terror' have unleashed such enmity towards Arabic and Muslim communities is a sad indictment on this nation's claim to be tolerant, diverse and multicultural.



This is a challenge, not simply to our nation's reputation, but to the dignity of people and the fabric of our society. The vilification of Arab and Muslim Australians has weakened the bonds of human solidarity and fostered suspicion and hostility in our community.

A CHRISTIAN REFLECTION

As believers in a loving God, racial hatred presents us with particular challenges. We believe that all members of the human family are sons and daughters of the Creator and equal in God's eyes. This all-encompassing relationship of humanity is the foundation of our dignity. It is the model of our relationship with our neighbours through life.

We are created in the image and likeness of God. Our human dignity and worth does not depend on the colour of our skin, our customs, our religious beliefs and practices. Because we are all equal in God's sight, it is wrong to discriminate against people on the basis of their race, nationality, culture, or religion. Respect for the person demands a respect for their culture. What makes us different from one another is what enriches us as human beings and deepens our relationships. Our differences reflect the beauty of God.

Racial discrimination against people of a particular background upsets the harmony and balance of what we could call a 'right relationship' with God and with neighbour. Incidences of racial hatred are a particular affront to this relationship. Verbal, emotional or physical abuse is a direct assault upon the human dignity of the victim, the solidarity and the rich diversity of the community and of our Creator.

During his ministry Christ drew the hearts and minds of people to the new reality of the Kingdom of God in this world. The spiritual promise was made real through a personal conversion and the behaviour required of those who sought entry to the Kingdom. Jesus called all whom he encountered

to follow his example to love God and to love one another in a way that overcame prejudices and social restrictions relating to religion, caste, culture or race. His ministry focussed especially on consoling and defending the dignity of those who were marginalised, vilified and attacked.

Against the racial and cultural restrictions of his time, Jesus did not hesitate to break down the barriers and associate with the Samaritan woman and her community (Jn 4:4-42) or to heal the daughter of the Syro-Phoenician woman (Mk 7:24-30).

We too are called today to recognise and celebrate the wonderful diversity of the Australian culture, to strengthen the bonds of the human family, and to stand in solidarity with those who are vilified or marginalised from the mainstream.

SUBVERTING RACISM

A few months after the 1991 Gulf War, I was invited to be part of a Christian-Muslim women's group. We began to meet and share some of our concerns and beliefs. It was a watershed for me, to drink tea and eat biscuits with Muslim women in the shade of the mosque. I discovered what I had believed all the time, but never fully realised. These women, veiled with the headscarf and believing so deeply in the faith of their Muslim tradition, shared my hopes and difficulties. Now I could wave to a Muslim friend and understand some of the pain she must feel to be so misunderstood in her adopted country, Australia.

(Australian Catholic Social Justice Council, 1995, "Tolerance: A Christian Perspective on the International Year of Tolerance, p.13)

In a society divided by the fear of terrorism and increasingly wary of anyone who is 'different', there is a greater potential for racism to thrive and race hate crimes to increase. Because acts of racial



hatred emerge from feelings of fear, intolerance, prejudice, we can address and prevent this kind of violence through education and community initiatives that build solidarity.

Church and community groups have often been at the forefront in welcoming the stranger, opening inter-faith dialogue and celebrating the diversity of cultures of their local neighbourhoods. As individuals and in our church communities we can continue to welcome people of other cultures and faiths. We can create occasions or events that open up conversation and grow acceptance and friendship. We can hold multicultural and inter-faith prayer vigils to celebrate our faiths. We can organise to visit each others sacred places of worship.

The prevention of race hate crimes in our community starts with association and solidarity.

THE ANTIDOTE TO RACISM IS ACQUAINTANCE



FURTHER READING

RECONCILIATION

John Chesterman and Brian Galligan (1997) *Citizens without Rights: Aborigines and Australian citizenship*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Michelle Grattan (ed) (2000) *Reconciliation: essays on Australian reconciliation*, Melbourne: Black Inc

Rosemary Neill (2002) *White Out: how politics is killing black Australia*, Crows Nest: Allen & Unwin

John Rickard and Vince Ross (eds) (2002) *Unfinished Business: text and addresses from the Unfinished Business Conference Melbourne June 2002*, Thornbury: Desbooks

The Little Red, Yellow and Black (and green and blue and white) Book: a short guide to indigenous Australia, (1994) Canberra: Australian Institute for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies/ Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation

INDIGENOUS WRITINGS

Kerry-Reed Gilbert (comp.) (1997) *Message Stick: contemporary Aboriginal writing*, Alice Springs: IAD Books

Ruby Langford (1988) *Don't Take Your Love to Town*, Ringwood: Penguin

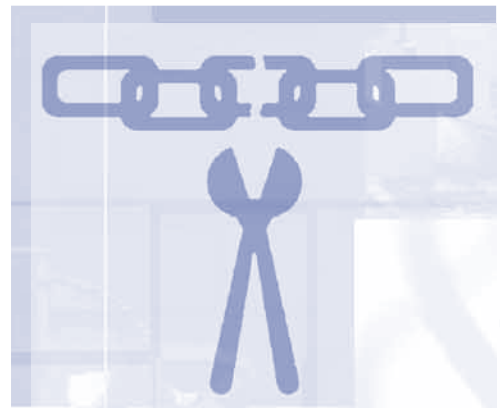
Sally Morgan (2000) *My Place*, Fremantle: Fremantle Arts Centre Press

Doris Pilkington (2002) *Follow the Rabbit Proof Fence*, Brisbane: University of Queensland Press

Leah Purcell (2002) *Black Chicks Talking*, Sydney: Hodder Headline

MULTICULTURALISM

Bill Cope and Mary Kalantzis (2001) *Reconciliation, Multiculturalism, Identities: Difficult Dialogues, Sensible Solutions*, Altona: Common Ground



James Jupp (Ed) (2001) *The Australian People: an encyclopedia of the nation, its people, and their origins*, second edition, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

J. Lack and J. Templeton (1995) *Bold Experiment: a documentary history of Australian immigration since 1945*, Melbourne: Oxford University Press

E. Vasta and S. Castles (1996) *The Teeth Are Smiling: the persistence of racism in multicultural Australia*, St Leonards: Allen & Unwin

MULTICULTURALISM IN THE CHURCH

Sandie Cornish (2002) *The Call to Hospitality: Catholic teaching on refugees*, Sydney: Australian Catholic Social Justice Council

Keith Rowe (2000) *Living with the Neighbour who Is Different: Christian faith in a multi-religious world*, Melbourne: Uniting Church Press

Seongja Yoo-Crowe and Colville Crowe (eds) (2000) *You and I: Our stories*, Sydney: Multicultural Ministry, Uniting Church in Australia

RACISM

Jock Collins, Greg Noble, Scott Poynting, Paul Tabar (2000) *Kebabs, Kids, Cops and Crime: ethnicity and crime in Australia*, Annandale: Pluto Press



Ghassan Hage (2003) *White Nation: fantasies of white supremacy in a multicultural society* (new edition) Annandale: Pluto Press

Peter Kell (2000) *Good Sports: The myth of the fair go in Australian sport*, Annandale: Pluto Press

Belinda McKay (ed) (1999) *Unmasking Whiteness: race relations and reconciliation*, Griffith University: Queensland Studies Centre

Martin Nakata (2001) *Indigenous Peoples, Racism and the United Nations*, Altona: Common Ground

Colin Tatz et al (1998) *AFL's Black Stars*, Port Melbourne: Lothian Books

THEOLOGY

Anne Patel-Gray (1995) "Not yet tiddas" in *Freedom and Entrapment: women thinking theology* edited by Maryanne Confoy, Dorothy Lee & Joan Nowotny. North Blackburn: Dove

The Rainbow Spirit Elders (2000) *The Rainbow Spirit in Creation: a reading of Genesis 1*, trans. Norman Habel, Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press

The Rainbow Spirit Elders (1997) *Rainbow Spirit Theology: towards an Australian Aboriginal theology*. Australia: HarperCollins,

Susan Thistlethwaite (1989) *Sex, Race and God: Christian feminism in black and white*, London: Crossroad Publishing

FOR CHILDREN

Jeanie Adams (1989) *Pigs and Honey* Norwood: Omnibus Books (Australian Children's Book of the Year for Younger Readers)

Phil Cummings & Craig Smith (1995) *Marty and Mei-Ling*, Milsons Point: Random House

Sandy Eisenberg Sasso and Phoebe Stone (1994) *In God's Name*, Woodstock: Jewish Lights Publishing

Phillip Gwynne *Deadly, Unna?* (1998) Ringwood: Penguin

Anita Heiss (2001) *Who Am I? (The Diary of Mary Talence)*, Sydney: Scholastic Press

Sally Morgan (1990) *Sally's Story: my place for younger readers*, Fremantle: Fremantle Arts Centre Press

Sally Morgan & Bronwyn Bancroft (illus) (1996) *Dan's Grandpa*, Fremantle: Fremantle Arts Centre Press

Gillian Rubenstein & Terry Denton (illus) (1996) *Mr Plunkett's Pool*, Milsons Point: Random House (Australian Multicultural Children's Book Award Winner)

Jane Yolen (1992) *Encounter*, Orlando: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich

EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES

Identity, Culture and Conflict (2001) New South Wales Department of Education, Employment and Training (video and Presenter's Guide)

Bringing Them Home Report
Study Guide and Information for Teachers
http://www.hreoc.gov.au/info_for_teachers/rabbit_proof/introduction.html

Racism. No Way.
A project to assist school communities and education systems address racism
<http://www.racismnoway.com.au>

A Fair Go: A Community Kit for Action Against Racism (2002) National NGO Coalition Against Racism http://www.socialjustice.catholic.org.au/Content/issues/community_kit_for_action_against_racism.html

Why Violence? Why Not Peace? A study guide to help individuals and groups in the churches reflect and act in the Decade to Overcome Violence (2002) Geneva: World Council of Churches
<http://www2.wcc-coe.org/dov.nsf>



WEBSITES AND WEB RESOURCES

National Council of Churches in Australia including the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Ecumenical Commission
<http://www.ncca.org.au>

RECONCILIATION

Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission
http://www.hreoc.gov.au/social_justice/index.html

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission
<http://www.atsic.gov.au>

Reconciliation Australia (formerly known as the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation)
<http://www.reconciliation.org.au>

Australian Institute for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies
<http://www.aiatsis.gov.au>

Limits and Possibilities of a Treaty Process in Australia, Seminar Series, Canberra: Australian Institute for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies
http://www.aiatsis.gov.au/rsrch/smnrs/smnr_treaty1.htm
http://www.aiatsis.gov.au/rsrch/smnrs/smnr_treaty2.htm

Bringing Them Home Report
<http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/special/rsjproject/rsjlibrary/hreoc/stolen/>

Australians for Native Title and Reconciliation (ANTaR)
<http://www.antar.org.au>

Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs)
<http://www.atsia.gov.au>

MULTICULTURALISM

Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs
http://www.immi.gov.au/level2/05_multic.htm

Federation of Ethnic Communities' Council
<http://www.fecca.org.au/>

RACISM

Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission
http://www.hreoc.gov.au/racial_discrimination/index.html

Isma - Listen: National consultations on eliminating prejudice against Arab and Muslim Australians
http://www.humanrights.gov.au/racial_discrimination/isma/index.html

World Conference on Racism
<http://www.un.org/WCAR/>

Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace (2001)
The Church and Racism: Contribution to World Conference Against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance
<http://www.petersnet.net/browse/3925.htm>

Racial Respect
<http://www.racialrespect.org.au/home/index.html>

Greek Orthodox Church (America)
An Orthodox reflection on truth and tolerance
<http://www.goarch.org/en/ourfaith/articles/article8075.asp>

Lutheran World Federation
“After Durban: facing the challenges of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance” statement by Dr Ishmale Noko, LSF General Secretary, 9/09/01
http://www.lutheranworld.org/What_We_Do/OIAHR/Documentation/OIAHR-Statement_by_Noko_After_Durban_9-09-2001.pdf



CHURCH CONTACTS

ANGLICAN CHURCH IN AUSTRALIA

The Social Responsibilities Commission
Anglican Province of Western Australia
GPO Box C138
Perth WA 6839
Phone: (08) 9325 7033
email: srcperth@iinet.net.au
<http://members.iinet.net.au/~srcperth/index.html>

National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander
Anglican Council
2 Church St, Mogo, NSW 2536
Phone: 0428 724 598
email: tflopckee@bigpond.com

ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH IN AUSTRALIA

Australian Catholic Social Justice Council
19 MacKenzie Street
North Sydney NSW 2060
Phone: (02) 9956 5811
email: admin@acsjc.org.au
<http://www.socialjustice.catholic.org.au/index.shtml>

National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander
Catholic Council
185 Pirie Street
Adelaide SA 5000
Phone (08) 8223 5244
email: natsicc@ozemail.com.au
<http://www.natsic.org.au>

UNITING CHURCH IN AUSTRALIA

Multicultural Ministry
Uniting Church in Australia National Assembly
PO Box A2266
Sydney South NSW 1235
Phone: (02) 8267 4220
email: multi@nat.uca.org.au
<http://nat.uca.org.au/multi/>

UnitingJustice Australia
Uniting Church in Australia National Assembly
PO Box A2266
Sydney South NSW 1235
Phone: (02) 8267 4220
email: unitingjustice@nat.uca.org.au
<http://nat.uca.org.au/unitingjustice/>

Covenanting
PO Box 1245,
Collingwood, VIC. 3066
Phone: (03) 9416 4262
email: peter.lewis@unitinged.org.au
<http://www.covenanting.unitinged.org.au>

Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress
PO Box 217
Thuringowa Central Q 4817
Phone: (07) 4773 5077
email: uaicc@ozemail.com.au
<http://nat.uca.org.au/uaicc/>

