

Hearts are Burning

Some snapshots...



*‘Were not our hearts burning within us
while he was talking to us on the road?’*

(Luke 24.32)



Hearts are Burning

Aims...

- to help put Indigenous issues back at the centre
- to help mark the anniversary of Pope John Paul's visit to Australia and revisit his historic challenging address
- to celebrate and assess what progress has been made in the almost 20 years since the Pope's visit
- to network and take local soundings across Australia
- to guide future directions and action

Hearts are Burning Speakers



Bishop Jim Leftwich



Graeme Mundine



Bishop Saibo Mabo



Vicki Walker



Dr. Jill Tabart

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Special Input

‘Hope Built on the Dreaming’

(Reflection on DVD)

by Elizabeth Pike

*with special thanks to all the Elders
who shared a welcome to country*



Respondents

Fr. Paul Devitt

Pastor Robert Voigt

Bishop Christopher Prowse

Fr. Colin Griffiths

Rev. Shayne Blackman

Archbishop Francis Carroll

Bishop John Harrower

Ros McMillan

Fr. Gerry Hefferan

Fr. Michael McMillan

Esther Bevan and Leonie Kelly



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Some common themes...

- 1986 Petition (for justice) to the Pope ‘could almost be handed over again today with very little change’
- ‘Pope’s address is an awakening call for all people’
- ‘Racism is on the rise’ everywhere (cf. recent events in Redfern, Palm Island, Port Augusta, Goondiwindi)
- When will resources be returned by the churches?
- Urgent need to (re)connect with younger people
- ‘The mission field has become the mission force’

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Redfern - Community Centre





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Redfern

- What resources are actually put into supporting Indigenous ministries?
- What land has actually be given back?
- Is 'Reconciliation' a word or concept worth using outside of personal relationship with God?
- How do we develop Indigenous theology in Sydney and elsewhere?

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Canberra – Aust. Centre for Christianity & Culture





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Canberra

- Support the Draft UN Declaration on Indigenous Peoples Rights
- celebrate the ‘Alice Springs manifesto’ (Archbishop Carroll)
- Join in the National Day of Healing

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Dubbo – St. Brigid's Church



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Dubbo



- key elements are: *respect*; relationships built over time, and through listening
- blocks include racism (cf. the systematically vandalised picture in St. Brigid's); rigidity of structures (including re. rites and requirements for leadership); dislocation within Aboriginal communities
- Ugara rocks in St. Brigid's symbolise Indigenous life and culture and relationship to land as foundational to altar and community (Father Paul Devitt)

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Adelaide – Reconciliation Chapel





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Adelaide

- ‘Churches have spent too much time trying to preserve their own existence, rather than pursuing their purpose, and have also withdrawn because of criticism and faults of the past’ (Pastor Robert Voigt of the Lutheran Church, SA)
- Land Act retreat being explored by State Government
- ‘difficult to get people involved’ (parish perspective)

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Hobart - Salvation Army Citadel





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Hobart

- get alongside and use your Indigenous church ‘arms’
- celebrate Indigenous days in the calendar
- powerful symbol of being grounded into the land in the consecration service of Anglican Bishop John Harrower
- the time for action is *now!*

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Melbourne – Cardinal Knox Centre





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Melbourne

- Publicise Message Stick and Dreaming at the Heart
- encourage and share Indigenous theologies
- ‘dawn comes when you can see the face and look into the eyes of the other human being’ (Bishop Christopher Prowse)

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Darwin – Nungalingya College & Tiwi Islands





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Darwin

- ‘No Humbug – No Begging’ (Larakia poster):
 - also appropriate for Govt/Ch–Indigenous relations?
- ‘Reconciliation went off with a bang and then collapsed’
- ‘What is stopping the Churches making a difference?’
- ‘as Betty Pike says “fear is at the heart of our nation”’
- ‘there is still a “mission mentality” among some some Church leaders and people’ (Ros McMillan, NTCC)

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Alice Springs – Church of the Ascension (Anglican)





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Alice Springs

- Policies of ‘denial’ and ‘mainstreaming’ are ways of taking away justice and disempowering
- Resurrection of the idea of the ‘undeserving poor’
- Government thinking seems to be: ‘Aboriginal people should be like us, and if they won’t be, they can die in their misery’ (assimilation as well as mainstreaming)
- Patterns of abuse and separation are repeated in each successive generation – ‘lost as well as stolen generations’
- ‘There should be more Fr.Hileys’ (PNG Anglican priest working with youth alongside Catholic counterpart)

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Brisbane – St. Francis College



Yarrabah group- photo courtesy of C.Kitto ABM



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Brisbane

- is the promotion of Harmony (rather than Elimination of Racial Discrimination) Day symptomatic of our problem?
- ‘Murriss taught me ecumenism’ (Fr.Gerry Hefferan)
- overlooked history of Indigenous Christians and their vital contributions to use and teaching of scripture, overcoming poverty and exclusiveness, healing and joyfully receiving the cross and never giving up
- Don’t forget those who struggle(d) and have paid the price – including the high loss in Ministers without adequate support
- Too much ‘dead silence’: Church leaders **MUST** speak up!

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Townsville – St.Teresa Church, Garbutt





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Townsville

- Plant trapped in a pot metaphor (Revd. Shayne Blackman): Church has to help Indigenous people break out
- ‘See what happens when Aboriginal people have the land’: example of Uniting Congress-led community and education development at Thuringowa Central – huge negative press expecting failure, now 200+ employed
- Minister holistically and provide pathways of wellbeing for all
- ‘We are all born to be custodians to one another’

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Perth – Wesley Centre





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Perth

- ‘people only want to go to the edge of problems’
- developing Indigenous pride is vital – helped by knowing and performing culture
- ‘white people need to be made aware of the depth of suffering in these communities’
- 55% of Aborigines are 25 years old or younger
- ‘There are injustices under our noses with which our churches are still complicit’

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Broome – Notre Dame University



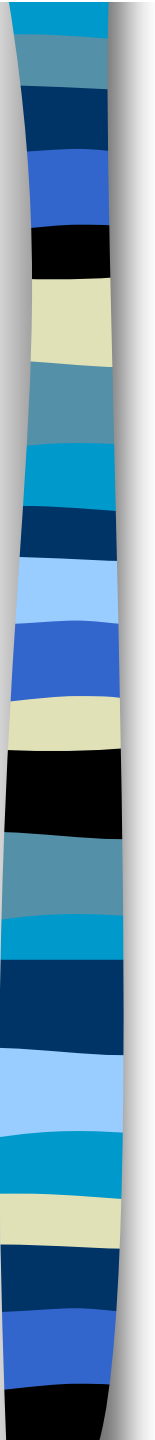
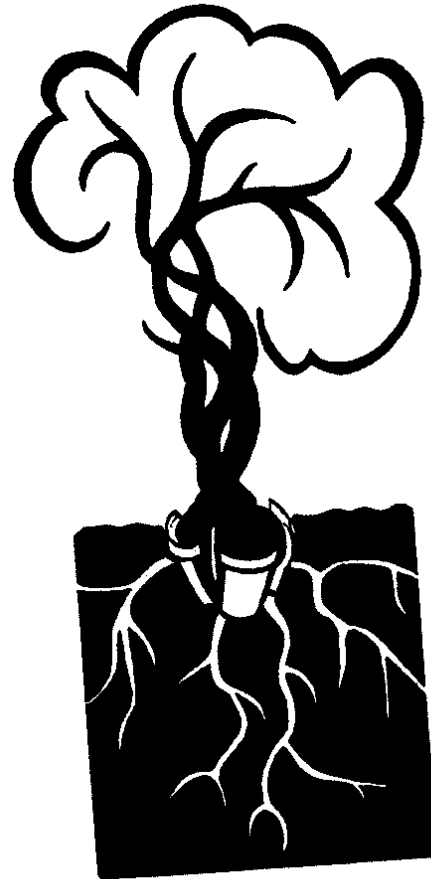


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Broome

- ‘need to keep coming around and keep stirring... for retelling, challenging and renewal’ – ‘nights like this reaffirm’
- ‘only in listening to people and their stories do we learn respect for people and for differences – the biggest need in Australia’
- ‘We don’t challenge each ourselves enough as Christians – leaving it to others, to a sister here, a brother down the road – it is *all* our responsibility’
- Indigenous people have the right to make their own mistakes

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Key recommendations...

- **Visit, be with, and listen to Indigenous Christians**
- Integrated NCCA Focus in 2006 on Indigenous issues
- Follow-up on ‘Continuing the Journey’ recommendations especially *greater Resourcing of Indigenous Ministry and Racism awareness*
- Build up local and State/Territory support networks
- Solidarity with and empowerment of Youth is central
- Reclaim the theological challenge of Reconciliation

*‘We don’t need another Pilgrimage to the Heart,
but we urgently need a Pilgrimage **with** a New Heart’*

