

### WHATS INSIDE



The natural photos used in this edition have been used with generous permission by Rhyse Maughan. Read his article 'Reflecting Creation Through a Camera Lens' on page 13.



#### WELCOME

This edition, contributors from diverse backgrounds offer insights on their relationship with "This Land," and how it has affected their faith and ways of seeing others.



#### **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY**

We start with a raw account from Brooke Prentis of how it feels to be in between two worlds, and a step we can take forward.



#### HOME IS THE LAND OF THE HEART

A painting depicting a map of the Western Desert is a catalyst for Tania Watson to repent of her rejection of this land



#### **HEFTED**

A shepherd in the Lake District inspires Peter Barney to think about those who are invisible within our land.



#### THE JOURNEY TO OPENNESS

For Jon Bergmann, telling the truth about our own social and cultural location is the first step towards embracing openness.



#### THE SOUNDS OF THIS LAND

We chat to Dayle Kinney about how the sounds of the land and heavens are informing her community's worship time.



#### REFLECTING CREATION THROUGH A CAMERA LENS

Rhyse Maughan articulates how he thinks about creation as a landscape photographer.



#### **SACRED SPACE**

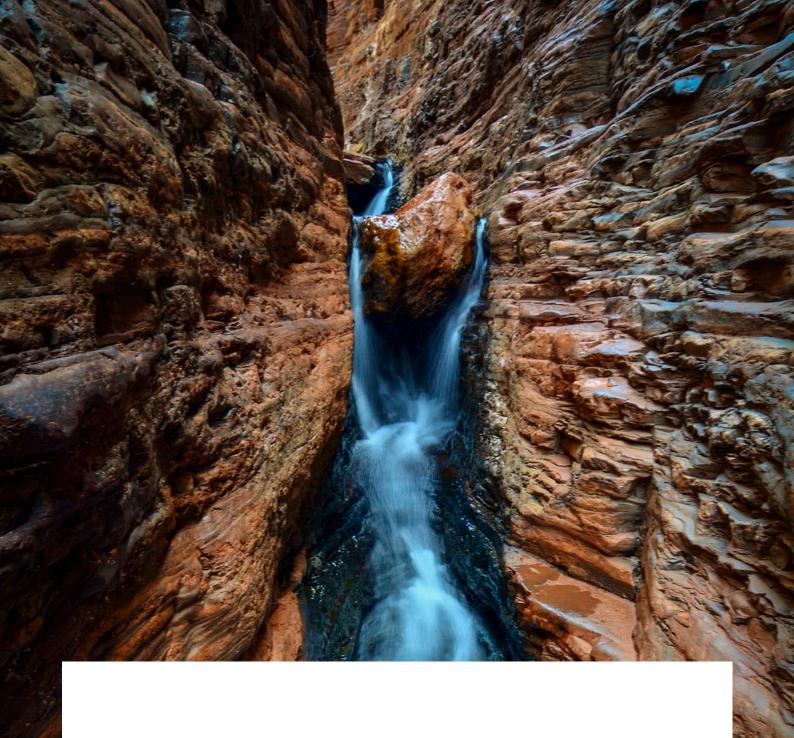
An Anglican minister, a Kimberley Elder and a local Dianella woman all have Brian Stitt thinking about places of encounter.



#### IMPORTANCE OF LAND

Australians Together.org.au collate the thoughts of Indigenous people from across Australia who share about the way they understand and relate to land.





## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY**

Like most Aboriginal people, I find myself in between two worlds.

Belonging to the world's oldest living culture, and a western culture termed "Australian".

At the moment, that sense is even more profound. As a nation, we are in between Reconciliation Week and NAIDOC week. We are also celebrating the Mabo decision 25 years ago that paved the way for native title, and overturned the lie our country had lived of Terra Nullius (land belonging to no one). But now we are hearing the Government arguing for the watering down of Native Title Laws. We also find ourselves in between being encouraged by 300 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leaders gathering at Uluru, and then discouraged by politicians ignoring the Uluru statement, saying the Australian public 'needs something they can agree to'.

The two worlds can make you sick, but most often it makes you tired.

Over 2,000 generations of my peoples, my family, have walked this land. 'Australia' wasn't our word. We had over 300 nations in this "nation" that has only been called Australia since 1901. Aboriginal wasn't our word. My family comes from Waka Waka land. I live on Gubbi Gubbi land. I work on Turrabal land. I find it hard to call myself Australian, because so often Australia does not include me.

Recently, Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull said on the ABC, "(Australians), we're defined by a commitment to a common set of political values and they are... freedom, equality, mutual respect, the rule of law, democracy, a fair go - that's our Australian values." If so, then why are Aboriginal people treated as they are? As author Frank Hardy once said, "If this is The Lucky Country, the Aborigines must be the unluckiest people in the world."

I dream of the day we can build an Australia built on truth, justice, love, and hope. These are what I will spend my life trying to build. As a Christian, truth, justice, love, and hope spring from our Biblical mandate to love; and as an Aboriginal person, from the role given to us by the Creator. We have been speaking of this Creator for over 60,000 years, passed down from generation to generation.

COUNTRY MEANS THE LAND, THE SEAS, THE RIVERS. COUNTRY MEANS THE TREES, THE PLANTS, THE ANIMALS. IT MEANS US. FOR OVER 250 YEARS WE HAVE BEEN TRYING TO TEACH YOU ABOUT THE COUNTRY THAT THE CREATOR TAUGHT US ABOUT. AS UNCLE GRAEME MUNDINE SAYS, "GENESIS 1 IS THE GREATEST ABORIGINAL DREAMING STORY EVER TOLD".

I don't want to be stuck between two worlds. For me this is part of what Reconciliation should be about. Imagine that to engage with Australia means that your world engaged with the Australia I talk about. Where animals that face extinction are valued and protected just as much as a person's life. Where Aboriginal sacred sites are protected instead of being bulldozed. The Australia where God's creation is valued above profits, as we mine minerals that do not replenish. The Australia that values my life as an Aboriginal person and takes action to close the gap.

Imagine that we were a nation that prayed about these things. That loved more than destroyed, and listened more than ignored. A nation where non-Aboriginal and Aboriginal peoples were friends, and shared about how to love this land and all life within it just as our Creator, God, does.

My prayer is that instead of being stuck in the middle we choose Jesus' world – to love, to listen, to share. At Common Grace, we like to give people the tools to take next steps. One tiny step to engage with the world I am talking about is to do an Acknowledgement of Country. In its simplest form, it's what I've done here – acknowledge which land I come from, on which I live, and on which I work. I've also acknowledged those who have gone before me and those to come – the Elders past, present and future.

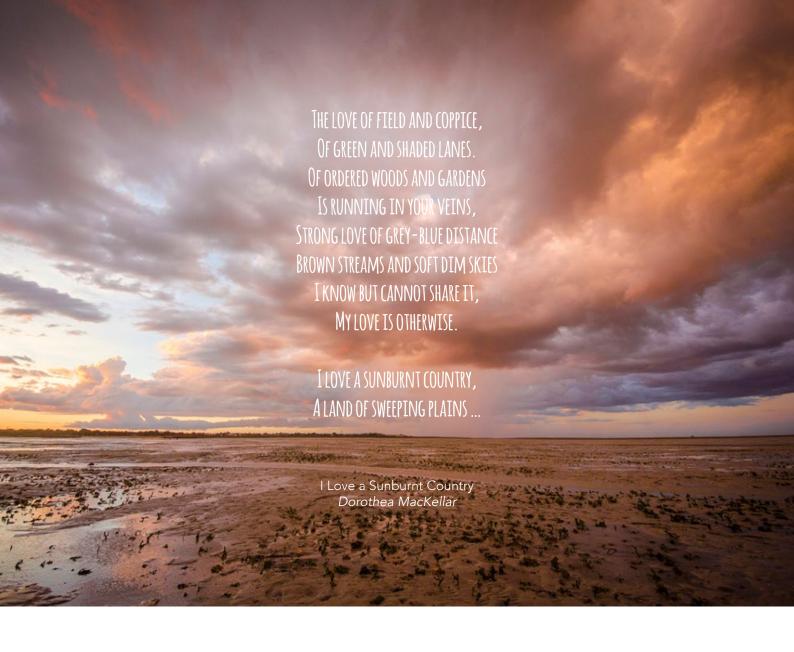
Will you take this first step? Will you ask your friend, pastor, church to take this first step too?



About the Author

**Brooke Prentis** 

Common Grace Find out more at www.commongrace.org.au



## HOME IS THE LAND OF THE HEART

Tania Watson

On the day that I rejected this land, I was six years old standing in the doorway of the laundry. I was watching my mother, sobbing and defeated as she dyed all our snowy white cotton bed sheets a dull, burnt orange. After three days living in subjugation to the red dust storms of the desert, she was done.

That day I made a vow to reject the land of my birth. My longing was for the green and pleasant land of my ancestors: my heart-home, Britain, land of green fields and gently flowing streams. Land where people spoke with a civilized and cultured accent. British culture became my frame of reference through which I navigated life as an exile in this wide brown land that was just not for me.

Bugai Whyoulter is a Martumili artist of the western desert. From birth, she learned to navigate life through walking and singing the song-lines of her ancestors. As an Aboriginal person, her identity, her frame for meaning and spirituality, was defined by the wide brown land.

As a person who rejected this wide brown land it follows that I would not appreciate Aboriginal art. So why did I acquire the Whyoulter piece, (reproduced below)?

I was on a visit to the Martu people with World Vision. We were taken to the stereotypical arts and crafts workshop where you feel the pressure to honour the local people and buy something.

But this raspberry ripple ice-cream map of the Western Desert really got to me: finger marks in paint singing the song of the memory of walking across red and golden sand dunes on Martu land.

When I look at a conventional map of the western desert all I see is stinking hot nothingness. When Martu people think about the land, they see song-lines connecting places of water. Water in the desert! I was totally amazed as I listened to the Martu people talk about their love and care for the land.

On the plane to fly home, I looked out from the window seat at the landscape with different eyes. The Martu people had given me a gift of healed vision. What I had decided as a child was barren and cruel, I could now see as a richly beautiful landscape abundant with life. On that flight, I repented of my rejection of this land. For the first time, I genuinely welcomed my identity as an Australian person. The wide brown land was for me after all.

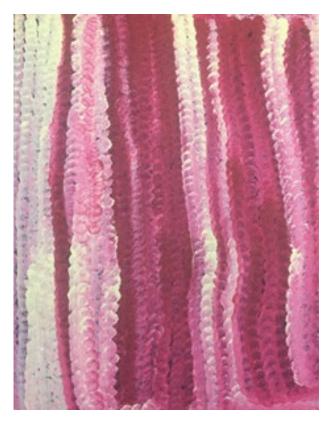
Then the Lord spoke to me out of my act of repentance.

"CAN YOU HEAR MY SPIRIT SINGING MY SONG-LINES OVER THE DRY PLACES OF YOUR HEART? CAN YOU NOT SEE THE LIVING WATER PRESENT IN YOUR SOUL?

CAN YOU HEAR MY SPIRIT SINGING MY SONG-LINES OVER THE DRY PLACES OF THE CHURCHES? WHERE I AM PRESENT, THERE IS LIVING WATER."

Two weeks later when the painting arrived, I saw that there is a base layer of navy blue paint on the canvas. Hidden beneath the rafts of dunes there is a representation of water. Did Bugai Whyoulter paint that intentionally? I have no idea. All I know is that through this piece of art, a blockage in my heart and soul was healed.

I love this sunburnt country, this land of sweeping plains with its rugged mountains ranges and drought and flooding rains. I love the people of this sunburnt country with a passion that is as red hot as the desert sand. I believe that Christ is present, Living Water that is already provided and can be found by dry, rebellious hearts of Australian people.



Bugai Whyoulter (Acrylic on linen)



About the Author

#### **Tania Watson**

Tania Watson is the Executive Minister for Churches of Christ in WA



## HEFTED

#### Peter Barney

When Lake District shepherd James Rebanks' fell backwards in a snowstorm and captured a photo of the sheep he was trying to herd, he didn't realise he was about to start a Twitter frenzy. After uploading the photo, James' account was getting 1,000 new followers every hour.

While there have been shepherds farming in the Lake District for 5,000 years, farming in British popular culture has become virtually invisible. This invisibility of an indigenous community is not unique to England. It is a global concern and goes hand in hand with the destruction of our earth that occurs through pollution of land and sea, change of the earth's climate and loss of flora and fauna.

In 2015 Pope Francis released an encyclical letter: Laudato Si' - on care for our common home. The Pope echoes the concerns of churches, christian communities, philosophers, theologians and scientists from many different cultures. The disfigurement and destruction of God's creation must be named and addressed.

When Rebanks uploaded onto Vine a video of his sheep dog Floss having her puppies it quickly gained thousands of views. "It's tempting to laugh at that" he says. "But I think that really that just tells you that people are desperate, they're absolutely yearning to have contact with things being born and seeing things live and we've become so disconnected from that that there's a hunger for it."

Rebanks has a unique ability to communicate through social media and writing while remaining an indigenous farmer in England. In addition to exploring the invisibility of those who live connected to the land and the global destruction of the land, he has also identified the disconnection that many in our world have from the land.

He sees that the remedy to these challenges lies in being hefted: a dialect word that shepherds in the Lake District use to describe the way sheep hold to a place on their mountains even though there are no fences. Rebanks describes this having taken place over thousands of years, "The sheep belong on that place on the mountain and they take their daughters and sons back, and they teach them that that's the place where they live. And the whole unfenced mountain farming that we do on the common land is based on this idea, this hefted idea."

NOT ONLY ARE THE ANIMALS HEFTED, SO ARE THE INDIGENOUS FARMERS WHO WORK THE LAND, "THE PEOPLE ARE HEFTED AS WELL, SO I THINK YOU END UP WITH A VERY DEEP ATTACHMENT TO PLACE AND I HAVE THAT."

As people of faith we are linked to the metaphors of the shepherd through Jesus' request that his disciple Peter, feed Jesus' sheep. The image of having a church that is a hefted flock seems very biblical. Rather than a people bound by rules and being fenced off for safety, a people who are attached to God through relationship with Jesus and a love for his creation.

Becoming hefted is a process of being-with: a parenting term used to describe the role that our relational presence plays in raising healthy children. We have known for a number of years now that this will trump a behaviour-and-rules based parenting foundation. The story of Mary and Martha informs us that Mary, who took the time to be present with Jesus, chose rightly over Martha, who was busy and distracted.

This gives us a blue print for where people of christian faith need to be in response to disfigurement and destruction of our land. We must be present with those who are invisible within our land such as indigenous Australians, farmers and those who live outside of the urban centres of Australia. They have much to inform us about the destruction that is being

done to God's creation. Our practices can also help us to fight the disconnect that we have from our land. Simple prayers such as saying grace at meal times can remind us that our food and all that sustains us is a gift from God that comes from our land. We can develop our capacity to speak and act on behalf of God's creation: our common home.



About the Author

#### **Peter Barney**

Peter is the COCWA Ministry and Mission Developer. You can find more writing by Peter at www.cocwa.org.au



## THE JOURNEY TO OPENNESS

Jon Bergmann

In scripture, land reveals both the promise and power of God, and provides a sense of stability, security and peace. The importance of the land is just as evident today as it was for the wandering Hebrews, but our modern landscape is increasingly multi-cultural and multi-ethnic.

All over the world people are on the move. Some want to be; others have to be. In the small community I am part of, we have seen an increasing number of people come in whose homeland is not this one. For some, this was their intention, but for most, they are here as a result of war, political instability or persecution. This merging of social and cultural identities forces us as a church to ask: how do we recognise the significance of a person's land in forming their identity, and therefore how do we begin to embrace diversity in an increasingly globalised world?



#### **LOCATING OURSELVES**

A community that seeks to create a place where diversity is not just acknowledged but embraced, has to become truth-tellers. We must commit ourselves to telling the truth about our own social and cultural location, and the impact this formation has had on our perspective. As a straight, white, educated, western male, I am in the majority in almost every room I step in to. I generally make no apology for that, because I had little say in most of it! I am, however, aware that because of who I am, questions of diversity and openness are a challenge, as they represent experiences I am often unfamiliar with, having grown up in the male-dominated west. The way to begin to resolve this is to simply be honest in my acknowledgment of my own social location with its predisposed biases and patterns.

In contrast, the scriptures present us with voices that seem to emerge from the underside of privilege. Theirs are voices of people enslaved to foreign and oppressive empires, displaced from families and cultural homelands. They are people at the mercy of principalities and powers. For many of us, telling the truth about our own location is to realise that it is profoundly different to that of scripture, and we are not to speak, but to listen.

## BECOMING A LISTENING COMMUNITY

Over the last century, various arms of the Christian church have made it their goal to assert views and opinions on the world stage in attempt to validate their faith. This has arguably led to even greater division and exclusive selfdefinition. As a church community however, we have rejected the notion of "standing firm" in open hostility to the world, and instead attempt to sit and listen to the stories around us. The simple act of listening can disarm, and lead you into places where compassion and mercy are more dominant than fear or anger.

The scriptures teach us about the role of the land in locating and constructing a sense of personal and spiritual identity. You only need to understand what a Samaritan was to a Jew to realise the power your birthplace had on forming your perspective of others. Yet those who chose to follow Jesus were invited into a strangely nomadic existence. Not only did Jesus acknowledge that he had no place to call "home" (Matt. 8:20) but he refused to entertain the prejudice that often comes with such ingrained cultural bias (Jn. 4:9-10). He embraced those on the outskirts of society, without fear. So how can we become a community of openness to people of all lands and experiences?

#### **EMBRACING OPENNESS**

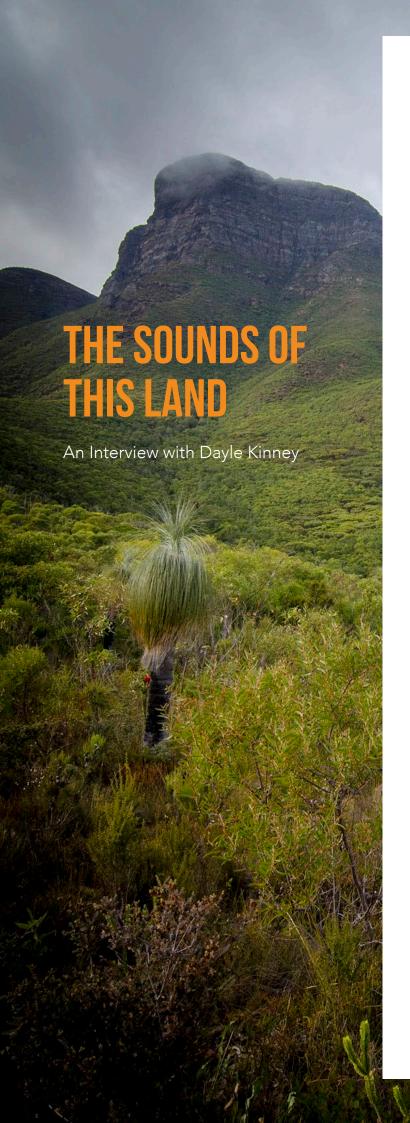
Once we have located ourselves and become true listeners, we are ready to begin the journey towards openness. Many churches today claim to be a place called home: and yet when people who have struggled to find a home come to the door, they find that they are invited in to the house but not allowed at the table with the rest of the family. This is a strange and divisive kind of home. To truly embrace openness we must commit ourselves and our communities to a kind of welcome that anticipates high levels of diversity and difference, that submits to the practice of listening in order to learn, and gives those on the outskirts a place to identify with. As I mentioned before, our community has seen so many people come through the doors who have spent much of their life running away. We cannot replace the land that has been taken from them, but we can still give them a place to belong. A place of honest and open welcome. A place called home.



About the Author

#### Jon Bergmann

Jon Bergmann is one of the Teaching Pastors at Westcity Church, and is the Director of Vocational Education and Training at Vose Seminary.



"Different cultures have different sounds – it is a physical and cultural reality, like say, the sounds of Hawaii - but it is also a spiritual reality" reveals Dayle Kinney.

Pastors Phil and Dayle Kinney began Jesus Central as a new church plant, and they started with singing songs written by other churches, following the usual church worship format. But they felt that while many songs might have been right for the church, the land and the area that they were birthed from, they weren't right for them in the now. They felt the Lord saying that each place has its own song, and began intently listening to what God was releasing from heaven for them.

It has been a two year journey from a structured agenda to a more organic shift, but they have found freedom and liberation. "When we meet together now, we don't sing. We wait. We listen for the sound of that day and that place – we listen to what God is releasing out of heaven" says Dayle.

"The lid has been taken off! The musicians plug in with one microphone, but very much respond to what is coming from heaven, and let the sound out. We sit over it" Dayle shares. She acknowledges that engaging in this way calls for leaving programs and agendas aside, to give room for God to declare what he wants for that time and place.

The group also attempt to see their land and area with spiritual eyes. "Areas and regions have a history which sets a spiritual tone. Sometimes we need to look at what has happened in the past". This information can be used to help release any strongholds and see transformation – declaring and decreeing the land and people in it for God.

"I believe this really is the great southland of the Holy Spirit".



**Dayle Kinney** 

Dayle Kinney, along with her husband Phil, are the Senior Ministers at Jesus Central, a community church that meets in homes after sharing a meal. She has six children. Dayle's heart is to raise people up to be all they can be in God.



# REFLECTING CREATION THROUGH A CAMERA LENS

Rhyse Maughan

As a Christian one of the most common questions I am asked is, "How do you know that God exists if you have never seen Him?". For me, the answer is easy – I have a relationship with the one who created me. And I know this to be true on basis of faith without necessarily having seen God, or being able to understand every aspect of His existence.

But for many people who aren't Christians, this can be quite a difficult question to answer, as faith for them is not a relationship, but simply a belief system.

So my response is often describing a scenario for them. And it goes like this....

"Imagine that you saw an incredible painting once. Bright with so many colours of every kind and woven together on a single piece of canvas. And this painting was the most beautiful, creative thing you ever saw!

What if I told you that same painting didn't have a painter or artist behind it. That this painting just appeared and just was. That the colours were formed together by nature and captured over time and there was no real purpose behind it. It was just a beautiful painting.

Quite often the response is, "that wouldn't make sense, because if you have a painting there has to be a painter, in the same way if there was a building there would be a builder behind the building."

And I would ask, "are you 100% certain of that? Even if you had never seen or knew the painter yourself?"

And they would respond; "Yes of course, because you can't have a painting unless you have a painter! It's impossible otherwise."

After explaining this little scenario, I phrase the same exact question to them, "If you saw a beautiful piece of creation; a sunset perhaps; or delicate flower or a still river reflecting a beautiful sky, do you still think that there is not a Creator behind it?"

Sometimes, you can see a dynamic change in their perspective and thinking in that moment. Because in all the confusion of the question "Is God real"? the simplicity is made evident in the fact that we experience God each and everyday in witnessing His creation.

And this fact remains true, whether you are a Christian or not. For those who aren't Christians, they may not personally know God. But they witness His art work and creativity each and every day. This serves as a reflection of who He is; giving us an invitation to know Him and walk with Him in this life through faith.

# MY PURPOSE AND MISSION AS A PHOTOGRAPHER IS TO USE MY GIFT TO REFLECT THE INCREDIBLE AWE AND WONDER OF THE CREATOR — OUR GOD; IN AND THROUGH WHAT CAN BE SEEN IN HIS CREATION.

This is probably best summarised in Romans 1:20; "For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made". God Himself is revealed to us through His creation. His very nature is displayed in all that we can see and experience in His creation. We just need to have our eyes and heart open to this truth.

As a landscape photographer I don't believe I create anything new with my photography, I just reflect what has already been created. And my hope and prayer is that everyone who gets a glimpse of God's creation through my photos would have a connection with their Creator and receive the invitation to begin a life long journey with Him. For all things have been created in Him for us to experience and enjoy!



About the Author

#### Rhyse Maughan

Since moving to the North West of Australia in 2011, Rhyse has had a deep passion for photography as a landscape photographer. For Rhyse, photography goes beyond the 'creative'. It's about authentically reflecting the beauty of creation through the lens of a camera.

www.rhysemaughan.com.au



## **SACRED SPACE**

Brian Stitt

## "SURELY THE LORD WAS IN THIS PLACE, I DID NOT KNOW IT!" GEN 28: 16

What is it that moves us when we go into a quiet place? Be it a forest glade, lit by golden light, or the desert, in its blazing red glory? What is the crowd really seeing as they silently, intently watch the sunset on the West Coast?

In that unconscious contemplation, we become aware of the other, we are somehow more than ourselves. I call it, sacred space.

Philosopher Martin Buber once wrote of it as the place of encounter, the stirrings of the mysterious, of the one who greets us as "I – Thou". We are stalked by the spirit of the Holy One who broods over time and place, to intrude upon our inner space. In the spiritual journey have we lost the ability to recognise his hidden presence?

Bernard Lonegan, SJ describes us being absorbed in our busyness when "out of the corner of our eye, something beckons." There are two responses, to let the moment pass or, turn and look, that the mundane moment becomes numinous. Let it happen. Let God be God for you, Lonegan says. Remember this happening in terms of biblical story. Let the commonplace be transformed to "the unknown house of God." The ordinary becomes sacred as God beckons to us. We can learn that any place can become a place of encounter.

Let me introduce three examples of what I'm suggesting from recent encounters with an Anglican minister, a Kimberley Elder and a local Dianella woman.

First, we had been experimenting with the liturgy of communion when I asked the group what they had noticed. The Anglican minister said, 'you walked on the sacred space'. For him the surrounds of the Communion Table became, by prayer, a sacred space where God was present. When the bread was broken, it became a place of sacramental mystery. There are times for all of us when something shifts. A hymn, a turn of phrase or scripture tug at our heart. Do we take the liberty in that moment to ignore all else, to turn aside and experience the divine, to stand on holy ground?

Second, while working in the Kimberley I was talking with an Aboriginal Elder when I asked what the line of stones on the ground meant. For him place was not just a geographical mark. They were places telling the story of the spiritual journey of his people, story celebrated in song lines that were enacted in procession from place to place, stories of identity, of sacred happenings, songs of creation. He was talking of the forgotten story of Scripture where places record God's self-revelation.

Third, I was talking to a Housing Services tenant who confessed, "I live in the next street, I drive around this corner almost every day. But I didn't know this was a church". I wondered what her place of encounter was. Where was her need for that inner conversation met? As I got to know her I found she had experienced sad and solitary places. She lacked the vocabulary and the confidence to describe her inner journey, as "people didn't talk about those things". In a society with a myriad of counter stories, how do we describe our intimations of otherness.

# WE ALL HAVE STORIES OF PLACE. WALKING DOWN ONSLOW RD IN SHENTON PARK, IS TO TELL THE STORY OF MY FAMILY, MY EARLY SPIRITUAL JOURNEY, MY BAPTISM AND CALL TO MINISTRY. THE HOLY GROUND OF GOD'S SELF-REVELATION AND INTERVENTION IN MY LIFE.

We all have these moments, these places of encounter with the mystery of who we are and who the other is for us. We live today in a society overwhelmed by individual loneliness. Fear of the solitary, and addictions as substitutes for inner peace. Yes, we all have these mysterious inner encounters. Moments of self- illumination where we turn away from the false self and journey into the promised land where God dwells. While we all do have them, do we have those skills of introspection to describe them?

#### About the Author

#### **Brian Stitt**

Brain has Played against the All Blacks
Three times and been beaten three
times. He is the Founding Director of
Dayspring Spiritual Centre in Dianella
and is married to Patricia.

## **IMPORTANCE OF LAND**

Source: Australians Together.org.au and adapted for On Mission.

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#### MORE THAN SOIL, ROCKS OR MINERALS

For many Indigenous people in Australia, land is much more than soil, rocks or minerals. It's a living environment that sustains and is sustained by people and culture. Traditionally, this reciprocal relationship between people and the land underpinned all other aspects of life for Indigenous people. Today, this relationship with the land remains fundamental to the identity and way of life of many Indigenous people.

Here, Indigenous people from across Australia share about the way they understand and relate to land. They help us understand why land is important to them and how it's relevant to all people living in Australia today.

#### **CONNECTION TO COUNTRY**

For many Indigenous people, land relates to all aspects of existence - culture, spirituality, language, law, family and identity. Rather than owning land, each person belongs to a piece of land which they're related to through the kinship system. That person is entrusted with the knowledge and responsibility to care for their land, providing a deep sense of identity, purpose and belonging. This intimate knowledge of the land and ways of relating to it are also reflected in language, including many words and concepts that have no English equivalent. This deep relationship between people and the land is often described as 'connection to Country'.

"THE LAND AND THE PEOPLE ARE ONE, 'CAUSE THE LAND IS ALSO RELATED," EXPLAINS DHANGGAL GURRUWIWI, A GALPU ELDER FROM NHULUNBUY IN THE NORTHERN TERRITORY.
"IN OUR KINSHIP SYSTEM, AS A CUSTODIAN I'M THE CHILD OF THAT LAND," SHE SAYS.





#### THE WAY WE TREAT LAND MATTERS

Traditionally, the relationship between Indigenous people and the land is one of reciprocity and respect the land sustains and provides for the people, and the people sustain and manage the land through culture and ceremony. Because of this close connection, when the land is disrespected, damaged or destroyed, this can have real impacts on the wellbeing of Indigenous people.

"(THE LAND) IS OUR LIFE", SAYS ANDREW JOHNSON, A COMMUNITY MEMBER FROM LAJAMANU IN THE NORTHERN TERRITORY. "IF THEY COME AND DESTROY OUR LAND AND OUR SACRED SITE, THAT TAKES AWAY OUR LIFE TOO." DJAPIRRI MUNINGGIRRITY, FROM NHULUNBUY IN THE NORTHERN TERRITORY, SAYS SIMPLY, "WITHOUT THE LAND, WE ARE NOTHING."

Honouring the sacred relationship with land is just as important for Aunty (Rev) Janet Turpie-Johnston, an Indigenous community leader and theologian in Melbourne, Victoria. She poses the question to all of us, "How are we ultimately going to honour this relationship with the very thing, the very earth, the very waters, the very air, the very sky, that gives us life and existence?"

#### **DISCONNECTION FROM COUNTRY**

When non-Indigenous people begin to understand the importance of land for Indigenous people, we can begin to understand why dislocation from land has had such devastating effects on many Indigenous people and cultures; for many Indigenous people, colonisation did more than steal their land, it stole their very identity. Despite this history, today, many Indigenous people today maintain a close connection to their Country.

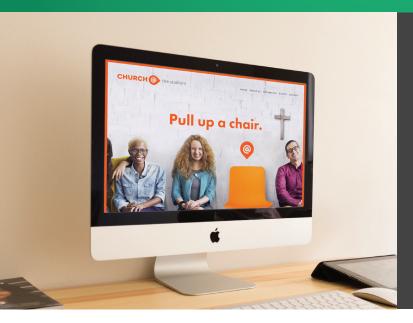
#### LIVING TOGETHER ON LAND

Warlpiri Elder and Church leader, Jerry Jangala, explains that unlike the western attitude towards land which sees it as something to be privately owned, many Indigenous people believe that land is for everybody. The land welcomes all people and offers us its provision. However, we're required to respect the land in return. Honouring this reciprocal relationship with the land is central to Indigenous culture and is a concept important for all people living in Australia today.



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