



Sunsets on Australia

I like this image as it has an indigenous appeal to it yet so Christian in its theme that one is forced to sit up and take notice. The connection between suffering of a nation of people and a sunset over Calvary says that we are running out of time and people are dying because we don't have the will power or it seems the know how to remedy a bad situation. The Indigenous people are still suffering even after so many years since the British colonisation and everyone is wondering why such a prosperous country can't find a solution. Maybe we did say "there was room for us all" words attributed to an earlier Governor and just maybe there was some sort of treaty which was supposed to help both peoples live in peace and harmony, but alas what went wrong? Have we now taken over this land and shut out these people or even deprived them of their identity and indeed the very reason for living?

Yes some would say that this great people made of so many tribes and so many dream times has lost its way, but can we also say why and was it necessary that they should have been left behind? Each State needs to look again at the whole idea of co-responsibility for justice and fair play for all Australians. We need to start realising that to say "They are not helping themselves or that they are this or that, is not helping towards a solution and it's time to just put out a hand and say "You are my brother, you are my sister". At the moment, though we would not like to admit it, we are encouraging a type of segregation that makes an even playing field concept looks more like a mountain side. Are we silently agreeing to the idea that they belong in the bush and we belong to the Cities? Is it some white man's anthem that there are two Australians, White and Black? Would we solve all our racial problems by simply having these people out of sight and out of mind? Are we one of the many Australians very unhappy to see Aboriginals in our neck of the woods, and God help us if they are in our very own street. "As long as they stay out in the Northern suburbs in places like Clarkson on the outskirts of our Towns and Cities we will get along fine" Don't think for

one moment that this is a meaningless phrase meant in jest; no it is an actual quote, and I suggest the person meant what he said.

So where do we go from here? What is the solution? Well let's quote the song "From little things big things grow" Remember the power of one? Let's start by changing our own way of thinking, then maybe trying to change the attitude of our own family members. From one it can become two, from two three and so on. Maybe the process has started and maybe hearts are slowly being changed but if so this is only the first step and there is a whole staircase out there to be climbed. Don't look too far up because it may well look too steep and we may get discouraged. Let's take one step at a time and bring God into the equation because up to know it appears human endeavour may not be enough. "Thy Kingdom come" must be possible or why pray for it.

The Christian Brothers Oceania Province could well come up with a forceful statement pledging our desire to be a part of this nationwide movement for a change in the attitude towards the indigenous people. I know things have already been happening in just about every Cluster in Oceania, especially in Queensland and Western Australia, where brothers are working full time with Indigenous people and are in solidarity with them. They would be heartened to see this strong statement of support come out of our very first and historic Oceania Chapter.

The indigenous people here in the Philippines are from the mountain regions and are slowly being squeezed out of their ancestral homes and forced to live on the fringes of our towns and cities as second class citizens. The site of these peoples plight caused me to think of our own at home in Australia and write this article and sending this via a chapter delegate. I hope it will not be seen a new material. This does come so late in your deliberations but let's hope not too late. Like Paul it may well be seen as a late birth and one crying out to be heard though I suspect it is well and truly in the brother's hearts already. I feel quietly confident that a submission or two along these lines has already been presented, so please see this as just a late effort to support what may well already be on the agenda for the spirit moves where it will and it certainly moved me. Peter T - Hilongos