

Date: 21 May 2000 @ FLINDERS ST BAPTIST CHURCH

**AN APOLOGY FROM ..
THE SOUTH AUSTRALIAN BAPTIST UNION OF CHURCHES TO ..
INDIGENOUS AUSTRALIANS**

It is with humility that we acknowledge you as the original custodians of the land in which we live and have built our churches. By misunderstanding your culture and imposing our ways on you, we have caused you much pain and loss. Your people have borne the cost and burden of this for over two hundred years. We desire to be reconciled with you.

OUR CONFESSION, APOLOGY, AND REPENTANCE

We acknowledge that our forebears took what was not theirs and successive generations did not make amends. We benefit from their consequences of their actions
We are deeply sorry.

We confess the racist attitudes and practices expressed and instituted in the society and churches, in which we participate. We have not respected you as we ought.
We are deeply sorry.

We apologise for knowingly or unwittingly not allowing you as indigenous peoples uncompromised dignity, fully-lived lives and a proud and hopeful future.
We are deeply sorry.

We seek forgiveness for our part in the problems faced by indigenous people today. We have too often been guilty of silence. We have grievously wronged you.
We are deeply sorry.

As member churches of the SA Baptist Union we apologise unreservedly, repent and seek forgiveness from you and from God. We desire to move on to where true reconciliation and loving acknowledgment of one another becomes a celebrated reality.

OUR AFFIRMATION FOR THE FUTURE

We affirm, as Christians, that we are all made in the image of God and therefore there is a sanctity and dignity in people of all ethnic groups. We believe that the image has been marred such that all people are in need of forgiveness from God and healing and restoration to God. As Christians we are being made into a new, redeemed humanity, therefore:

- We seek to facilitate the healing of the past for indigenous people, confessing the sins of our past as well as our present apathy in redressing these wrongs. In receiving forgiveness from you and from God, we desire to live freely together with you as forgiven and reconciled people.
- We recognise that all believers are equal in the bond of Christian fellowship. Together we seek to build church structures and congregations which encourage the gifts and participation of Aboriginal people as well as people of other racial and ethnic origins.
- We work, as a Union of Baptist Churches, to develop church structures which are inclusive of all cultures in Australia. We encourage the indigenous expression of Christianity in life and worship. We seek to learn from our indigenous brothers and sisters, respecting and valuing your unique contributions to the body of Christ and the understanding of the gospel.
- We desire to share with indigenous people in the ministry of the gospel in ways which respect your history, culture and dignity.
- We seek to be advocates of social justice for indigenous people as need and opportunity arise as we together anticipate and work for the Kingdom of God.

In particular, we intend to work together with you in practical ways to address the wrongs done. We acknowledge that this is only the beginning of a new journey for us. We want to listen to you and learn from you. As we walk and work together, we pray for trust and acceptance.