



SEVEN SITES, SEVEN WORDS

The Suffering of Aboriginal Australians and The Passion of Jesus

Geoff Boyce and Norman Habel

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and
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Introduction

Seven Sites, Seven Words was inspired by the tabling of the “Bringing Them Home” Report to Federal Parliament on May 26 1997, the release of Norm Habel’s book, *Reconciliation - Searching for Australia’s Soul* (HarperCollins) in 1999, and the launch of *The Journey of Healing* in 2000.

Seven Sites, Seven Words marries the *Tenebrae* tradition with an adaptation of the rites devised by Norman Habel, “Healing Rites at Seven Sites”, contained in the Appendix of his book *Reconciliation - Searching for Australia’s Soul*.

Tenebrae (Latin for 'shadows' or 'darkness') is a Christian religious service celebrated by the Western Church on the evening before or early morning of Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and Holy Saturday, which are the last three days of the Easter Holy Week.¹ In some Protestant traditions the service is based on the last seven sayings of Jesus, assembled from the various gospel accounts. The people reading each portion of scripture extinguish a candle when they finish reading their passage so that, in the end, the church is left in darkness, signifying the darkness of the events leading to Easter Friday and of Jesus in the tomb.

Seven Sites, Seven Words embraces this tradition and timing in the Christian calendar. It takes the form of a journey, walking together in darkness, lit only by the light of bamboo flares that are progressively extinguished. At each site symbolic actions are played out against an evocative soundscape accompanying readings from the history of dispossession of Aboriginal people juxtaposed with parallel readings from the Biblical record of the Passion of Christ.

Seven Sites, Seven Words is therefore a remembrance in the tradition of Lament. It is as much an acknowledgement of the betrayal, mistreatment, denial and death inflicted by white colonisers on Aboriginal peoples as a recalling of the events leading to the death of Jesus Christ. It is not history in the sense of an accurate re-enactment. Nor does it offer ‘balance’ - looking at points in history from many angles. It does not offer ‘answers’, but reminds us of events that have shaped us. The symbolic acts employed in the observance engage our senses to take us beyond mere passive observance. Lament challenges not just the mind, but the whole person and the whole community.

In 1997, when Lowitja O’Donoghue accepted the apology from the Uniting Church in South Australia for its complicity in the Stolen Generations, she said: ‘We forgive, but we will not forget’.

Seven Sites, Seven Words is a means of ‘not forgetting’ for white Australians.

Seven Sites, Seven Words was first staged at Blackwood Uniting Church on the Wednesday night of Holy Week in 2001, repeated the following year and restaged at Pilgrim Uniting Church in the City in 2011 and 2012.

The preparation of this resource was inspired by a conversation with Denise Champion of the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress following the 2012 observance, who suggested that the observance be documented as a resource that might be shared or adapted by others.

The authors encourage free use of the material provided acknowledgements are made. The authors would also appreciate being informed of its use.

Musicians associated with the soundtrack were contacted prior to the creation of the 2011/2012 soundtrack and those that replied gave permission for use, provided credits were provided. A postcard with all credits was made available to participants of the observances, and in this resource, appear in the Program.

Preparing the Sites

The Seven Sites

Eight different sites are required - the seven sites and a *Gathering Place* for Prologue and Conclusion.

Each needs to be able to accommodate the anticipated number of people attending.

It may be possible to conduct the whole observance within one large space, particularly if the number of people attending is small. The observance is much more dramatic if each site is self contained and out sight of the others. If the observance is held inside, each site may be identified by a large candle, lit beforehand, on a pedestal.

The first and subsequent observances at Blackwood UCA were conducted inside using the foyer for gathering and conclusion, and a number of rooms and spaces, as well as the body of the church, which were all interconnected. At Pilgrim UCA in the City, the gathering and first four sites were outside and the remainder within the body of the church. Decisions about the locations of sites were made on the basis of their symbolic contribution. eg at Blackwood we used their large kitchen for Site 4 - *The Feeding Station*. At Pilgrim, Site 4 was the nearby Town Hall Cafe.

The timing of movement between each site needs to be considered to provide a natural time for reflection.

The first and last sites should preferably link easily to the *Gathering Place*.

The Gathering Place

CD Player, table, programs²

People meet here before and at the conclusion of the observance in 'normal' lighting. At the Pilgrim observance this was timed to coincide with sunset and was outside the front of the church.

Music may be played as people gather.

People collect a program and readings are distributed among those attending.

The playing of the song *Dali Mana Gamarada* signals the beginning of the Prologue.

The observance comes full circle by gathering here again.

The repetition of the song *Dali Mana Gamarada* signals the end of the observance.

Lighting

Each site should be dimly lit. eg a couple of desk lamps per site.

If inside, the seven sites are each set up with a large candle alight at the centre of each space or at a commanding point. The leader gathers the people around this focal point and extinguishes each candle at the end of the readings and actions for each site. This signals the helpers to turn off the lighting for the final silence in darkness. The leader pauses in silence before inviting the people to the next site, leading them on.

If outside, seven bamboo flares (or candles in protective holders) may be carried from site to site, the leader extinguishing one at each site.

Sound

If the sites are within close proximity, one central sound desk with appropriate amplification may be all that is required, provided the sound levels may be adjusted during the readings. At Pilgrim, a portable P.A. sound system with CD player and microphone were used to amplify the music and spoken word.

One audio person is needed. If required this person carries and operates the portable sound system from site to site.

The Soundscape is pre-recorded on CD with 1 second intervals between tracks.

The Soundscape continues at all times apart from periods of silence, typically immediately following each action (which follow readings) and, unless indicated, when moving from site to site.

At each site the appropriate track of the Soundscape commences on a signal from the Leader, when the Leader is satisfied that everyone is gathered. The commencement of the soundtrack at each site signals the commencement of the observance at each site.

When there is a reading, the volume is turned down to allow the readings to be heard above the soundscape. When there are no readings, the volume is turned up again.

Sound is turned off by fading out (not with abrupt stops).

Requirements

Site 1 The British Union Jack flag - to be raised (eg hoisted on a cord over a pulley attached to the ceiling, or by raising a pole with the Union Jack attached)

A few coins to be dropped on a tile or hard surface

Site 2 A long length of black material (at least the width of the space) about a metre wide

A cane

Site 3 A bowl containing liquid soap

Site 4 Some damper or flat bread on a plate

Site 5 Tarpaulin

Circle of lit tea light candles (which are placed on the tarpaulin or on a small table on the tarpaulin)

Bowl of ashes

Four small bowls to collect ash for marking foreheads of the people

A cross

Site 6 No requirements

Site 7 (4) Bowls of water

Circle of unlit tea light candles arranged around the central candle.

Candle holders for the tea light candles might be used to prevent candle wax from dripping during their movement.

Total List of Requirements

Gathering Place and seven sites with sufficient space at each site for participants to gather

Inside: Subdued lighting at each site – eg bedlamps

Seven large candles, one for each site (preferably on pedestals)

Outside: Seven bamboo flares or candles in protective candle holders

Tea light candles, one for each participant (and preferably in candle holders) for Site 7 and sufficient to form a circle or mass of candles for Site 5

British flag and means of raising it

Coins and a surface which will resonate when they are dropped on to it (eg a tile)

Long strip of 1m wide black material which, when stretched out, is as wide as the standing room (eg 10 metres)

A cane

Liquid soap in a small bowl

Damper or flat bread on a plate

A Cross

Tarpaulin and bowl of ashes

Four small bowls for ashes

Four small bowls of water

CD player(s) or sound system

Soundscape CD

Program for participants with Isaiah reading and final litany
 Readings on separate sheets with cues for readers
 Four total scripts for Helpers to set up and undertake actions
 Total script for the Sound Operator
 Postcard with credits for soundscape

Soundscape

A prepared CD with tracks sequenced for continuous soundtrack, one second between tracks.

1. Dali Mana Gamarada (5:28)	Deborah Cheetham & Wicked Beat Sound System	Corroboration
2. Paul Keating (1:01)	Various Artists	Reconcilliatiiion
3. Driftwood Spear#2 (3:21)	Michael Livett & Anne Norman	Driftwood
4. The Sleeper Awakes#46,47 (5:38)	Michael Livett & Anne Norman	Driftwood
5. Their Smooth Dark Flames Flicker (4:56)	Michael Livett & Anne Norman	Driftwood
6. Shake A Dead Geranium Compil'n (2:40)	Michael Livett & Anne Norman	Driftwood
7. Budding Fronds#25 (2:31)	Michael Livett & Anne Norman	Driftwood
8. Down City Streets (4:02)	Archie Roach	The Definitive Collection
9. Driftwood Spear#2 (3:21)	Michael Livett & Anne Norman	Driftwood
10. Whispering Lunar Incantations#28(5:54)	Michael Livett & Anne Norman	Driftwood
11. John Howard (0:55)	Melbourne Reconciliation Convention	Extracted from YouTube film
12. Petrified Forest#35 (2:19)	Michael Livett & Anne Norman	Driftwood
13. Gurrumul History (I Was Born Blind)(5:54)	Geoffrey Gurrumul Yunupingu	Gurrumul
14. <i>Jumbucco</i> (5.00)	Waak Waak Yungi	Womadelaide 2004
15. Dali Mana Gamarada (5:28)	Deborah Cheetham & Wicked Beat Sound System	Corroboration
16. Yull Lull (3:55)	Paul Kelly and Singers for the Black and Gold	Reconcilliatiiion

Sources

Reconciliation, Stories of the Heart, Sounds of the Rock, various artists (ANTaR, Caritas Australia, Catholic Mission)
Driftwood, Michael Livett & Anne Norman (AMN Productions, Suite 3 50, 45 Glenferrie Rd, Malvern Vic 3144)
Corroboration, A Journey Through The Musical Landscape of 21st Century Australia (Mushroom 2001)
Archie Roach, The Definitive Collection (Mushroom /Warner 2004)
Gurrumul, Geoffrey Gurrumul Yunupingu (iTunes/Skinnyfish 2009)
Womadelaide, Sounds of the Planet 2004, various artists (Arts Projects Australia and WOMAD Ltd)
<http://www.myspace.com/video/loz/howard-39-s-blemish/11923175>

Animators

Leader

Sound operator

Two pairs of helpers (who set up and do, or facilitate, actions)

Readers from among participants

Helpers

If the observance is held inside, setting up the sites beforehand may require extra helpers to clear space and set up subdued lighting and central candles.

During the observance, you will need two pairs of helpers to manage the props and enact the symbolic actions at each site and, if inside, turn off the subdued lighting at each site.

If outside, one pair may be engaged with actions at one site (and remain to pack up immediately afterwards) while the other pair are preparing the next site. This pair then undertakes the actions at that site when the people arrive, and pack-up when the people leave. And so on. Each pair of helpers should have copies of their own program.

Readers

Readers are assigned by being given a copy of their particular part of the program containing their reading during the initial gathering. There are 25 readings.

Prologue

Gathering Song

Audio#1

Deborah Cheetham and Wicked Beat Sound System, *Dali Mana Gamarada* (5.28)

Acknowledgements

Leader

- The Local Aboriginal People and Their Land
- The Hosts of this Observance
- Local Reconciliation Groups
- Norm Habel and Geoff Boyce for the Seven Sites, Seven Words Resource
- The Musicians and Artists who have contributed to the Soundscape
- Helpers and Readers

Leader

Welcome to Seven Sites, Seven Words – a remembrance of the suffering of Aboriginal Australians and the Passion of Jesus.

The words of Lowitja O'Donahue, in accepting an apology from the Uniting Church in South Australia for their complicity in the stealing of Aboriginal children from their families, still ring today as they did in 1997: "We forgive, but we will not forget."

They resonate with words, spoken over a meal shared with friends, by Jesus of Nazareth, as he faced betrayal and subsequent death: "Do this in remembrance of me". Seven Sites, Seven Words is an act of remembrance.

The format for this evening will take the form of a journey. I will lead you and we will walk together from site to site in silence. Please gather close around me at each site.

(If inside: 'At each site there is a central candle around which we will gather.')

Some of you will have been given a piece to read at one of these sites. Come to the light (or microphone) where I am standing if you need. Otherwise read with a loud voice, please, wherever you are.

There will be some symbolic action at the end of most readings – a reading or readings from the history of dispossession of Aboriginal people followed by a reading from the Biblical record of the Passion of Christ.

We will observe a moment of silent reflection following these symbolic actions, before being invited to move on to the next site.

Afterwards light refreshments will be provided in the lounge at the rear of the church.

The words of the song that is playing - *Dali Mana Gamarada* by Aboriginal soprano Deborah Cheetham supported by Wicked Beat Sound System, are words of the Eora (Sydney) people and translate as "I embrace you and escort you into country".

In this spirit of embrace and accompaniment let us begin our remembrance.

Audio Note

Audio#1 may continue until played out - right up to the point when Track#2 is required. There is no soundscape prepared for the beginning of the Prologue - Paul Keating's Redfern Speech.

Leader

Let us begin by recalling the then Australian Prime Minister Paul Keating's *Redfern Speech* and then by reflecting on alternate readings from the Hebrew prophet Isaiah.

Audio#2

Paul Keating's *Redfern Speech* (excerpt) (1.01)
then immediately

Audio#3

Livett and Norman *Driftwood Spear* (3.21)
(and let run into next track if necessary)

Leader

As we are about to set out to visit the seven sites and hear the seven words, let us read the words of prologue, which prefigure what we may experience on our journey. We will return to these words at the end. They may be found in the inside of your program, entitled *Prologue and Conclusion*. The men read the first line; women the second line in italics.

We hear the voice of the Hebrew prophet and the echo of the voice of white settlers about Aboriginal people:

M: He had no form or majesty that we should look at him,
W: *They had no form or majesty that we should look at them,*

M: nothing in his appearance that we should desire him.
W: *nothing in their appearance that we should desire them.*

M: He was despised and rejected by others;
W: *They were despised and rejected by others;*

M: a man of suffering and acquainted with infirmity;
W: *a people of suffering and acquainted with infirmity;*

M: as one from whom others hide their faces
W: *as those from whom others hide their faces*

M: he was despised and we held him of no account.
W: *they were despised and we held them of no account.*

M: He was oppressed and he was afflicted,
W: *they were oppressed and they were afflicted,*

M: yet he did not open his mouth;
W: *yet they did not open their mouths;*

M: like a lamb that is led to the slaughter,
W: *like lambs that are led to the slaughter,*

M: and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent,
W: *and like sheep that before their shearers are silent,*

M: so he did not open his mouth.
W: *so they did not open their mouths.*

M: By a perversion of justice he was taken away.
W: *By a perversion of justice they were taken away.*

M: Who could have imagined his future?
W: *Who could have imagined their future?*

(Isaiah 53: 23, 78)

Invitation

Leader

We are invited to hear again the words of Christ's passion in a new context as they echo through our ancient land.

We are invited to connect these painful words from the Christian tradition with the cries of agony of indigenous Australians from these seven Australian sites.

We are invited to hear these words of Christ's Passion anew as we relive our history, face the hidden stories of what happened in our past, purge the poison of racism and seek healing for the shame and the effects of past injustices, the wounds of which continue today.

We are invited to join in a Journey of Healing, to forgive and be forgiven, but not to forget.

Audio fades to silence

Leader

Let us face move to the first site, Holdfast Bay, 1836, to face the violence of dispossession.

The leader leads the people to the first site in silence.

Site 1: Holdfast Bay 1836

Audio #4

Livett and Norman, *The Sleeper Awakes* (5:38)
(and let run into next track if necessary)

Leader

Let us stand and face the story of dispossession - Holdfast Bay, South Australia, 1836.

Reader 1a

On 28 December 1836, British settlers began the dispossession and subjugation of our traditional ancestors who had lived since the Dreamtime in the land now named "South Australia". On that day invaders from England made a proclamation at the place our people had always called Pattawilya, but which the newcomers named Holdfast Bay. They made a public declaration to their own satisfaction of power and control over the lands. Without treaty or recompense, they proceeded to survey and sell for their own use and profit the land that our people had occupied for countless generations.

They did not discuss or consult. How could they? They did not know the languages of the peoples whose lands they came to take and for the most part did not attempt to learn them. Even more important, they considered themselves superior to our race whom they thought of as savages; ignorant, primitive, uncivilized. In the words of the Governor's proclamation made that day, they saw themselves 'promoting their advancement in civilization, and...their conversion to the Christian faith'.

Reader 1b

In 1834 the British Parliament had passed an Act authorizing the establishment of a colony to be known as 'South Australia'. The designated land, half a world away, unseen by those who passed the legislation, was described in the Act as 'waste and unoccupied'. The earth was untilled. The land was not disfigured by permanent manmade constructions. But it was indeed not 'waste'. In fact its resources were known and carefully husbanded. It was totally occupied by many and various ancestral groupings of our people.

No-one told us Nungas. Noone could tell us. Noone asked us if we agreed to the change. Our ancestors had no choice. On that day in 1836 our sovereign status was changed. We were proclaimed British subjects. From that moment the tragedy began which is the bitter and often brutal history of the past 150 years for all our people in 'South Australia'.³

Leader

It was, in reality, an invasion.

Silence

The Union Jack is hoisted.

The person hoisting the flag steps back, salutes, and while continuing the salute sings:

God save our gracious King

Long live our noble King

God save our King!

Ends salute.

Audio moment of silence; then Audio #4 continues

Leader

Let us hear from the record of the Passion of Christ.

Bible Reader

When Jesus had finished saying all these things, he said to his disciples, "You know that after two days the festival of Passover is coming, and the Son of Man will be handed over to be crucified."

Then the chief priests and the elders of the people gathered in the palace of the high priest, who was called Caiaphas, and they conspired to arrest Jesus by stealth and kill him.

But they said, "Not during the festival, or there may be a riot among the people."

Then one of the twelve, who was called Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests and said,

"What will you give me if I betray him to you?"

They paid him thirty pieces of silver.

And from that moment he began to look for an opportunity to betray him.⁴

Silence**Coins are dropped**

The leader extinguishes the first lamp/candle, (lights are turned off) and a silence is maintained.

Leader

Let move to the second site, Tasmania in the 1830's, and face the violence of 'final solutions'.

The leader leads the people to the second site in silence.

Site 2: Tasmania, 1830's

Audio#5

Livett and Norman *Their Smooth Dark Flames Flicker* (4:56)

Leader

Let us face the violence of 'final solutions'. Tasmania, 1830's.

Reader 2a

The Black War in Tasmania reached its heights in the 1830's and resulted in near genocide. After several years of local raids and counterattacks, Governor Arthur, in the spring of 1830, planned a joint offensive with a regiment of soldiers, police, prisoners and settlers. They formed a human chain across the settled districts of Tasmania. This human chain, known as the 'black line', moved relentlessly southwards for three weeks. Those who eluded the net were persuaded by George Robinson, a devious diplomat, to surrender. Fewer than 200 Tasmanians from the settled districts survived they were all wounded.

Reader 2b

The remnants of the Tasmanian people were exiled to Flinders Island in Bass Strait. The land had been cleared of 'natives'; the genocide was almost complete. Among those who survived was the famous Truganini, who came to be known as 'the last Tasmanian'. Today we know that there are several thousand descendants of indigenous Tasmanians still resisting albeit peacefully the total clearance of their land by the infamous black line.⁵

Leader

It was, in reality, genocide.

A ribbon of black is drawn over the participants from front to back.

Leader

Let us hear from the record of the Passion of Christ.

Bible Reader 2

Immediately, while he was still speaking, Judas, one of the twelve, arrived; and with him there was a crowd with swords and clubs, from the chief priests, the scribes, and the elders.

Now the betrayer had given them a sign, saying, "The one I will kiss is the man; arrest him and lead him away under guard."

So when he came, he went up to him at once and said, "Rabbi!" and kissed him.

Then they laid hands on him and arrested him.

But one of those who stood near drew his sword and struck the slave of the high priest, cutting off his ear.

Then Jesus said to them, "Have you come out with swords and clubs to arrest me as though I were a bandit?"

Day after day I was with you in the temple teaching, and you did not arrest me. But let the scriptures be fulfilled."

All of them deserted him and fled.⁶

Silence

A cane is brought down hard.

The leader extinguishes the second lamp/candle, (lights are turned off) and a silence is maintained.

Leader

Let us move to the third site and face the violence of assimilation.

The leader leads the people to the third site.

Site 3: The "Reserve".

Audio#6

Livett and Norman *Shake a Dead Geranium Compilation* (2:40)
(Repeat if necessary)

Leader

Let us face the violence of assimilation.

Reader 3a

Some times you'd get about six people in one cell, sleeping on the floor. It was about ten feet by ten feet. You got six people in there and you all got to lie together. And you've got the old pan there, the toilet pan, in one corner. You know the smell of the pan. If someone opened the pan to have a pee or something, like it would go right through the cell ... When they gave you the deportation order, you had to go. It was bad them days ... They used to have us under the Aborigines Protection Act, but they weren't protecting us: they were robbing us.

Reader 3b

My sister and I had our mouths washed out with soap for speaking our language. The facewasher, they rubbed soap on it and they got us and they put it in our mouths. Terrible you know, to have soap up your nose and your mouth just because you're talking; we couldn't speak a word of English you know. We had to learn English and we had to live like white people because 'your mother and father's way is heathenism. I didn't understand what heathenism was until a lot later on, when I left that reserve and I got a hold of a dictionary, but I knew it must have been bad because of the tone of their voice.⁷

Leader

It was, in reality, the deliberate annihilation of indigenous culture.

Let us pass this liquid soap among us and each take a small drop on one finger and place it on our tongues.

When we offer the soap to our neighbour let us offer the invitation –
"Taste being made civilised".

The liquid soap is passed around.

Let us hear from the record of the Passion of Christ.

Let us hold our tongues during the reading, as Jesus was silent during his trial.

The people hold their tongues for the duration of the reading.

Bible Reader 3a

They took Jesus to the high priest; and all the chief priests, the elders, and the scribes were assembled.

Peter had followed him at a distance, right into the courtyard of the high priest; and he was sitting with the guards, warming himself at the fire.

Now the chief priests and the whole council were looking for testimony against Jesus to put him to death; but they found none.

For many gave false testimony against him, and their testimony did not agree.

Some stood up and gave false testimony against him, saying,
"We heard him say, 'I will destroy this temple that is made with hands, and in three days I will build another, not made with hands.' "
But even on this point their testimony did not agree.

Bible Reader 3b

Then the high priest stood up before them and asked Jesus, "Have you no answer? What is it that they testify against you?"
But he was silent and did not answer. Again the high priest asked him, "Are you the Messiah, the Son of the Blessed One?"
Jesus said, "I am; and
"you will see the Son of Man
seated at the right hand of the Power;
and 'coming with the clouds of heaven.' "
Then the high priest tore his clothes and said, "Why do we still need witnesses? You have heard his blasphemy! What is your decision?"
All of them condemned him as deserving death.
Some began to spit on him, to blindfold him, and to strike him, saying to him, "Prophesy!" The guards also took him over and beat him.⁸

The leader extinguishes the third lamp/candle, (lights are turned off) and a silence is maintained.

Leader

Let us move to the fourth site and face the violence of dehumanisation.

The leader leads the people to the fourth site.

Site 4: The Feeding Station

Audio#7

Livett and Norman *Budding Fronds* (2:31)
(Repeat if necessary)

Leader

Let us face the violence of dehumanisation.

Reader 4a

Most of the Aboriginal Australians who died last century were not killed in battles or massacres. They perished because white settlers cleared away the scrub where bush tucker was found. Native animal and bird life were replaced by sheep and cattle. Aborigines and farm animals competed for the same waterholes. Natural food supplies disappeared, and local Aborigines were forced to depend on rations dispensed by nonindigenous settlers, missionaries or government officials at 'feeding stations'. Those rations were mainly secondgrade flour. Dispossession meant destroying the 'bread of life' which had served these custodians of life in the land for thousands of years.

Reader 4b

This dependency on the European invaders for food made the indigenous peoples of Australia even more vulnerable. When crises arose and racism erupted, local settlers or police sometimes laced the flour with arsenic or they poisoned the waterholes. Rations were a reward for good behaviour and compliance; withholding food was a punishment for acts of resistance. These rations continued in many regions until the 1960s. Even with the best of intentions, government and mission bodies served Aboriginal people with rations that were alien to them and tantamount to poison.⁹

Leader

Take and eat the damper as it is passed around - the Boss Cocky says, 'this is given for you.'

Audio#8

Archie Roach *Down City Streets* (4:02)

Participants receive damper during the song.

Audio#9

Livett and Norman *Driftwood Spear* (3:21)

Leader

Let us hear from the record of the Passion of Christ.

Bible Reader 4a

Then Pilate took Jesus and had him flogged.
And the soldiers wove a crown of thorns and put it on his head, and they dressed him in a purple robe.
They kept coming up to him, saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!" and striking him on the face.

Pilate went out again and said to them, "Look, I am bringing him out to you to let you know that I find no case against him."

So Jesus came out, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. Pilate said to them, "Here is the man!"

When the chief priests and the police saw him, they shouted, "Crucify him! Crucify him!" Pilate said to them, "Take him yourselves and crucify him; I find no case against him."

The Jews answered him, "We have a law, and according to that law he ought to die because he has claimed to be the Son of God."

Now when Pilate heard this, he was more afraid than ever.

Bible Reader 4b

He entered his headquarters again and asked Jesus, "Where are you from?" But Jesus gave him no answer.

Pilate therefore said to him, "Do you refuse to speak to me? Do you not know that I have power to release you, and power to crucify you?"

Jesus answered him, "You would have no power over me unless it had been given you from above; therefore the one who handed me over to you is guilty of a greater sin."

From then on Pilate tried to release him, but the Jews cried out, "If you release this man, you are no friend of the emperor. Everyone who claims to be a king sets himself against the emperor."

When Pilate heard these words, he brought Jesus outside and sat on the judge's bench at a place called The Stone Pavement.

Now it was the day of Preparation for the Passover; and it was about noon. He said to the Jews, "Here is your King!"

They cried out, "Away with him! Away with him! Crucify him!" Pilate asked them, "Shall I crucify your King?" The chief priests answered, "We have no king but the emperor."

Then he handed him over to them to be crucified.¹⁰

The leader extinguishes the fourth lamp/candle, (lights are turned off) and a silence is maintained.

Leader

Let us move to the fifth site and face the violence of desecration.

The leader leads the people to the fifth site.

Site 5: Maralinga, 1952 - 1956

Audio#10

Livett and Norman *Whispering Lunar Incantations* (5:54)

Leader

Let us face the violence of desecration

Reader 5a

Between 1952 and 1956 the British, with the approval of the Australian government, exploded twelve nuclear weapons in three Australian locations on the Monte Bello Islands off the northwest coast, and at Emu and Maralinga in South Australia. The Aboriginal Australians living in the so-called 'prohibited zone' around the test sites of Emu and Maralinga were forced to leave their lands their spiritual homes and the sacred sites they had known for thousands of years. Many of them were taken to mission stations like Koonibba.

Reader 5b

All life and land in these areas were contaminated; Aboriginal Australians both inside and outside the prohibited zone were exposed to radioactive contamination and fallout. Aborigines at Wallatina reported a big 'black mist' coming from the direction of Emu. This black radioactive cloud brought sickness and death to the people. The 'red sands' of which the people were proud became 'poisoned' and grey. The Aboriginal people of these lands suffered more than dislocation. They suffered dehumanisation because political leaders were willing to sacrifice Aboriginal lives for an alleged 'greater good'. They had their spirits crushed in a nuclear power game.

In recent years a few Aboriginal Australians are returning to the fringes of the prohibited zone. Their spirits are rising again.¹¹

Leader

It was, in reality, desecration.

Silence

Ashes are thrown violently over the candles on the table, extinguishing and/or contaminating them.

Pause.

Helpers take small bowls, gather some of the of ash and mark the foreheads of participants with ash as the readings continue.

Leader

Let us hear the aspirations of 'White Australia' as expressed in the report of the Royal Commission into British Nuclear Tests in Australia 1985.

Audio track #10 continues

Reader 5c

Reading from the Royal Commission into British Nuclear Tests in Australia 1985, page 15.

It is a challenge to Australian men to show that the pioneering spirit of their forefathers who developed our country is still the driving force of achievement ... England has the bomb and the know-how; we have the open spaces, much technical skill and great willingness to help the motherland.

Between us we will help to build the defences of the free world, and make historic advances in harnessing the forces of nature.¹²

Reader 5d

The truth about Maralinga and similar places is that the desecration was more than contamination by nuclear fallout, which is something we nonresidents can perhaps grasp. The deeper desecration was the pollution of sacred sites, sacred ancestor trails, and sacred land. This land was the indigenous people's spiritual home, their link with the creator spirits in the earth, their sacred ground of being. To remove them from their spiritual roots was evil enough; to pollute their sanctuary with a 'white man poison' was doubly immoral.¹³

Leader

Let us hear from the record of the Passion of Christ.

Bible Reader 5

So they took Jesus, and carrying the cross by himself, he went out to what is called The Place of the Skull, which in Hebrew is called Golgotha.

There they crucified him, and with him two others, one on either side, with Jesus between them.

Pilate also had an inscription written and put on the cross. It read, "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews."

Many of the Jews read this inscription, because the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city; and it was written in Hebrew, in Latin, and in Greek.

Then the chief priests of the Jews said to Pilate, "Do not write, 'The King of the Jews,' but, 'This man said, I am King of the Jews.' "

Pilate answered, "What I have written I have written."

When the soldiers had crucified Jesus, they took his clothes and divided them into four parts, one for each soldier. They also took his tunic; now the tunic was seamless, woven in one piece from the top.

So they said to one another, "Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it to see who will get it."

This was to fulfill what the scripture says,

"They divided my clothes among themselves,
and for my clothing they cast lots."¹⁴

A cross is placed in the ashes.

The leader extinguishes the fifth lamp/candle, (lights are turned off) and a silence is maintained.

Leader

Let us move to the sixth site and face the violence of denial.

The leader leads the people to the sixth site.

Site 6: The Australian Reconciliation Convention Melbourne 1997

Leader

Let us face the violence of denial at *The Australian Reconciliation Convention*, Melbourne 1997.

We recall the speech by the then Prime Minister of Australia, John Howard, when Aboriginal delegates turned their backs on him. They were expecting the word "Sorry". Let us stand and face outwards, away from me and the central lamp, both as a symbol of our solidarity with Aboriginal people in the face of the refusal of the then Prime Minister to say "Sorry", and also in acknowledgement of our own denials.

The congregation stand and face outward from the central space.

Audio#11

Audio extracted from the film *Howards Blemish* at
<http://www.myspace.com/video/loz/howard-39-s-blemish/11923175> (0.55)

Or the following may be read:

Extract from the speech of the Prime Minister to the Australian Reconciliation Convention, Melbourne, 1997

This week the report of the Human Rights and Equal Opportunities Commission inquiry into The Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from their Families will be tabled in Parliament. Like all such reports, it will be subjected to proper analysis and scrutiny. It will neither be uncritically accepted nor summarily swept aside. However, let me make this clear. Personally, I feel deep sorrow for those of my fellow Australians who suffered injustices under the practices of past generations towards indigenous people. Equally, I am sorry for the hurt and trauma many people here today may continue to feel as a consequence of those practices. In facing the realities of the past, however, we must not join those who would portray Australia's history since 1788 as little more than a disgraceful record of imperialism, exploitation and racism. Such a portrayal is a gross distortion and deliberately neglects the overall story of great Australian achievement that is there in our history to be told, and such an approach will be repudiated by the overwhelming majority of Australians who are proud of what this country has achieved although inevitably acknowledging the blemishes in its past history. Australians of this generation should not be required to accept guilt and blame for past actions and policies over which they had no control. However, we must acknowledge past wrongs, understand that they still cause a great deal of personal distress and resolve to improve areas of indigenous disadvantage both now and into the future.¹⁵

Leader

It was, in reality, a denial of our shame.

The leader pauses.

Leader

Let us stay standing, looking away, as we hear from the record of the Passion of Christ.

Bible Reader 6a

When they had sung the hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.
And Jesus said to them, "You will all become deserters; for it is written,
"I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered."
But after I am raised up, I will go before you to Galilee."
Peter said to him, "Even though all become deserters, I will not."
Jesus said to him, "Truly I tell you, this day, this very night, before the cock crows twice,
you will deny me three times."
But he said vehemently, "Even though I must die with you, I will not deny you." And all
of them said the same.

Bible Reader 6b

While Peter was below in the courtyard, one of the servant-girls of the high priest came
by.
When she saw Peter warming himself, she stared at him and said, "You also were with
Jesus, the man from Nazareth."
But he denied it, saying, "I do not know or understand what you are talking about." And
he went out into the forecourt. Then the cock crowed.
And the servant-girl, on seeing him, began again to say to the bystanders, "This man is
one of them."
But again he denied it.
Then after a little while the bystanders again said to Peter, "Certainly you are one of
them; for you are a Galilean."
But he began to curse, and he swore an oath, "I do not know this man you are talking
about."
At that moment the cock crowed for the second time. Then Peter remembered that
Jesus had said to him, "Before the cock crows twice, you will deny me three times."
And he broke down and wept.¹⁶

**The leader extinguishes the sixth lamp/candle, (lights are turned off) and a
silence is maintained.**

Leader

Let us move to the seventh site and face the violence of assimilation.

The leader leads the people to the seventh site.

Site 7: The Fountain of Tears, Adelaide

Audio#13

Geoffrey Gurrumul Yunupingu *Gurrumul History (I Was Born Blind)* (5.54)

Leader

Let us face the violence of assimilation.

Reader 7a

On 31 March 1998 a striking stone monument was dedicated at the site of the former Colebrook Home where stolen Aboriginal children were institutionalised until 1971. The tragic story of how Aboriginal children were forcibly removed 'stolen' from their parents and placed in public institutions or private homes is recorded in *Bringing Them Home*. This report was released in 1997 and records the painful experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people subjected to a misguided government policy of racial assimilation. The stone monument dedicated on that Sunday in 1998 is entitled 'Fountain of Tears' and symbolises in a dramatic way the sorrow of the Aboriginal parents who lost their children. The water from the fountain flows down, from a coolamon, over the faces of six Aboriginal people into a pool of tears below. The water from that pool was used in a healing ritual for those present at the dedication of the fountain.

Reader 7b

As we travel across this land, searching for our soul, we hear wailing, deepdown wailing. The policemen came unannounced, they said, and we had no time to hide our little girl, no time to say goodbye. They tore her from my breast! They tore my breast! They tore my soul! She screamed and screamed as they took her off down the long dirt track to a 'white' prison somewhere. In that prison, night after night the voices of torn parents seeped into their memories to comfort the stolen children - but they could not. Day after day the voices of their teachers crushed their hopes. 'You can be white, like us! You can be white!' The tears flowed and the years flowed until a nation heard the stolen story and tears of healing began to flow over many white faces. The tears still flow over the black faces on the monument where Colebrook Home once stood and kept Aboriginal 'orphans' apart, 'safe' from their culture.¹⁷

Leader

Let us pass around bowls of water. Let us dip a hand into the water and run the hand over the eyes of a person near by with the words, 'the tears of a stolen child'.

Bowls of water are passed around and faces anointed.

Leader

Please join me in the reading of "Fountain of Tears" on the back page of your program. Your responses are in dark type.

THE FOUNTAIN OF TEARS

Leader: These are the tears of the stolen generation.

Together: *May they help heal our memories.*

Leader: These are the tears of Aboriginal Australians who suffered and died for this land.

Together: *May they help heal our shame and sorrow.*

Leader: These are the tears of God, who still suffers for and with this land.

Together: *May they heal our broken hearts, our broken people and our broken land.*

Audio#14

Waak Waak Yungi *Jumbucco*. (5.00)

Leader

Let us hear from the record of the Passion of Christ

Bible Reader 7

Meanwhile, standing near the cross of Jesus were his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene.

When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing beside her, he said to his mother, "Woman, here is your son."

Then he said to the disciple, "Here is your mother."

And from that hour the disciple took her into his own home.¹⁸

Leader

Let us light a candle of hospitality and stand in a circle together.

I invite you to take a tea light candle and move toward a helper who will light your candle with a taper.

Four helpers take tapers and light them from the oil lamp/candle and move to the four corners of the space. Tea-light candles in candle holders are taken up by the people and lit by helpers. People stand in a circle holding their candles - when all the tea light candles are lit, the helpers light their own tea light candles and join the circle.

Leader

Enlightened by these words and experiences tonight, let us take our own lights and follow this light, which may represent for us a vision of hope.

Let us go to the place where we originally gathered and place our candles on the table there as signs of truth, reconciliation and hospitality.

Audio track #14 continues as the leader and people move out.

The leader takes the central lamp/candle and processes out of the space to the Gathering Place.

There, the lamp is held (or the candle is placed on the table with the people's candles).

Conclusion

Audio #15

Deborah Cheetham and Wicked Beat Sound System, *Dali Mana Gamarada*. (5.28)

Leader

We have heard again the ancient words of Christ's Passion in a new context as they echo through our ancient land.

At these seven sites, we have connected these painful words from the Christian tradition with the cries of aboriginal Australians.

We have heard these words of Christ's passion anew as we have faced the hidden stories of what happened in our past, and sought healing for the shame and effects of past injustices.

So let us complete the circle of our journey by recalling the words of our Prologue. The words may be found in the inside of your program, men reading the first line, and women, the second line in italics.

We hear the voice of the Hebrew prophet and the echo of the voice of white settlers about Aboriginal people.

M: He had no form or majesty that we should look at him,
W: *They had no form or majesty that we should look at them,*

M: nothing in his appearance that we should desire him.
W: *nothing in their appearance that we should desire them.*

M: He was despised and rejected by others;
W: *They were despised and rejected by others;*

M: a man of suffering and acquainted with infirmity;
W: *a people of suffering and acquainted with infirmity;*

M: as one from whom others hide their faces
W: *as those from whom others hide their faces*

M: he was despised and we held him of no account.
W: *they were despised and we held them of no account.*

M: He was oppressed and he was afflicted,
W: *they were oppressed and they were afflicted,*

M: yet he did not open his mouth;
W: *yet they did not open their mouths;*

M: like a lamb that is led to the slaughter,
W: *like lambs that are led to the slaughter,*

M: and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent,
W: *and like sheep that before their shearers are silent,*

M: so he did not open his mouth.
W: *so they did not open their mouths.*

M: By a perversion of justice he was taken away.
W: *By a perversion of justice they were taken away.*

M: Who could have imagined his future?
W: *Who could have imagined their future?*

(Isaiah 53: 23, 78)

Leader

Let us join in the responsive conclusion, on the back page of your program.

Leader The future is open to us.

Men The future is in our hands.

Women *The future is on our lips.*

Together **The future is in our embrace.**

The Leader extinguished the final oil lamp/candle

Leader

We are the bearers of light in the world.

Let us go to love and serve, as Jesus loved and served. Amen!

We are invited to tea and coffee ...

A postcard which provides details and credits for the soundtrack is available there.

Audio#16

Paul Kelly and Singers for the Black and Gold, *Yill Lull*. (3.55)

Acknowledgements

Soundscape Credits

1. *Dali Mana Gamarada* (5:28) Deborah Cheetham & Wicked Beat Sound System
Corroboration, A Journey Through The Musical Landscape of 21st Century Australia
(Mushroom 2001)
2. *The Redfern Speech* Paul Keating (1:01)
Reconciliation, Stories of the Heart, Sounds of the Rock, various artists
(ANTaR, Caritas Australia, Catholic Mission)
3. *Driftwood Spear#2* (3:21) Michael Livett & Anne Norman
Driftwood, Michael Livett & Anne Norman
(AMN Productions, Suite 3 50, 45 Glenferrie Rd, Malvern Vic 3144)
4. *The Sleeper Awakes#46,47* (5:38) Livett & Norman *Driftwood*
5. *Their Smooth Dark Flames Flicker* (4:56) Livett & Norman *Driftwood*
6. *Shake A Dead Geranium - Compilation* (2:40) Livett & Norman *Driftwood*
7. *Budding Fronds#25* (2:31) Livett & Norman *Driftwood*
8. *Down City Streets* (4:02) Archie Roach
Archie Roach, The Definitive Collection (Mushroom /Warner 2004)
9. *Driftwood Spear#2* (3:21) Livett & Norman *Driftwood*
10. *Whispering Lunar Incantations#28*(5:54) Livett & Norman *Driftwood*
11. *Melbourne Reconciliation Convention Speech* John Howard (0:55)
Extracted from <http://www.myspace.com/video/loz/howard-39-s-blemish/11923175>
12. *Petrified Forest#35* (2:19) Livett & Norman *Driftwood*
13. *Gurrumul History (I Was Born Blind)* (5:54) Geoffrey Gurrumul Yunupingu
Gurrumul, Geoffrey Gurrumul Yunupingu (iTunes/Skinnyfish 2009)
14. *Jumbucco* (5.00) Waak Waak Yungi
Womadelaide, Sounds of the Planet 2004, various artists (Arts Projects Australia and WOMAD Ltd)
- 15 *Dali Mana Gamarada* (5:28) Deborah Cheetham & Wicked Beat Sound System
16. *Yull Lull* (3:55) Paul Kelly and Singers for the Black and Gold
Reconciliation, Stories of the Heart, Sounds of the Rock, various artists
(ANTaR, Caritas Australia, Catholic Mission)

Text Acknowledgements

Norman C. Habel, 1999. *Reconciliation, Searching for Australia's Soul*. HarperCollins
Bible readings are taken from the *New Revised Standard Version* of the Bible.

Endnotes

- ¹ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tenebrae> (viewed December 21, 2010)
- ² The Program contains the responsive readings in large print- the Prologue and Conclusion Isaiah reading, 'The Fountain of Tears' and the 'Conclusion'. It also lists the credits.
- ³ C. Mattingley and K. Hampton, 1998. *Survival in Our Own Land*, p3. Australian Scholarly Publishing, Melbourne.
- ⁴ Matthew 26:1-5, 14-16
- ⁵ Norman C. Habel, 1999. *Reconciliation, Searching for Australia's Soul*, p171. HarperCollins
- ⁶ Mark 14: 43-50
- ⁷ Rintoul S. 1993, *The Wailing. A National Black Oral History*, pp. 208,209, p141. Heinemann, Melbourne
- ⁸ Mark 14: 53-65
- ⁹ Habel p176
- ¹⁰ John 19: 1-16
- ¹¹ Habel p179
- ¹² Royal Commission into British Nuclear Tests in Australia 1985. p. 15.
- ¹³ Habel p61
- ¹⁴ John 19:16-24
- ¹⁵ Extract from the Australian Council for Reconciliation Convention, Melbourne. Hon. John Howard.
- ¹⁶ Mark 14:27-31, 66-7.
- ¹⁷ Habel p186
- ¹⁸ John 19: 25-27