

Admit

Admission is a confession usually following an accusation. Australian society and the Church in particular stands accused of being complicit in the disadvantage of first nation peoples. For most people that complicity is accepting the status quo and failing to act to rectify the inequity still experienced by Australia's first peoples.

Jesus said Love God with all our heart and love your neighbour as yourself. Mark 12:30-32

As Church and individuals we need to hold that teaching in all areas of life.

The charge of complicity results from many aspects which include ignorance of history and culture, complacency due to our own relative comfort and affluence, The complexity of the race relation situation in 'Australia. It can be just too hard to engage mentally and physically with the complex matters involved. The risk of fracturing relationships family and friendships due to strongly held positions. Structural racism both historical and current as well as underlying racist attitudes held by many people. Perhaps most importantly, separation from God as we reflect on the first and greatest commandment Jesus taught.

Day 1

Read

Ephesians 4:18

They are darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, due to their hardness of heart.

Reflect

Ignorance has many root causes, Family culture, scant knowledge of Aboriginal and colonial history being passed down through families, much more would be known about the world wars in most households. History books reflect Government policy and the colonial Aboriginal interface has been written out of school curriculum till recently. It requires effort to educate oneself of Australia's early history and many priorities compete for that limited resource.

Consider/act

What positive steps have I taken to inform myself of Australia's colonial impact upon the first nations?

Day 2

Read

Ezekiel 34:21

²¹ Because you push with side and shoulder, and thrust at all the weak with your horns, till you have scattered them abroad.

Reflect

In Ezekiel 35 the picture of the weaker sheep being muscled off the best pasture so that the stronger take all reflects our society which has by strength dispossessed discriminated and oppressed first nations. All non-Aboriginal Australians benefit from that dispossession.

Consider/act

Is your comfort disturbed by knowledge of existing inequities in this country?

Day 3

Read

Isaiah 42:10

*fear not, for I am with you;
be not dismayed, for I am your God;
I will strengthen you, I will help you,
I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.*

Reflect

Understanding the complexity of Aboriginal disadvantage today bearing in mind cultural issues of which most have scant knowledge can make engaging with this crisis overwhelming. Many choose to 'turn off' the issue and hope it will go away.

Consider/act

Do you have the strength to engage with Building relationship with First Nation citizens?

Day 4

Read

Matthew 10:34-36

³⁴ "Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I have not come to bring peace, but a sword. ³⁵ For I have come to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. ³⁶ And a person's enemies will be those of his own household.

Reflect

Opinions on racial equity in Australia are often very firm and entrenched. Older generations tend to be more conservative but not always. Family, peer and societal conditioning (and the Devil) has a stronghold on many lives.

Consider/act

Does tension in your family or friendship group cause you to withdraw from the conversation?

Day 5

Read

Deuteronomy 10:19

¹⁹ Love the sojourner, therefore, for you were sojourners in the land of Egypt.

Reflect

The tragedy that first nation people are sojourners, strangers, refugees in their own land is due to genocidal actions and consequent oppression and discrimination. The premise that underpinned Terra Nullius was the understanding that the natives were a lower species than Europeans. The racism embodied in that understanding lives on. Particularly in rural areas where the cultures are in close proximity. Government policy often reflects different outcomes than would apply to non-indigenous populations.

Consider/act

How would you make first nations people more comfortable in this nation?

Day 6

Read

Luke 15:20- 24

²⁰ And he arose and came to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt compassion, and ran and embraced him and kissed him. ²¹ And the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.' ²² But the father said to his servants, 'Bring quickly the best robe, and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet. ²³ And bring the fattened calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate. ²⁴ For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found.'

Reflect

As we reflect upon the first and greatest commandment and Jesus teaching to love one's neighbour in the light of treatment of Australia's Aboriginal population it is easy to see how the nation, the Church and many citizens have fallen short of God's expectations and commands. Our history especially being a nominally Christian country demonstrates how we have strayed from God's plan and purpose.

Consider/act

How do you respond to God's willingness to rush to meet returning sinners with forgiveness?

Day 7

Read

James 1:22

But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.

Reflect

Aboriginal Australia has spoken through the Uluru Statement from the Heart about the next steps they would want to occur in this nation.

Consider/act

What action does this move you to?