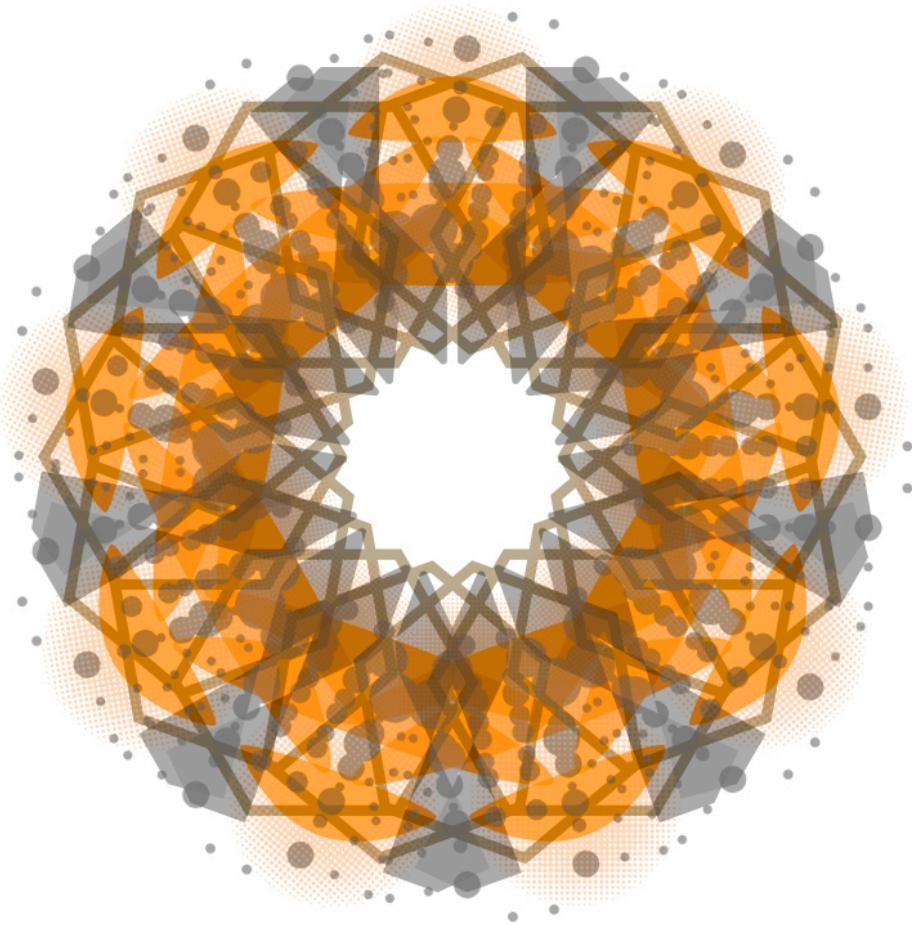


Soul Food

Reconciliation – Walking Together



Reconciliation – Walking Together

Exploring the essence of what reconciliation really means, and whether the human heart and soul can hold the answers we have been looking for.

Program

01. *Jack Davis, 'The Elder', 1992 Wdd*
02. *Black & White by Maurice Nicholson*
03. *Kevin Gilbert, The Search for Meaning Collection, Caroline Jones*
04. *Emily Roberts, Ojibwa Prayer, Native American*
05. *Nganyinytja – an elder of the Pitjantjatjara people of Central Australia*
06. *Wisdom Man by Banjo Clarke*
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19. *Australian Aboriginal elder Lorraine Mafi Williams*

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We would like to acknowledge the Wurundjeri
people of the Kulin Nation, the Traditional
Owners of the land on which we are gathered,
and pay our respects to their Elders both past
and present.

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**We want to walk with you, we don't want to
walk alone.**

— *Pastor Doug Nicholls*

01. Cry softly my people
I am back in the dreamtime now
Forgive the second children
But don't forget! And allow
Your own to grow and to nourish
With the heart to see
Help them to love and to flourish
Yet always remembering me
As being with them together
As one in affinity.

— *Jack Davis, 'The Elder', 1992*

02. Two sisters married two white men
Brother married a white lady
One sister married a Yugoslavian man
One cousin married a Greek man
Another cousin married an Italian man
Because the World is changing people are coming together.
My name is Maurice and I am an Aboriginal person.
Our society used to be divided.
In my lifetime I have seen lots of changes like black and white people socialising
more in public, mixed marriages.
Aboriginal people are struggling to get their families back together since they
were split up by government policies.
Having had our culture pulled apart, we were lost and sad.
We are trying to look for identity and to realise our culture again.
We all need to work together against racism to stop hatred and cruelty.
Black or white, we all share a sense of humour and we all share the same sadness
in losing a loved one.
We all share the colours of LOVE.
White society still has a black history.

— *Black & White by Maurice Nicholson*

03. Right from our early beginnings we were taught of the sanctity of the total life around us... The Aboriginal way is that everything is created equal and sacred: that the soil, the clay, the rocks are all sacred; and that all have a personality... I had the strength of knowing that my creator is not above me somewhere, but is always with me; that, whatever the substance around me, that creation flows to me, through me, within me; that the universe is part of me, as I am part of it... there is complete belonging, and life and death is just a constant flowing... a continual renewing.

– *Kevin Gilbert, The Search for Meaning Collection, Caroline Jones*

04. Grandfather,
Look at our brokenness.
We know that in all creation
Only the human family
Has strayed from the Sacred Way
We know that we are the ones
Who are divided
And we are the ones
Who must come back together
To walk in the Sacred Way.
Grandfather,
Sacred One
Teach us love, compassion, and honour
That we may heal the earth
And heal each other

– *Emily Roberts, Ojibwa Prayer, Native American*

This is the land of dreamings, a land of wide horizons and secret places. The first people, our ancestors, created this country in the culture that binds us to it.

– *Hetti Perkins*

05. Much trouble has come from people forgetting the land, the spirit. Many people are sick and have lost their spirit. The white government has cut their culture; we grieve for them. But we can all learn and make our spirit strong. My teaching is about opening your spirit, working together to build understanding. Opening our way, opening our hearts to share the spirit of the land with all who want to learn.
- *Nganyinytja – an elder of the Pitjantjatjara people of Central Australia*

If you can imagine the one family continuously occupying the same land for 40,000 years or more, using it not just to sustain life but as a place of reverence and worship, where every tree, rock and waterhole had significance, you will get some understanding of the importance of land to indigenous people.

– *Tania Major*

06. In his foreword to the book, the Right Honourable Malcolm Fraser wrote:

“Banjo Clarke was extraordinary. In many ways his life was one of forgiving; a life of kindness and a life of love. He knew what had happened to his ancestors in western Victoria and in other parts of Australia, yet he carried no residual anger.

“There is a touching story about a little girl who observed Banjo walking along one of the main streets of Warrnambool, greeting young and old. She turned to her mother and asked, ‘Mummy, who is that man who loves everyone?’ In many ways, that child’s words describe Banjo Clarke most accurately.”

Quotes from Banjo:

When forgiveness and love of the planet and a love of the people that walk upon it are your main priorities in life, then things get easier between people. Then disputes tend to fade away. And the ultimate goal is, the laughter returns.

I’ll never leave here. My heart and spirit will never leave the bush. I do not understand the notion of ‘title’ and ‘ownership’. Who can own the forest but God? It is a cathedral to me, a special place where I can feel my ancestors’ presence. It’s my homeland, the spirit of my people, where they roamed, sang and told stories. Whether you are black or white, you need to love, respect and be kind to this cathedral and never, never undermine it.

I’m glad to pass on the ancient wisdom to anyone who likes to listen. And a lot of the young people do listen. They come along to see me – lost kids, little white kids, little Aboriginal kids on drugs. They come home and ask, ‘Could I stay for a while?’ ‘Yeah!’ I say. ‘We’ve got lots of room here – have a feed, mate. If I’m

ever not home, help yourself. Have a good rest, mate. I treat them with kindness, you know, because they feel at this time in their life that they've got no friends ...This is a refuge for lost souls. My door's open for everyone, and they're all welcome. That's all I can do.

I would go to every human being's funeral in the world if I could, to show my respect for him or her for being a human being.

– *Wisdom Man by Banjo Clarke, as told to Camilla Chance – The compassionate life and beliefs of a remarkable Aboriginal Elder*

07. O humankind! Verily, ye are all the leaves and fruits of one tree; ye are all one. Therefore, associate in friendship; love one another; abandon prejudices of race; dispel forever this gloomy darkness of human ignorance, for the century of light, the Sun of Reality hath appeared. Now is the time for affiliation, and now is the period of unity and concord. For thousands of years ye have been contending in warfare and strife. It is enough. Now is the time for unity. Lay aside all self-purposes, and know for a certainty that all men are the servants of one God Who will bind them together in love and agreement.

– *Bahá'u'lláh, The Bahá'í Writings, as quoted in `Abdu'l-Bahá, The Promulgation of Universal Peace*

o8. No matter what part of the world we come from we are all basically human beings. We all seek happiness and try to avoid suffering. We have the same basic human needs and concerns. All of us human beings want freedom and the right to determine our own destiny as individuals and peoples. That is human nature. The great changes that are taking place everywhere in the world, from Eastern Europe to Africa are a clear indication of this...

As a Buddhist monk my concern extends to all members of the human family, and indeed, to all sentient beings who suffer. I believe all suffering is caused by ignorance. People inflict pain on others in the selfish pursuit of their happiness or satisfaction. Yet true happiness comes from a sense of brotherhood or sisterhood.

We need to cultivate a universal responsibility for one another and the planet we share. Although I have found my own Buddhist religion helpful in generating love and compassion, even for those we consider our enemies, I am convinced that everyone can develop a good heart and a sense of universal responsibility with or without religion.

With the ever growing impact of science in our lives religion and spirituality have a greater role to play reminding us of our humanity. There is no contradiction between the two. Each gives us valuable insight into the other. Both science and the teachings of the Buddha tell us of the fundamental unity of all things...

I believe all religions pursue the same goals, that of cultivating human goodness...

I pray for all of us, oppressor and friend, that together we succeed in building a better world, through human understanding and love.

– *Dalai Lama, in 1989 accepting the Nobel Peace Prize*

09. Where Aboriginal Australians have been included in the life of Australia they have made remarkable contributions. Economic contributions, particularly in the pastoral and agricultural industry. They are there in the frontier and exploration history of Australia... In sport at an extraordinary degree. In literature and art and music.

In all these things they have shaped our knowledge of this continent and of ourselves. They have shaped our identity. They are there in the Australian legend. We should never forget - they helped build this nation. And if we have a sense of justice, as well as common sense, we will forge a new partnership.

As I said, it might help us if we non-Aboriginal Australians imagined ourselves dispossessed of land we have lived on for 50,000 years - and then imagined ourselves told that it had never been ours. Imagine if ours was the oldest culture in the world and we were told that it was worthless.

Imagine if we had resisted this settlement, suffered and died in the defence of our land, and then were told in history books that we had given up without a fight. Imagine if non-Aboriginal Australians had served their country in peace and war and were then ignored in history books. Imagine if our feats on sporting fields had inspired admiration and patriotism and yet did nothing to diminish prejudice. Imagine if our spiritual life was denied and ridiculed.

Imagine if we had suffered the injustice and then were blamed for it.

It seems to me that if we can imagine the injustice then we can imagine its opposite. And we can have justice... we can turn the goals of reconciliation into reality...

We are beginning to more generally appreciate the depth and the diversity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures. From their music and art and dance we are beginning to recognise how much richer our national life and identity will be for the participation of Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islanders. We are beginning to learn what the indigenous people have known for many thousands of years - how to live with our physical environment.

Ever so gradually we are learning how to see Australia through Aboriginal eyes, beginning to recognise the wisdom contained in their epic story.

I think we are beginning to see how much we owe the indigenous Australians and how much we have lost by living so apart.

– *Prime Minister Paul Keating, Redfern Park, 10 December 1992, at the Australian launch of the International Year of the World's Indigenous Peoples*

This is perhaps the point of this Year of the World's Indigenous People: to bring the dispossessed out of the shadows, to recognise that they are part of us, and that we cannot give indigenous Australians up without giving up many of our own most deeply held values, much of our own identity - and our own humanity.

— Prime Minister Paul Keating

10. I have been told many times that when I win I make my people proud to be Australian. I am Aboriginal, I am one of them and every time I win or am honoured like this it should be an example to Aboriginal people who may think they have nowhere to go but down. But more importantly I am an Australian and I would like to make all Australians feel proud to be Australian. Ours is a truly multicultural society and should be united as such. I would like to believe that my successes are celebrated by all Australians, bringing our nation together.

— Catherine Freeman, 1960-2010 Australians of the Year, Wendy Lewis

**Love your brother like your soul,
guard him like the pupil of your eye.**

— Christian Writings

11. Racism, one of the most baneful and persistent evils, is a major barrier to peace. Its practice perpetrates too outrageous a violation of the dignity of human beings to be countenanced under any pretext. Racism retards the unfoldment of the boundless potentialities of its victims, corrupts its perpetrators, and blights human progress. Recognition of the oneness of mankind, implemented by appropriate legal measures, must be universally upheld if this problem is to be overcome.

There are spiritual principles, or what some call human values, by which solutions can be found for every social problem. Any well-intentioned group can in a general sense devise practical solutions to its problems, but good intentions and practical knowledge are usually not enough. The essential merit of spiritual principle is that it not only presents a perspective which harmonises with that which is immanent in human nature, it also induces an attitude, a dynamic, a will, an aspiration which facilitate the discovery and implementation of practical measures.

We join with all who are the victims of aggression, all who yearn for an end to conflict and contention, all whose devotion to principles of peace and world order promotes the ennobling purposes for which humanity was called into being by an all-loving Creator.

Let men and women, youth and children everywhere recognise the eternal merit of this imperative action for all peoples and lift up their voices in willing assent. Indeed, let it be this generation that inaugurates this glorious stage in the evolution of social life on the planet.

*– Excerpt from ‘The Promise of World Peace’ – Universal House of Justice,
Bahá’í World Centre*

**Do not be content with showing friendship in words alone,
let your heart burn with loving kindness for all who may
cross your path.**

– Bahá’í Writings

12. Let us behave with others as we would with Ourselves. Let us look upon all living beings as our good friends, for in all of them there resides one soul. All are but part of that Universal Soul. A person who believes that all are his soulmates and loves them all alike, never feels lonely. The divine qualities of forgiveness, compassion and Service will make him loveable in the eyes of all. He will experience intense joy throughout his life.

– *Hindu Scripture*

13. May the Wise Lord who reigns at his will grant to each of us that which he desires. I desire strength and endurance to uphold Righteousness – this do thou give me, O Devotion, the rich rewards, the life of the Good Mind. And may the sovereign Good be ours! According as one desires bliss may one receive bliss through thy most farseeing Spirit, O Lord, the wonders of the Good Mind which thou wilt give as Righteousness, with the joy of long life all the days!

– *Zoroastrian Scripture*

14. In safety and in bliss, may the creatures of all be of a peaceful heart. Whatever living things there are: whether weak or strong with none excepted. Great or small, seen or unseen, dwelling far or near, born or awaiting birth – may all be blessed with peace. Let no one work another one's undoing, or show contempt in any place. Let no one wish another harm, through provocation or resentful thought. Just as a mother with her life protects her child, her only child, let all the embracing thoughts for all that lives be yours. An all embracing love for all the universe, in all its height and depth and breadth.

– *Buddhist Scripture*

15. And when ye reap the harvest of your land, thou shalt not wholly reap the corners of thy field, neither shalt thou gather the gleanings of thy harvest. And thou shalt not glean thy vineyard, neither shalt thou gather every grape of thy vineyard; thou shalt leave them for the poor and for the stranger: I am the

LORD your God. Ye shall not steal; neither deal falsely, neither lie one to another. And ye shall not swear by My name falsely, neither shalt thou profane the name of thy God: I am the LORD.

Thou shalt not defraud thy neighbour, neither rob him; the wages of him that is hired shall not abide with thee all night until the morning. Thou shalt not curse the deaf, nor put a stumbling-block before the blind, but shalt fear thy God: I am the LORD. Ye shall do no unrighteousness in judgment; thou shalt not respect the person of the poor, nor favour the person of the mighty; but in righteousness shalt thou judge thy neighbour. Thou shalt not go up and down as a talebearer among thy people; neither shalt thou stand against the blood of thy neighbour: I am the LORD. Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thine heart; thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbour, and not suffer sin upon him. Thou shalt not avenge, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself: I am the LORD.

– *Jewish Scripture — Old Testament, King James Bible, Leviticus, 19:9-19*

16. The diversity in the human family should be the cause of love and harmony, as it is in music where many different notes blend together in the making of a perfect chord. If you meet those of different race and colour from yourself, do not mistrust them and withdraw yourself into your shell of conventionality but, rather, be glad and show them kindness. Think of them as different coloured roses growing in the beautiful garden of humanity and rejoice to be among them...

There are no whites and blacks before God. All colours are one, and that is the colour of servitude to God. Scent and colour are not important. The heart is important. If the heart is pure, white or black or any colour makes no difference. God does not look at colours; He looks at the hearts. He whose heart is pure is better. He whose character is better is more pleasing. He who turns more to the Abha Kingdom is more advanced.

In the realm of existence colours are of no importance.

– *Bahá'í Writings — 'Abdu'l-Bahá, Paris Talks*

We are all visitors to this time, this place. We are just passing through. Our purpose here is to observe, to learn, to grow, to love... and then we return home.

– *Aboriginal Proverb*

The history of human suffering of the indigenous people of this country cannot be assuaged by legal decisions or the opening of a purse. It can be assuaged only by the opening of hearts.

– *Professor Michael Dodson*

17. Once words ran high in a Blacksmith shop.
The furnace said, "If I cease to burn, the smithy must close."
The bellows said, "If I cease to blow, no fire, no smithy."
The hammer and anvil, also, each claimed the sole credit for keeping up the smithy.
The ploughshare that had been shaped by the furnace, the bellows, the hammer and the anvil, cried, "It is not each of you alone that keeps up the smithy, but ALL TOGETHER."

– *P. V. Ramaswami Raju, Indian Fables*

18. How good it is if friends be as close as sheaves of light, if they stand together side by side in a firm unbroken line. For now have the rays of reality from the Sun of the world of existence, united in adoration all the worshippers of this light; and these rays have, through infinite grace, gathered all peoples together within this wide-spreading shelter; therefore must all souls become as one soul, and all hearts as one heart. Let all be set free from the multiple identities that were born of passion and desire, and in the oneness of their love for God find a new way of life.

– *Bahá'í Writings – 'Abdu'l-Bahá, Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá*

19. When Humanity is in chaos like it is now, the simplest teaching given by the
Aboriginals is to respect each other.
Nobody is better than anybody else.
Love one another.
Especially in these times of chaos.
And I don't just mean the love between husband and wife.
I mean the humanity love as well.
And just the caring towards each other.
No discrimination
No racism
Everybody is equal.
And this is what God wants us to do.
You see, we believe there is God in heaven,
Just like everybody else.
But we believe that God is pure illuminating light of love.
It's a Being. God's not a man or a woman.
It's a beautiful Being of love.
And all humanity should know that and love each other.
That's the ultimate aim of the above and the below.
That's the ultimate aim of humanity.

– *Australian Aboriginal elder Lorraine Mafi Williams*

**Never doubt that a small, group of thoughtful, committed
citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that
ever has.**

– *Margaret Mead*

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All Soul Food programs are available for free download from
www.soulfood.com.au

About Soul Food

Soul Food is a monthly event held at the State Library of Victoria, providing an opportunity to relax in a tranquil environment and reflect on inspiring themes.

It features music, audio-visual pieces and readings from various Faiths; indigenous, ancient and modern, from all over the world. Soul Food's purpose is to inspire us to transform our lives, our neighbourhoods and communities, with actions that promote the unity and betterment of society.

Soul Food is a free community event open to all.

Venue

State Library of Victoria,
Village Roadshow Theatre
Corner Swanston St & La Trobe St (Enter via La Trobe Street)

Time

11.00am – 12.00pm

First Sunday of every month

September 1st
October 6th
November 3rd
December 1st

Further Information

For further information about Soul Food events in Victoria, South Australia, Tasmania or Western Australia please call 03 9415 6007 or visit www.soulfood.com.au.

Study Circles

The Bahá'í community offers a series of regular 'Study Circles' – as an opportunity to further explore subjects related to spiritual development. Study Circles are small, informal groups, and provide an environment in which to discuss meaningful topics with like-minded people. The first Study Circle is titled "Reflections on the Life of the Spirit", from the Ruhi Study Circle series. It is a three unit study on; Understanding the Bahá'í Writings, Prayer & Meditation, and Life & Death.

If you enjoy Soul Food then a Study Circle may also appeal to you. For more information please contact 03 9415 6007 or email soulfoodvic@gmail.com.

The Bahá'í Community of Victoria

Soul Food is an initiative of the Bahá'í Community of Victoria. For further information about the Bahá'í Faith please visit www.bahai.org.au.

Supporters

Soul Food is proudly supported by the Baha'i Council of South-Eastern Australia, and the Office of Multicultural Affairs and Citizenship.

