

We opened
New Parliament House
with

Gathering PRAYER Bulletin



We meet at a special moment in Australia's history ...

Welcome to one of the most exciting moments in the Australian Christian Church's history. You'll note the sub-theme for the Gathering that's emerged is "And they were all gathered together in one place with one accord." Over this weekend you will be mixing with people that probably have never come together quite like this before, and for many, the only thing that will unite them will be their love for the Lord Jesus and a love for their country.



**... All gathered together in one place
of one accord ...**

(cont. from p.1)

We know the eyes and the ears of the world are going to be on us. We know heads of government at both the federal and state spheres are very conscious that we're coming and they're waiting to see what will happen.

Preserving the unity

The Bible talks about the unity of the Spirit we already have and here is a great opportunity to show how our love for Christ and each other is the way forward for a country struggling for a sense of unity.

In the designing of the program, broad participation and symbolic action were the ways we chose to go. We're a nation looking for symbols and as a Christian Church we are looking for new symbols that will express both our Australian-ness and our faith.

We ask for a spirit of patience and grace, if some of the things that happen aren't immediately to your taste. This is the first time anything quite like this has happened and it will probably be good to remind ourselves that the clearest expression of love is patience. We have the unity of the body through the Spirit, but we may need to exercise patience to maintain it. But I am certain that if you look beyond the fumbling attempts of humans, you will see the sovereign hand of God, gently bringing together a very special moment; and we know that Australians have little respect for political parties or religious groups that have no unity. A case could be put that the most powerful witness of today will be that sense of unity that will grow amongst us as the day wears on.



Marchers all over the nation prepared for Canberra by taking to the streets in the 'Cooee' events.

Let's build an 'open crowd'

We would like everybody to be at the various marshalling points as near to 11.00 o'clock as is possible. We want to share in some songs together, have a word of prayer, welcome everybody and build an open crowd, so when we participate in the march there will be a magnetic spirit of joyfulness, that will be like a sweet fragrance in the streets of Canberra.

Use your FM radio to stay in touch

Badges and balloons will be available. One to help us identify each other and the other to release, as a symbol of our prayer rising up to God.



Archbishop Donald Robinson

"The Christian Church was one of the first groups to give leadership in the Australian colony and it is imperative that it remains in forefront to ensure our nation's future is based firmly on Christian hope."

Prayer, Reflection & Celebration

At the first meeting of the Steering Committee, it was decided that we should have three goals 1) Prayer, 2) Reflection and 3) Celebration. We committed ourselves also to meditate on the words of the first Christian sermon ever preached on these shores by Richard Johnson, when he took as his text Psalm 116 "What shall we render to the Lord for all of His benefits toward us". It is time in our Bicentennial year to thank God for such a wonderful country and all the benefits He has bestowed upon us. But then to ask what is a right response.

Attending to unfinished business with our Aboriginal brothers and sisters.

It seemed to godly Christian leaders as we thought through this issue that coming to terms with the unfinished business with our Aboriginal brothers and sisters was a top priority. As it says in Matthew 5:23 & 24, "If you bring your sacrifice to the altar and you know a brother has got something against you, you must first leave your sacrifice at the altar and fix it up with your brother and then come back."

This is a great opportunity for us to model before God and the whole Australian community, an authentic expression of reconciliation. A lot of discussion has been entered into with Aboriginal Christians and a wonderful spirit of reconciliation emerged amongst them as they shared with us what would have meaning for them.

It is interesting that as the program unfolds you will find not only will we have a cross made from the very wood of the corral, which housed the Myall Creek massacre, but they suggested fire and water. Fire which speaks of purifying. The Scripture says our God is a consuming fire, and water which speaks of the life-giving Spirit.

A Prayer as we gather together around the new Parliament House

- Gather round Parliament House.
- Sing "Save Save Save"
- Prayer together

Almighty God, Creator of all, we come as your children to pray for our nation at the time of the opening of this new Parliament House.

You have drawn us together in the name of your Son, Jesus Christ, who died on the Cross to show your love and your truth.

Loving God, we praise you for your goodness and for all who encourage us to live as your people. You have given us the gift of life and with that gift the choice of following the guidance of your Holy Spirit, or going our own way. As individuals and as a nation we confess that many times we have taken our own way and not yours.

Merciful God, we apologise for the careless use of all you have given us in this ancient land. Strengthen the Aboriginal people whose sufferings have been great since the recent arrival of others here.

In our history, too often we have put self first, failing to recognise you in neighbours at home or in nearby countries.

Before you, our God, we lay the prayers we bring in our hearts ...

(A time for silent prayer)

Grant us your peace in our hearts, our homes, our nation and our world.

Teach us to deal justly, to love mercy and walk humbly with you.

Help us to show the reconciling love of Jesus Christ, living, working and playing together for the future of our nation, Australia.

- Act of Reconciliation with Aboriginal Christian leaders
- While Aboriginal people minister with fire and water we sing "Lord Have Mercy"
- Sing "Father Makes Us One"
- Move to land bridge



Rev. Charles Harris — President Aboriginal and Islander Congress.
"I came because genuine and sacrificial concern for my people is something money can't buy."

A chill went up our spine as we sensed God at work amongst us, reassuring us of His ownership of the whole program.

When we first arrive at New Parliament House, we will sing a song together "Save, Save, Save", No. 2 on the songsheet, then we will be led in the prayer that has been composed by one of our Patrons, Rev. Alistair Christie, of the Uniting Church in Canberra. We will repeat it line after line, after him, then there will be a season of quiet personal prayer and then we will conclude in prayer, at which point we will sing song No. 3 on the hymn sheet.

It is at this point that Christian leaders will participate in an act of reconciliation with Aboriginal Leaders. Aboriginal Christians then will create smoke from the fire and with the familiar fragrance of the Australian bush, will walk around new Parliament House, purifying it in the name of God. Then they will share with us the most basic element so significant to human life on this planet and in our country particularly — water. We will be reminded when the first white men arrived, the Aboriginal people showed them where the water holes were.

Now Christian Aboriginal leaders who have participated in the revivals and renewal movements in the desert lands of Australia, will be coming to us again, saying "Will you be humble enough to let us lead you to the spiritual water holes we have found in the wilderness, so together we may be refreshed and built up in one spirit?"

We will all be given a little plastic cup and Aboriginal people will serve us by offering water, which God has given to us all, to share; to receive and drink, as a symbol of His refreshing spirit, and after receiving the reconciliation that we all have because of the blood of Christ, we will all sing "Father Make Us One".

We are expecting dozens and maybe hundreds of Aboriginal people, many of whom will be tribal people and they will be shy, but if you can, then gently shake a hand or give a hug saying "the peace of Christ be with us both".

Afternoon program of celebration

We will then quietly move back to the land bridge between old and new Parliament House, where we will move to a spirit of rejoicing and thanksgiving.

First up on the program will be Kings Kids from Y.W.A.M., with a special medley of Australian songs and Gospel songs that will warm your heart. Senator Michael Tate will open the proceedings and then we will share together in a whole new way. It will be the first time we will all be there together in one place, with one accord. We will see each other and give thanks for what God has done amongst us.

(cont. on p.4)



The dawn prayer service in Perth on Australia day.

Songs for an Aussie Awakening

1 MAKE WAY! *Graham Kendrick*

Chorus: (Ladies echo in brackets)

Make way (make way)
Make way (make way)
For the king of kings (for the King of kings)
Make way (make way)
Make way (make way)

(Unison): And let His Kingdom in.

1. Make way, make way
for Christ the King in splendour arrives
Fling wide the gates and welcome
Him into your lives!
2. He comes the broken hearts to heal
The prisoners to free
The deaf shall hear, the lame shall dance
The blind shall see.
3. And those who mourn with heavy hearts
Who weep and sigh
With laughter, joy and royal crown
He'll beautify.
4. We call you now to worship Him
As Lord of all
To have no gods before Him
Their thrones must fall!

Chorus twice to end.

2 SAVE, SAVE, SAVE *Graham Kendrick*

Save, save, save
the people of this land
O Lord, for You
You are a God of mercy.

Send, send, send
The fire of your Spirit, Lord,
For O, our God is a consuming fire.

3 LORD HAVE MERCY UPON US

Lord have mercy on us
Come and heal our land
Cleanse with Your fire
Heal with Your touch
Humbly we bow and call upon you now

O Lord have mercy on us
O Lord have mercy on us

(Last time)

4 FATHER MAKE US ONE

Father make us one,
Father make us one,
That the world may know,
Thou hast sent the Son,
Father make us one.

5 AUSTRALIA YOU BELONG TO JESUS *Mark Baker*

Darkness is over you
There is nothing you can do
Your money's gone and your babies cry
Your luck's run out and your land is dry

Broken and in despair
They're crying "Does anybody care?"
Violence and anger are in your voice
In children's hearts, no longer joy.

Won't you hear, I bought you with a price
Go and proclaim, the Kingdom of my grace
You are my own, purchased by my blood
Let Australia know that I love her

Australia you belong to Jesus
the King of Kings is your sovereignty
His majesty calls for your allegiance
Saying lay down your idols, follow me

You belong to me, I bought you with a price
Go and proclaim the Kingdom of my grace
You are my own, purchased by my blood
Let Australia know that I love her

Australia you belong to Jesus ...

6 WE WILL STAND *Tim Edwards*

Sometimes it is hard for me to understand
Why we pull away from each other so easily
Even though we're walking the same road
Yet we build, dividing walls between ourselves
But I don't care what label you may wear
If you believe in Jesus, belong with me
The bond we share is all I care to see
It will change the world forever
If you join with me and say

(Chorus)

Say that you're my brother, you're my sister
So take me by the hand
Together we will work until he comes
There's no foe that can defeat us
If we're walking side by side
Just as long as there is love, we will stand

The day will come when we will be as one
With a mighty voice together we will proclaim
That Jesus, Jesus is King
It will echo though the earth,
it will shake the nations
And the world will see

(Chorus)

See that you're my brother ...

7 OUR GOD REIGNS

How lovely on the mountains are the feet of him,
Who brings good news, good news.
Announcing peace, proclaiming news of happiness,
Our God reigns, our God reigns

Our God reigns, our God reigns,
Our God reigns, our God reigns.

8 AMAZING GRACE

Amazing grace how sweet the sound,
That saved a wretch like me,
I once was lost, but now am found
Was blind, but now I see.

Twice grace that taught my heart to fear,
And grace my fears relieved,
How precious did that grace appear
The hour I first believed.

Through many dangers, toils and snares,
I have already come,
Tis grace that brought me safe thus far,
And grace will lead me home.

When we've been there ten thousand years,
Bright shining as the sun,
We've no less days to sing God's praise,
Than when we first begun.

9 LORD MAKE US WILLING

1. Lord make us willing
To reach out our hands
To pray for our nation
To make it stand
That the light of the Gospel
Will lead the way
And light up Australia today.

2. Lord we are willing
To reach out our hands
To pray for our nation
To make it stand
That the light of the Gospel
Will lead the way
We'll pray for Australia
Our land Australia
Lord touch Australia today.

(to the tune of "I still call Australia home")

10 JESUS PUT THIS SONG INTO OUR HEARTS *Graham Kendrick*

Jesus put this song into our hearts
Jesus put this song into our hearts
It's a song of joy
No one can take away
Jesus put this song into our hearts.

Jesus taught us how to live in harmony
Jesus taught us how to live in harmony
Different faces, different races,
He made us one,
Jesus taught us how to live in harmony.

Jesus taught us how to be a family
Jesus taught us how to be a family
Loving one another with the love that He gives
Jesus taught us how to be a family.

Jesus turned our sorrow into dancing
Jesus turned our sorrow into dancing
Changed our tears of sadness into rivers of joy
Jesus turned our sorrow into a dance.