



# *Covenanting* and the Uniting Church in Australia

At its 7th Assembly in 1994, the Uniting Church formally entered into a relationship of Covenant with its Indigenous members, recognising and repenting for the Church's complicity in the injustices perpetrated on Australia's Indigenous community, and pledging to move forward with a shared future.

The Covenanting Statement, read by the President of the Uniting Church, states in part

"We lament that our people took your land from you as if it were land belonging to nobody, and often responded with great violence to the resistance of your people; our people took from you your means of livelihood, and desecrated many sacred places."

"By providing foster-homes for Aboriginal children, our churches in reality lent their support to the government practice of taking children from their mothers and families, causing great suffering and loss of cultural identity."

"We seek to journey together in the true spirit of Christ as we discover what it means to be bound to one another in a covenant."

The generous response from the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress to this statement, reads in part

"We come to this covenanting table with our gifts of Aboriginal spirituality, our culture, our Aboriginal way of loving and caring, our instinctive concern and a willingness to share and teach our history and every good aspect about being Aboriginal and Islander."

"We pray that God will guide you, together with us, in developing a covenant to walk together practically so that the words of your statement may become a tangible expression of His justice and love for all creation. We ask you to remember this covenant by remembering that our land is now sustaining your people by God's grace."

You can find the full text of these statements on the Assembly website at  
<http://assembly.uca.org.au/resources/covenanting/item/135-covenanting-statement-1994>

*For more information*

visit the Assembly's covenanting webpage at  
<http://assembly.uca.org.au/resources/covenanting>  
for information and resources to assist the Church in its covenanting journey

## *The Uniting Church's journey with recognition - a new Preamble*

At its Twelfth Assembly meeting in 2009, the Uniting Church began a process of adopting a new Preamble to the Church's Constitution, which acknowledges Australia's traditional owners and their pre-existing relationship with the Creator God. The Church also acknowledged its complicity in dispossessing the First People of Australia from their land, culture and spirituality.

The Preamble was formally adopted after it was approved by the majority of the Church's Presbyteries and Synods (as a change to the Constitution requires).

You can find the full text of the new Preamble at  
<http://assembly.uca.org.au/resources/covenanting/item/668-the-revised-preamble>