Recognition without Dignity

The Politics and Theology of Postponement of Aboriginal Peoples' Justice in Australia

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> The bread that is shared among Christians is not only material resource but the recognition of dignity.
> *Rowan Williams*[1]

I, Brooke, belong to peoples who have a Dreaming – a Dreaming that for over 60,000 years taught us and continues to teach us of the Creator, how to care for creation, and how to live in right relationship with one another. I belong to peoples who, for over 2,000 generations, have left footprints on these lands now called Australia. I belong to peoples who are the world's oldest living culture. I also belong to peoples, however, who understand what it is to live the politics of the postponement of justice in Australia, a people who have been crying out for justice for nearly 250 years in this land we are told is 'young and free', this land of the 'fair go' in this so-called 'lucky country'. As Aboriginal peoples we see a very different Australia to what many others see. We see an Australia that is in a mess, in chaos, in ruins. We see an Australia whose heart is sick, weeping, broken. It is a recognition of the reality of Australia in 2018. Somehow Australia seems to have been able to avoid and avert being held to account for injustices.

I, Geoff, am writing this introduction on 26 January. In 2018 this date is contested in Australian public life and there are various proposals as to what to call this national public holiday: Australia Day, Invasion Day, Survival Day, or Day of Mourning being among the more prominent. Stan Grant, an author and journalist, is unequivocal:

> Australia still can't decide whether we were settled or invaded. We have no doubt. Our people died defending their land and they had no doubt. The result was the same for us whatever you call it. Within a generation the civilisations of the eastern seaboard – older than the Pharoahs – were ravaged.[2]

This history – our history – makes a mockery of the opening lines of Australia's National Anthem sung around the country on 26 January: "Australians all let us rejoice for we are young and free". As a consequence, 'change the date' is another grassroots campaign that has been gaining momentum in recent years, leading

1 Rowan Williams, *Being Disciples:Essentials of the Chrisitan Life* (London: SPCK, 2016), 36.

2 Stan Grant, *Talking to My Country* (Sydney: HarperCollinsPublishers, 2016), 2. See also "Timeline", online at: http://bit.ly/2AOFB9Y [Accessed 26 January 2017].

one Australian city to change the date of its Australia Day celebrations.[3] These are just some of the reasons for me (Geoff) to avoid the complexities associated with achieving Reconciliation between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples in Australia. There are other significant impediments. I am not Aboriginal. I am an Anglican priest representing an institution with a history of misplaced presumptions and misguided policies in its dealings with Aboriginal peoples. The politics of postponement has frustrated social justice for Australia's first peoples, leaving many disappointed and disillusioned. A significant milestone in Australian democracy was achieved in the year of my birth (1967), when Aboriginal people were first counted as citizens of Australia in the national census. Over the next fifty years justice for Aboriginal people stuttered and had stalled by 2008, when Kevin Rudd, then the Australian Prime Minister, formally apologised on behalf of the government to the stolen generations.[4]

How has justice been postponed in Australian political life? Addressing that question is the purpose of this chapter. It will endeavour to outline a role for Christian thought and practice in analysing, and then addressing, the politics of postponement. It is thus concerned with a public theology that is marked by a recognition with dignity; it represents a public theology where history, politics and theology – storytelling, faith and the public square – must also learn to walk together.

The Gap between Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal Peoples

One reason for the postponement of justice is the lack of engagement from non-Aboriginal peoples – that is, the majority or the dominant culture. An attempt was made by former Prime Minister Paul Keating to draw attention to the role non-Aboriginal peoples have in bringing recognition with dignity and ending the postponement of justice for Aboriginal peoples.

> And, as I say, the starting point might be to recognise that the problem starts with us non-Aboriginal Australians. It begins, I think, with the act of recognition. Recognition that it was we who did the dispossessing. We took the traditional lands and smashed the traditional way of life. We brought the disasters. The alcohol. We committed the murders. We took the children from their mothers. We practised discrimination and exclusion. It was our ignorance and our prejudice. And our failure to imagine these things being done to us. With some noble exceptions, we failed to make the most basic human response and enter into their hearts and minds. We failed to ask – how would I feel if this were done to me? As a consequence, we failed to see that what we were doing degraded all of us.[5]

I, Brooke, compiled a list of injustices and consequences of injustices facing Aboriginal peoples today to use when addressing non-Aboriginal audiences. It is not

3 For example, Kylie Beach, "Thoughts on Change the Date", online at: http://bit.ly/2LX0oN2 [Accessed 26 January 2017].

4 The 1967 referendum succeeded through the campaign "Vote Yes for Aborigines", which indicated an emerging national mood in favour of reconciliation. For many non-Aboriginal people confusion continues regarding Aboriginal citizenship that had been gained previously in 1962 (or 1948).

5 Paul Keating, "The Redfern Park Speech". In: M. Grattan (ed.), *Reconciliation: Essays in Australian Reconciliation* (Melbourne, Bookman, 2000), 60.

an exhaustive list, but it is exhausting to name and recognise the scope of injustice. Invasion, dispossession, stolen land, stolen wages, stolen generations, lack of a treaty, slavery, the frontier wars, frontier violence, massacres, genocide, the loss of language, the lack of the return of ancestral remains, the lack of protection of sacred sites, the lack of the prevention of the sale of cultural items, the high rates of prison incarceration, the high rates of juvenile detention, denied access to medical treatment whilst in custody, denied access to an interpreter, initial denied release of CCTV footage of Ms Dhu's and Wayne Fella Morrison's death in custody,[6] the Northern Territory Intervention, paperless arrest laws, forced removal from homelands, nuclear waste dumps without proper and thorough consultation with traditional owners, coal mines without agreement from traditional owners, contravention of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, poverty, racism, the new stolen generation, and Aboriginal deaths in custody.

The list is long, overwhelming, traumatic – to engage with each injustice takes time. Many non-Aboriginal peoples continue to avoid and avert engagement with these issues. How should we even name them? Naming is important. The holocaust, segregation, apartheid – Germany, United States, South Africa – each has a name for such historic injustice. Aboriginal peoples have faced genocide and massacres, were put into camps and missions, were denied the vote and denied a wage. But these actions are never called by their proper name. Most non-Aboriginal peoples live with a vague sense of past wrongdoing. I do not have a suggested name, but the lack of recognition postpones justice.

A public theology of justice, grounded in either right order or rights, can never become a single or comprehensive ideal that can be promoted under the banner of God's justice in the public sphere.[7] Its value lies in offering an account of justice that takes seriously the histories of Christian communities: a theologically grounded concept of justice needs to avoid consciously endorsing the notion that the justice of the dominant is the dominant justice. A public theology of justice consistently rejects any account of justice that relies upon coercive force employed by those possessing power. Fundamentally, a vision of Christian justice has been revealed in Jesus' life, death and resurrection, and practised by Christians and their communities. Here we find the kind of justice that rejects coercion and domination.

Elsewhere I, Geoff, have argued that the justice of Jesus Christ – expressed as enemy-love – constitutes a distinctly Christian way of justice.[8] Following Christopher Marshall, the force and effect of the compassionate Jesus is reckoned to embody the way of reconciliation and justice together as mediated in and through in the parable

6 Calla Wahlquist, "Family of Indigenous Man Who Died After Prison Incident Call For Coronial Process Overhaul", *The Guardian*, 20 October, 2016. Online at: http://bit.ly/2opYZHH [Accessed 27 November 2017].

7 Both Christopher D. Marshall, *Crowned with Glory and Honor: Human Rights in the Biblical Tradition* (Telford: Pandora Press, 2001) and Nicholas Wolterstorff, *Justice: Rights and Wrongs* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008) represent a rights-based approach to justice. Oliver O'Donovan, *The Ways of Judgment* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2005) [https://doi.org/10.1515/9781400828715]. and Emil Brunner, *Justice and the Social Order* (London: Lutterworth Press, 1949) proposed a right-order approach to justice.

8 Geoff Broughton, *Restorative Christ: Jesus, Justice and Discipleship* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2014).

of the prodigal son in Luke 15:11-32.[9] The non-violent Jesus practises justice without retaliation – this time exemplied through the teaching of Jesus on enemy-love in Luke 6:27-45.[10] These references to the compassionate and non-violent are perceived to be responses to the core ongoing Christological question: Who is Jesus Christ for us today? For Dietrich Bonhoeffer Christ is the 'man for others' and so the type of justice that then ensues is the Jesus-for-others demanding justice with repentance. In this instance, the biblical core is witnessed to by the second wrongdoer on the cross alongside Jesus (Luke 23:26-49).[11] These three types lead into a Christology of embrace associated with the imagery of Miroslav Volf. This inclusive and embracing Jesus who enacts justice with repair is demonstrated by Saul's encounter with the risen Jesus at Acts 9:1-6.[12] The underlying assumption is that these models/types lend themselves to a Christian theology of justice, grounded in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ that is able to name Aboriginal injustices properly, and provide recognition with dignity.

The Concept of Recognition[13]

Of vital importance for this concern with restorative justice is the status and role of recognition. This refers to Charles Taylor's well-known thesis that identity is partly shaped by recognition or its absence, often by a misrecognition of others. Taylor's examples include women under patriarchy, 'black lives matter', and Indigenous and colonised people.[14]

> Misrecognition shows not just a lack of due respect. It can inflict a grievous wound, saddling its victims with a crippling self-hatred. Due recognition is not just a courtesy we owe people. It is a vital human need.[15]

What has arguably existed in Australian politics from its historical beginnings is "not the need for recognition but the conditions in which the attempt to be recognised can fail".[16] These conditions have become more obvious since the 1967 referendum – itself a crucial first step in recognising Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples. Since the Rudd apology to the Stolen Generations in 2008 (another promising step in recognising past injustices), the failure to be recognised is that non-Aboriginal people never get further than these first steps. Justice, inevitably, is postponed. The politics of recognition is equally postponed because, in the analysis of Jürgen Habermas – in a response to Taylor's thesis and focused more on the political issues of asylum:

9 Broughton, *Restorative Christ*, 24-50.
10 Ibid., 51-82.
11 Ibid., 91-124.
12 Ibid., 125-157.
13 The Canadian philosopher Charles Taylor was recently named the winner of the first Berggruen Prize that is to be awarded annually for "a thinker whose ideas are of broad significance for shaping human self-understanding and the advancement of humanity". Berggruen Institute, 4 October 2016. Online at: http://bit.ly/2IwH7BU [Accessed 28 October 2017].
14 Charles Taylor, *Multiculturalism: Examining the Politics of Recognition*, edited by Amy Gutmann (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994), 25-26.
15 Ibid., 26.
16 Ibid, 35.

> as soon as we treat a problem as a legal problem, we bring into play a conception of modern law that forces us – on conceptual grounds alone – to operate within the architectonics of the constitutional state and its wealth of presuppositions.[17]

Will constitutional recognition alone address those injustices and consequences of injustice named above? The contemporary debates in Australia over 26 January as a commemorative date, such as the 'history' of the land now called Australia (is it 250 years old or 60,000 years old?), exemplify how recognition without dignity, or just a plain lack of recognition, has led to the postponement of justice for Aboriginal peoples. One of the first injustices an Aboriginal child will encounter within the Australian school system is this lack of recognition in Australian history. Until recent years the Australian school system and higher education system persisted with the abbreviated version of Australia as a continent 'discovered' and settled by Captain Cook. It was not until 2016 that the invaded-versus-settled debate made the headlines of mainstream media. The University of New South Wales corrected the widely misunderstood history, by asserting:

> Australia was not settled peacefully, it was invaded, occupied and colonised. Describing the arrival of the Europeans as a 'settlement' attempts to view Australian history from the shores of England rather than the shores of Australia.[18]

Since 1788 Aboriginal people have been denied a treaty. This basic lack of recognition has resulted in Australia being the only Commonwealth nation, and one of the only liberal democracies, without a treaty with its first peoples. At the time of Federation in 1901 Aboriginal peoples were not recognised in the Constitution, as it was then thought that they would die out – either naturally or through extermination. On 26 January 1938 a group of Aboriginal leaders, including William Cooper, gathered on the 'Day of Mourning' to present a 10-point plan demanding equal rights as citizens, asking for recognition, pleading for the granting of dignity. Cooper stated that:

> We, representing the Aborigines of Australia, assembled at the Australian Hall in Sydney on 26 January 1938, this being the 150th anniversary of the white man's seizure of our country, hereby make protest against the callous treatment of the white man of our people in the past 150 years and we appeal to the Australian nation to make laws, new laws for the education and care of Aborigines and for a new policy that will raise our people to full citizen status, and equality within the community.[19]

17 Jürgen Habermas, "Struggles for Recognition in the Democratic Constitutional State". In: A. Gutmann, (ed.) *Multiculturalism: Examining the Politics of Recognition* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994), 110.

18 University of New South Wales, Diversity Toolkit, General Information Folios, Part 3: Appropriate Terminology, Indigenous Australian People. Online at: http://bit.ly/2LYsQQK [Accessed 3 February 2017].

19 National Museum of Australia, "1938: Sesquicentenary and Aboriginal Day of Mourning". Online at: http://bit.ly/2IGOw1o [Accessed 26 January 2017].

Only recently have historians recognised Aboriginal ways of sustainable food and land management.[20] Others persist with a direct assault on Aboriginal heritage and dignity.[21]

For nearly 250 years Aboriginal recognition has been without dignity or denied altogether. Both political and ecclesial assumptions are culpable as churches in Australia have affirmed and assented to the politics of [mis]recognition rather than the recognition with dignity found in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Donna Hicks, in her landmark book *Dignity*, argues that the concept of dignity provides a broader and deeper framework for locating such injustice beyond the politics of identity or recognition. A paragraph describing the contemporary injustice towards Muslim people in the United States of America could have been written as a summary of the postponed justice for an Aboriginal person in Australia:

> all of the essential elements of dignity were violated. He was excluded from being able to participate on the basis of his [Aboriginal] identity. He was not acknowledged and recognized as a significant political player, although he had been active in Washington politics for many years. It was not safe for him to be involved ... and it was grossly unfair that he could not participate. Because of the negative stereotype of [Aboriginal peoples], he was not given the benefit of the doubt, making him misunderstood and disempowered. His freedom was restricted, his concerns could not be responded to – no one took the time to listen to him – and finally, there was no public attempt to right the wrong. No one took responsibility for the injuries that he and other [Aboriginal peoples] were suffering from.[22]

Before identifying dignity as an essential, but often missing, element in the recognition of Aboriginal peoples in Australia, contemporary approaches to recognition need to be identified.

Contemporary Approaches to Recognition

Contemporary discussion of Aboriginal recognition in Australian politics has a long history. It has been expressed under various guises, beginning formally with the 1963 Yirrkala Bark Petitions.

> These are the first documents bridging Commonwealth law as it then stood, and the Indigenous laws of the land. These petitions from the Yolngu people of Yirrkala were the first traditional documents recognised by the Commonwealth Parliament and are thus the documentary recognition of Indigenous people in Australian law ... The petitioners unsuccessfully sought the Commonwealth Parliament's recognition of rights to their traditional lands on the Gove Peninsula in Arnhem Land ... Though these documents did not achieve the constitutional change sought,

20 Bill Gammage, *The Biggest Estate on Earth: How Aborigines Made Australia* (Melbourne: Allen and Unwin, 2010).

21 Karl Quinn, "First Contact Review: David Oldfield's Verdict on 'Stone Age' Culture", *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 15 November 2016, online at: http://bit.ly/30SbBVf [Accessed 18 November 2016].

22 Donna Hicks, *Dignity: The Essential Role It Plays In Resolving Conflict* (New Haven, NJ: Yale University Press, 2011), 36-37.

> they were effective in making a way for the eventual recognition of Indigenous rights in Commonwealth law.[23]

Thirty years after the Day of Mourning in 1963, the Yirrkala Bark Petitions paved the way for the 1976 acknowledgement of Aboriginal land rights and the 1992 overturning of the concept of *terra nullius* in the Mabo Case. In 1997 a report for the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commision of the Austrlain Government was released (HREOC, 1997, *The Bringing Them Home Report*), waking Australia up to the truth of the stolen generations – a government policy that forcibly removed Aboriginal children from their birthmothers. It was in this report that genocide was finally recognised.[24] Now, in 2018, many non-Aboriginal Australians do not understand that this apology was only to the stolen generations and there has still been no apology for stolen land or stolen wages. The politics of Reconciliation has followed this familiar pattern of postponement. Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu identifies such national injustice, similar to what he experienced under apartheid in South Africa, as a situation where there ...

> was almost always the loss of dignity that drove the perpetrators to the awful acts they had committed. It was dignity regained that enabled them to face their victims. And it was dignity – the perception of worth in the other – that made reconciliation possible. I could not but reflect there on my and others' experience of apartheid in South Africa. In those dark days it was in the consciousness of our own worth and the knowledge that right must prevail and evil be overcome that our dignity sustained us. It was our sense of dignity that brought us to democracy in peaceful transition.[25]

Aboriginal peoples, together with non-Aboriginal brothers and sisters, desire to celebrate their dignity and recognition as a gift. Dignity, for Aboriginal peoples, as the world's oldest living culture, is a wonderful gift to Australia – including the Australian churches – sharing knowledge of God and relationship with the Creator that pre-dates Jesus of Nazareth.

How might Australian churches receive these gifts? The next section will explore the notion of Kingdom reversals through Jesus' teaching and hospitality that shapes the sacramental and welcoming life of the Christian community. The relationships and rituals of the Chrisitan community can satisfy the longing for the deep dignity of full recognition desired and deserved by Aboriginal peoples.

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23 "Petitions of the Aboriginal people of Yirrkala 14", 28 August 1963. Online at: http://bit.ly/2VpsTb3 [Accessed 3 February 2017].

24 Ronald D. Wilson, *Bringing Them Home: Report of the National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from Their Families*, Report for Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission: April 1997. The report cites the *UN Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide*, 1948 where genocide includes "forcibly transferring children of the group to another group" committed "with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group". Online at: http://bit.ly/2LX8ib8 [Accessed 3 January 2011].

25 Desmond Tutu in the Foreword to Donna Hicks, *Dignity: The Essential Role It Plays In Resolving Conflict* (New Haven, NJ: Yale University Press, 2011), iii.

Human Dignity, Kingdom Reversals and Eschatological Recognition

Theological approaches to justice often divide between advocates of rights (e.g. Marshall, Wolterstorff) and right order (e.g. O'Donovan, Brunner). Now a new dividing in theology is emerging between rights and dignity. One proponent of this view is John Milbank, who considers himself among "a small intellectual minority (myself included) [who] see dignity as a more valid alternative to rights".[26] With his customary laser-like precision, Milbank identifies the theological problem of ignoring dignity and worth in relation to justice: "where worth is no longer regarded, only money retains any value".[27] According to the Christian ethicist David Gushee, the divine gift of human dignity is the Christian account of human worth.

> [T]he Hebrew Bible offers at least four bodies of material that bear witness to a sacredness-of-life ethic: (1) its creation theology; (2) its depiction of God's compassionate care for human beings, especially suffering people; (3) its covenantal/legal materials; and (4) its prophetic vision of a just wholeness for Israel and all creation.[28]

In Christian doctrine in the gosepls sin is often portrayed as blindness, a potent metaphor reminding us that humans do not recognise God or each other, because we are finite, fallen and foolish. The gift of sight to the blind (seeing again) – seeing God, ourselves or each other (including our shared history) – is one significant dimension of the reversals of the kingdom. The promise of full recognition, according to 1 Corinthians 13:1, is eschatological in nature: "or now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then we will see face to face. Now I know only in part; then I will know fully, even as I have been fully known". The apostle is referring to seeing Jesus and being fully known by Christ. Full seeing and full recognition – to both know and be known – in Christ is a promise for eternity.

The gift of sight, however, has ethical implications for life now in the Kingdom of God. The gift of seeing each other afresh animates reversals where guests become hosts, and hosts become guests. The mutual giving and receiving required by such reversals means that *both* parties must recognise something about themselves in order to recognise the other. The discussion of guests and host in the kingdom begins, naturally, with God as host surrounded by a large and diverse gathering of guests.

Luke 13: God the Host Welcomes Many Guests at His Table

The saying of Jesus found in Luke 13:28-29 (and also found at Matthew 8:11-12) is commonly referred to as 'The Feast of the Kingdom'. It describes the eschatological Kingdom as a feast or banquet where there will be full knowing and recognition, even as the participants will be fully known and recognised. The image of reclining "at table in the kingdom of God" (13:29) indicates a heavenly banquet where the

26 John Milbank, "Dignity and Rights: Fusion and Instability". In: Christopher McCrudden, (ed.), *Understanding Human Dignity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 189.

27 Milbank, "Dignity and Rights", 203.

28 David P. Gushee, "A Christian Theological Account of Human Worth". In: McCrudden, *Understanding Human Dignity*, 278.

composition of those who will share in this life – those gathered and reclining with the patriarchs – is a surprising reversal of expectations. The common Jewish assumption was that it would compromise their descendants: "Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God" (11:28) who would be gathered around God's heavenly table. Gathered instead – quite shockingly – are people "coming from east and west, and from north and south" (11:29). Most radically, the implications of such a reversal is emphasised: "behold, some are last who will be first, and some are first who will be last" (11:30).[29]

Ethicist Alan Verhey, who noticed this theme of eschatological reversal in Luke, found it so pervasive throughout the New Testament that he entitled his own book *The Great Reversal*.[30] Richard Hays has also noted that "this reversal motif is [so] built into the deep structure of Jesus' message" that it validates the reversal theme as a foundational element of Jesus' teaching.[31] Too often the church has been content to affirm the theological significance of Jesus' vision, but stopped short of embracing it socially. Jesus' practice of mixing and eating across ethnic and social divisions (Matthew 11:19; Luke 7:34) leaves no biblical warrant for this reticence. In fact, all the gospel narratives, but most noticeably Luke-Acts, witness to the radical embrace of God's great reversal.[32] This is Jesus' view of the Kingdom community to which public theology must bear witness. Within the Australian context, how might the church offer leadership and hope for a nation struggling with many forms of diversity and a dark past? Though Christianity has contributed to ignorance, silence and misrecognition of Aboriginal peoples, it can yet also be an ambassador of Reconciliation with repentance and recognition with dignity.

Three Warning Parables

Luke 16-19 contain three warning parables about rejecting God's great reversal. The first, beginning in Luke 16:28, is the parable of the rich man and his poor neighbour Lazarus. It can be read as a contemporary warning to rich, city-dwelling non-Aboriginal peoples eclipsing and ignoring the Aboriginal 'Lazarus' living at our national 'gate'. The second, a parable of a religious leader's piety, prayer and pride that fail to secure him the righteousness he desires, serves as a warning to people of faith whose pride displaces justice for Aboriginal peoples. The third (Luke 18:18-30) is the story of a rich ruler who wants to inherit eternal life; he is a man who tries to avoid the fate of reversal of the rich man in Luke 16; he departs sadly in a way that might warn rich Australians who love their acquisitions and accumulate wealth more than Aboriginal poverty and injustice.

29 John Koenig, *New Testament Hospitality* (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1985), 15-45.

30 Allen D. Verhey, *The Great Reversal: Ethics and the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1986).

31 Richard B. Hays, *The Moral Vision of the New Testament* (San Francisco, CA: Harper, 1996), 163.

32 Koenig, *New Testament Hospitality*, Verhey, *The Great Reversal* and Hays, *The Moral Vision* contain extended treatments of the "reversal" motif in Luke and Acts.

Encountering Jesus, Embracing Reversal

The first part of Luke 19 narrates Zacchaeus' encounter with Jesus. "Jesus entered Jericho and was passing through it. A man was there named Zacchaeus; he was a chief tax-collector and was rich" (19:1-2). Zacchaeus, as a tax or toll collector, was driven by greed and became very rich. In the diminutive figure of Zacchaeus we have a window into privilege and entitlement. Leaders of governments, CEOs of large corporations as well as ordinary Australians, share Zacchaeus' addiction: power and greed become intoxicating. All is not well in Zacchaeus' world. He is so desperate to see Jesus that he races ahead of the crowd to climb a tree. Preachers, with more passion than precision, rush to offer amateur psychoanalysis of Zacchaeus' inner world. Luke instead compares Zacchaeus with the similar figures from the preceding chapters. In the light of the stunning failure of these anonymous rich men – their power and wealth failed to satisfy those deeper longings – as hearers we eagerly anticipate: what will happen to rich Zacchaeus? A profound reversal must take place in Zacchaeus' life. First, as a rich and powerful host, he must open his home and his heart to Jesus. Second, in his encounter with Jesus, the truly generous host, he discovers his own emptiness, his deep need for forgiveness, his obligation to make amends.[33]

> When Jesus came to the place, he looked up and said to him, "Zacchaeus, hurry and come down; for I must stay at your house today". So he hurried down and was happy to welcome him.
> *Luke 19:5-6*

Zacchaeus was happy to welcome Jesus (*hypedexato*, literally 'to receive' Jesus). This responsive act must be interpreted and understood on more than one level. Jesus, the guest, invites himself to Zacchaeus' place. Zacchaeus the host receives Jesus as a guest in his home and in his life as the story confirms. Unlike the earlier rich and powerful 'me', this one receives and welcomes Jesus. A deeper, great reversal occurs as Jesus is encountered, recognised and known as the true host. Encountering Jesus as host, Zacchaeus encounters, recognises and knows his deep need. Jesus the generous host is a generous giver. Zacchaeus, receiving true generosity, is transformed by the one who says that "it is more blessed to give than to receive" and immediately sets about giving back to those from whom he had stolen. The two previous rich men could not be generous, because they had not learned to receive. They had only learned to take. Then Jesus said to Zacchaeus, "Today salvation has come to this house, because he too is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man came to seek out and to save the lost" (Luke 19:10).

Rich and powerful hosts – like Zacchaeus, like so many of the dominant culture – are used to being the hosts – that is, the ones in control. If freed from our greed for power and wealth by a truly generous host, we can become so transformed that we are able to give generously. Each week, as we receive bread and wine, we not only remember our own need and hold out empty hands, but we remember the world's need, becoming grateful and generous hosts in the redemptive and transformative process.[34]

33 Robert J. Karris, *Eating Your Way Through Luke's Gospel* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2006), 36-37.

34 Brendan Byrne, *The Hospitality of God: A Reading of Luke's Gospel* (Strathfield: St. Paul's Publications, 2000), 150-152 identifies the same motif but prefers the language of "exchange" to "reversal".

A Sacrament of Reversal: The Eucharist

Only a theology of dignity grounded in the hospitality of Christ can recognise people as hosts and guests as sacraments. Sarah Coakley rightly suggests that "the possibility of seeing and finding Jesus" is formed and shaped first by the narrative of the gospels and, as at Emmaus in Luke 28:35, the "rupture of expectation that the sacramental breaking of bread implies".[35] True recognition of Jesus, of ourselves and the mutual recognition of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal brothers and sisters, the rupture of expectation is a Eucharistic reversal (or, according to Koenig, the 'supper of discernment').[36]

Each week, as an Anglican priest, I, Geoff, invite people to the Eucharist with words of reversal:

> But here,
> at this table,
> he is the host.
> Those who wish to serve him
> must first be served by him,
> those who want to follow him
> must first be fed by him,
> those who would wash his feet
> must first let him make them clean.
> Jesus Christ,
> who has sat at our table
> now invites us to his.[37]

Gathering as the community of faith for the Eucharist, non-Aboriginal peoples are not merely welcoming hosts for minority 'others' (how easy it is for rich and educated white Christians to assume the role of hosts). At the Eucharist non-Aboriginal peoples must discover they are first guests. First person speech is required here, as I, Geoff, am named, interrogated, then forgiven by Christ the host. In remembering the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ through the liturgy for Holy Communion, I discover that I am not the centre of God's story, but that Christ is. Receiving the wine, I discover that Christ, the true host, welcomes me into the very life of God. In Christ I am given my true name and dignity. Gathered around the table of Jesus Christ, I, as a non-Aboriginal person, recognise that I am not the host on *terra nullius*. The Eucharistic reversal means, in fact, that I am a guest in a country gifted to Aboriginal ancestors in the time of dreaming. I am no more the centre of the Australian story than I am the centre of God's story. This is true confession.

Gathered together at the table of Jesus Christ, I am deeply transformed by becoming the guest: I am welcomed in Christ by the ancient hosts of these lands, its culture and its dreaming. Such welcome is true forgiveness. Rowan Williams affirms that to share in the Eucharist means "to live as people who know that they are always guests".

35 Sarah Coakley, "On the Identity of the Risen Jesus: Finding Jesus Christ in the Poor". In: B. Gaventa & R. Hays, (eds.), in *The Identity of Jesus Christ* (Grand Rapids, MN: Eerdmans, 2008), 316.

36 Koenig, *Hospitality*, 65-71.

37 Wild Goose Worship Group, *A Wee Worship Book: Fourth Incarnation* (Iona: Iona Publications, 2009), 83.

Sacramental discipline demands both 'honest repentance' (naming, confessing) and the gift of forgiveness through the risen Jesus for the Eucharist to be seen in this 'globally transforming way'.[38]

A Proposal for Recognition with Dignity for Aboriginal Peoples

Any public and practical proposal for recognition with dignity for Aboriginal peoples feels like a repeating of many voices, making many calls, over many decades, indeed over two centuries. The question of a treaty (or treaties) necessarily involves political processes, but successive federal governments have lacked the will to debate the merits of a treaty with its first peoples.[39] I, Brooke, also put on the public record in 2013 that:

> Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices all over this state need to be heard and listened to – in this state and in this country. When a government has the courage to do this our way with proper, authentic, far-reaching and face-to-face consultation, then just maybe we might actually come to build a state and country for all Australians based on respect, kindness and harmony.[40]

History repeats itself as Aboriginal voices are ignored, silenced and not recognised, such as those represented by 'Concerned Australians':

> We are Sovereign Peoples who have never ceded our land. We want to take control over our lives and determine our futures, through legal agreements, compacts, covenants or treaties established in law and enforceable through the courts. The time is long overdue for Government to sit down with Aboriginal Peoples across Australia and to negotiate agreements and return to us our rights.[41]

A call for recognition with dignity requires the first step of beginning negotiations for a treaty (or treaties).[42] Any treaties would confirm the 1988 Barunga Statement and promise of then Prime Minister Bob Hawke.[43] The statement recognises the dignity of Aboriginal peoples' "prior ownership, continued occupation and sovereignty and affirming Aboriginal peoples human rights and freedom".[44]

Recognition with dignity reaches back 250 years, possibly 60,000 years, which has direct implications for the Australian church. The call of Uncle Rev. Neville Naden is urgent:

> Over the past 226 years, since colonisation, the First Nations peoples of this land have fought for the recognition of land custodianship ... Respectful Relationships are needed if we are going to forge a future of equality for our people in this country. There are many ways this can be done, three of which are outlined below:

38 Rowan Williams, *Being Christian: Baptism, Bible, Eucharist, Prayer* (London: SPCK, 2014), 51-60.
39 http://bit.ly/2IvAa4b [Accessed 4 February 2017].
40 Brooke Prentis, Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee Public Hearing, *Youth Justice and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2014* (Brisbane: Transcript of Proceedings, 3 March 2013), 31-32.
41 http://bit.ly/2LT4Pu6 [Accessed 4 February 2017].
42 The Treaty Interim Working Group, http://bit.ly/2IxhTUa [Accessed 4 February 2017].
43 1988 Barunga Statement, http://bit.ly/2IxLMU3 [Accessed 4 February 2017].
44 1988 Barunga Statement.

> Recognition of the need for First Nations People to be invited to sit down at the (Church Denomination) table when issues regarding land and property are discussed.
>
> That when distributing the resources and assets of the church, priority be given to First Nations People of this country. (After all, this is still their land!)
>
> That in church seminars, conferences, Synods, General Assemblies, Indigenous Christian leaders be given roles as key-note speakers so that non-Indigenous audiences might be better informed.[45]

Based on Genesis 2, which teaches a "primal human kinship, unity and equality by narrating a story in which all human beings come from one common ancestor, or couple", recognition with dignity can be deepened and extended.[46] Australian churches ought now to embody the Eucharistic reversals in local treaties such as the treaty between local Aboriginal leaders and the St Mary's in Exile Church in South Brisbane.[47] Other practical reversals from hosts to guests for the Australian church can include displaying an acknowledgement of country plaque, or holding a service of prayer and lament on 26 January. Recognition, with dignity of Aboriginal peoples means hosting a celebration service for NAIDOC week,[48] hosting an Aboriginal speaker at least once a year, and treating all Aboriginal people in its neighbourhood with dignity.

Conclusion

A robust, public theology defines precisely such prophetic roles for Christian thought and ecclesial practice in addressing the politics of postponement in Australia. It is time for a theology of recognition with dignity, where Eucharistic reversals are enacted in the public square as we learn to walk together as guests and hosts. To see an end to the postponement of justice, it is crucial that we walk together.

Postscript

In late April 2018 Gurrumul's posthumous album *Djarimirri* became the first Indigenous language release to reach No. 1 in Australia's ARIA album charts.[49] What does this remarkable achievement mean for the recognition of the dignity of Australia's Aboriginal peoples? It would be a serious mistake to claim too much. There is a long

45 Neville Naden, "The Issue of Land and Australia's First Nations Peoples". An edited version of this chapter "Colonization has Many Names". In: J. Havea, (ed.), *Indigenous Australia and the Unfinished Business of Theology: Cross-cultural Engagement* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 1-7. See also Peter Adam, "Australia - Whose Land? A Call for Recompense", paper presented at *The Second Annual John Saunders Lecture* (Morling College, 2009) and Broughton, *Restorative Christ*, 158-166.

46 Gushee, "A Christian Theological Account", 279.

47 Uncle Dennis Walker, http://bit.ly/2AOGYWl [Accessed 1 November 2018].

48 NAIDOC Week is observed in July on an annual basis. The week is designed to celebrate "the history, culture and achievements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples". The term NAIDOC originally referred to the "National Aborigines and Islanders Day Observance Committee". Online at: http://bit.ly/33aTIYJ [Accessed 1 November 2018].

49 Ben Smee, "Gurrumul's Album Djarimirri Is First Indigenous-Language Chart-Topper", *The Guardian*, 22 April 2018. http://bit.ly/35gGyWE [Accessed 22 April 2018].

and regrettable history of 'first steps' in Australia regarding the recognition of, and Reconciliation with, Aboriginal peoples (see further our "Reconciliation without Repentance" chapter in this volume). Non-Aboriginal Australians are always eager to claim real, grassroots progress is being made for Aboriginal peoples by appealing to important (but largely symbolic) gestures. Conversely, it would be a mistake to overlook the seismic shifts in Australia since the chapter above was first presented in November 2016. This postscript briefly addresses some of those issues and the way forward.

The *Uluru Statement From the Heart* rejected the Government's preferred model of constitutional recognition that was drawn up on their terms, which many assumed would be the mere inclusion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in a preamble.[50] The *Statement*, instead, articulates a deeper, fuller recognition of Aboriginal peoples – more closely resembling a joint partnership.

The *Uluru Statement from the Heart* emerged from the Referendum Council's selection of 300 Aboriginal leaders from across Australia – an historical moment for our nation as such a large gathering is a rarity. This gathering, and the process adopted, faced difficulties and divisions from the beginning. For example, only 13 regional forums were held across Australia to select the 300 delegates from more than 300 nations of Aboriginal peoples. Only those selected people were allowed to participate, meaning grassroots Aboriginal community leaders, and even the Anangu peoples, the traditional custodians of the land where the Referendum Council was conducted, were excluded from the process. The name Uluru was used without appropriate consultation and approval of the Anangu peoples.[51]

The final *http://bit.ly/31X88Gm* contained the following calls:

- an acknowledgement and explanation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples sovereignty;
- the establishment of a First Nations voice to the Federal Parliament; and
- the establishment of a Makarrata Commission for agreement making between First Nations peoples and Government (e.g. treaty/treaties) and for truth telling (e.g. A truth-telling commission).

50 Uluru Statement From the Heart. Online at: http://bit.ly/31X88Gm [Accessed 22 April 2018].

51 Kirstyn Lindsay, "Anangu Tribal Elders Ask For The Name of Uluru Statement From The Heart To Be Changed", *SBS*, 12 December 2017. Online at: http://bit.ly/35dEnTG [Accessed 22 April 2018].