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CALL TO INDIGENOUS CHRISTIAN LEADERS & OTHERS TO JOIN US FOR AUSTRALIA DAY PRAYER CANBERRA 25-27 JAN 2020

SPIRITUAL AUTHORITY OF ABORIGINAL GATEKEEPERS

By Ps Barbara Miller, March 2001

Acts 17:26 tells us “From one man He made every nation of men that they should inhabit the whole earth; and He determined the times set for them and the exact places where they should live.” God also sets in place authorities in the land, both spiritual and secular and we are told to obey these authorities (Ro 13:1-5) and pray for them (1Tim 2:2). Because Australia was colonized in recent history (just over 200 years ago) and the church in Australia came as part of the colonizers, the church has been slow to recognize the authority of Aboriginal people in the land, particularly the authority of elders. There is a blessing to be had by honouring the traditional owners of the particular area of land you have spiritual responsibility for before God as pastors or the land you live in as believers.

Aboriginal people talk of their land as their “country” and as there were over 600 tribes in Australia when Europeans came, there are over 600 “countries”. Many of these countries no longer have traditional owners left as they have been wiped out. We should make an effort to see who can “speak for country” in our own area so that we can partner with them in unlocking the safe which protects the people under their jurisdiction. As Brian Pickering, National Co-ordinator of the Australian Prayer Network has said, God showed him a safe with two locks, spiritual authorities having one key and secular authorities having another key. Both keys are needed to unlock a city so the people can be saved.

Traditionally, because of the 600 plus countries, no Aboriginal person or tribe had the authority to speak for the nation of Australia and this makes it difficult today even for heads of national Aboriginal organizations to speak for the Aboriginal people of the nation even when they are elected because Aboriginal people were traditionally not elected to positions of authority. They reached positions of authority in their country or geographical area by virtue of the knowledge they obtained by passing through ceremony at different stages of their life cycles. By the time they were elders, they had the requisite knowledge to make decisions for the clan. Even then, this was not a personal authority but a corporate authority. There were no chiefs, the elders making corporate decisions. This system still pertains in some places today, co-existing alongside elected Aboriginal persons who may not be elders and people who are elders in age only but not in traditional knowledge. This is both a result of coming to terms in a positive way with the white legal system and the erosion of traditional authority because of colonization and the negative social, cultural, political and economic pressures this has created.

Since the Mabo decision in 1993 and the overturning of the legal fiction of “terra nullius” or uninhabited land and the recognition of native title, there has been more division between clans as to who can speak for land. This is because of the removal of some Aboriginal people from their land by white authorities resulting in the inability of past generations in many cases to “care for

country” by performing ceremonies and environmental care. Thus, their knowledge of the land and its boundaries is lessened. Disputes over boundaries then occur.

I have been aware of these issues for many years because my involvement in Aboriginal social justice issues dates back to 1970. But on January 26 1996, on Australia Day in Brisbane, I was asked by Rev Jim Nightingale of the House of Prayer for All Nations Brisbane, to speak at a prayer gathering in the Roma St Forum in the city, an outdoor venue. The Lord gave me a word that just as Joseph had risen to authority in Egypt, that He would raise Aboriginal people in this nation of Australia to positions of authority in the spirit and that He would also send them out to other nations as witnesses for Him. He also said that what was meant for harm against them, He would turn that around for the good. That became the theme of the International Conference on Reconciliation and Peace Norman and I organized in Cairns in 1998.

Aboriginal people have been exercising authority in the spirit over this nation since they first inhabited it, particularly traditional healers or medicine men. I believe what God was saying in that word in 1996 was that Aboriginal people would be increasingly exercising authority in the spirit under His authority in this nation. Unfortunately, the churches in Australia have been slow to recognize Aboriginal Christian leadership and many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander pastors have started their own small churches, mainly with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander congregations, as a result. Their attendance at ministers’ fraternal meetings is often poor.

One of the things that Norman strongly believes in that just as we are commanded in the 10 commandments to “honour your father and mother so that you may live long in the land the Lord your God is giving you” (Ex 20:12), we are to honour the fathers and mothers of this nation, the Aboriginal people. In fact, he calls them the apostolic fathers and mothers of this nation and believes we receive a special blessing for doing this.

In fact, Aboriginal protocol is that when you enter another person’s country, you honour those who can speak for that country before you speak on it yourself. Appropriate Aboriginal people are often asked to open conferences as a result, even by mayors of cities.

There are times when the Lord calls intercessors to speak to the land or prophecy to the trees or mountains etc (Ezekiel 6:1-3). There are territorial spirits that Peter Wagner and others have written about (see Dan 9 re the Prince of Persia who held up Daniel’s answer). The Lord’s holy angels also have territorial responsibility. When the original custodians of the land or territory speak, it has power in the spirit, and more so when Aboriginal Christians, anointed by the Holy Spirit, speak or prophecy to it.

Monte Ohio, who with his wife Linda organized the first World Conference of Indigenous Christians in Rotorua, New Zealand in 1996 came to Cairns beforehand and spoke about using the language of the original inhabitants to speak into the spiritual realm. They found that speaking in Maori to spirits over New Zealand was more powerful than speaking in English. There has been a revival in the use of the Maori language in New Zealand. In Australia, however, there are almost as many languages as there were tribes and many of these languages do not exist anymore because of the people being wiped out by warfare or introduced disease. Also, missionaries put Aboriginal children in dormitories, separated from their parents and forbade them to speak their language. Presumably speaking the wrong Aboriginal language in a territory or country would not be any more effective than speaking in English.

When it comes to identificational repentance, Aboriginal Christians have spiritual authority to stand in in the gap (Ezekiel 22:30) for their people as did Daniel (Dan 9:20), Ezra and Nehemiah. Norman recently repented on Sydney Harbour Bridge for the sins of Aborigines in worshipping the rainbow

serpent as it was an assignment the Lord had given him. Aboriginal Christians can take spiritual responsibility for the corporate sins of their ancestors and the present sins of their people just as white people can for their peoples' present and past sins. (This is another teaching which I won't go into in detail here).

However it is worth noting that when we have done identificational repentance in Cairns e.g. of the sins of white settlers and Aborigines at the location of the first point of contact, we could have had an Aboriginal person from anywhere in Australia to stand in and that would have been better than no Aboriginal person at all, we could have had an Aboriginal person living in Cairns and that would've been better, we could have had an Aboriginal person born in Cairns and that would have been better still but we prayed with an Aboriginal person who is a traditional owner of the land where the first contact and sins took place. Not only that, she is the recognized leader of her tribe and the one asked to open conferences by the mayor etc. Added to that she is a Christian who regularly attends the Baptist church and loves Israel. So, these are the levels of how closely identified an Aboriginal person may be to the land which we are praying over to heal of the sins that occurred on it and how effective our prayer may have been in the spiritual realm.

However, the authority even to stand in the gap as an intercessor is something some Aboriginal Christians are unsure about. When Roger Mitchell, one of the leaders of the British and European Prayer movements came to Australia in October 1997 to set up the British intercessors visit to Australia to say sorry for the sins of the British as the fathers and mothers of Australia, he went to Praise Corroboree, a cross-cultural Christian gathering at Parliament House in Canberra. He broke down and repented to Aboriginal pastors about the treatment of Aborigines by the British. They did not know what to do. Some said they would have to go back to their communities and ask if it was alright to accept the apology. They didn't know if they had the authority to accept it or what the right protocol should be because they were facing an international situation that was new to them.

Norman and I were at the meeting. He respected the right of the elders to speak first as is Aboriginal custom but when they were unable to take that position of authority to stand in the gap and receive the repentance of Roger who was left very distressed with the weight of the sin he was carrying, Norman stepped in and received the repentance. He went a step further and repented on behalf of Aborigines for their resentment of and anger towards the British. Norman was stepping into the authority he had, as an Aboriginal Christian who has an anointing from the Lord and a calling to work in the area of reconciliation.

In fact, this was not the first time Norman had done this. A few months previously, we'd been in England for a Reconciliation Conference at Coventry Cathedral. The Lord showed me that Norman needed to repent on behalf of Aborigines for resentment and anger towards the British for the loss of land, loss of government, rape of women and loss of life etc because of colonization. I was to repent for the rebellious, anti-authority and anti-pommy attitudes that white Australians have as a result of colonization. In doing this, we believe we were forerunners in the spirit of what the Lord wanted to do in reconciliation and healing relationships between Britain and Australia and opening up the gates or the door for the British – Australian Reconciliation Tour which followed in 1998 when 35 British intercessors travelled Australia for 6-7 weeks saying sorry to black and white Australians for their treatment in the foundation of Australia as a multicultural nation. We hosted their week in Cairns as part of an Australian visit hosted by the Australian Prayer Network and then joined 35 Australians under the covering of the Australian Prayer Network on a return Reconciliation Tour of England for 2 weeks in 1999 hosted by the British Prayer Movement.

Without going into any detail of the Reconciliation Tour of England (this is available separately), the highlight was the prayer team's visit to Portsmouth where the first convicts left from for Australia. As a prophetic sign, a boat with the Australian team in green and gold came into the

harbour. We did a re-enactment but this time coming from the water to the land and having the British greet the Australians warmly instead of, as before, rejecting the sons of Britain and sending them off to Australia. It was decided that the Aboriginal people present would lead the other Australians ashore. The prophetic prayer event started with Norman praying to honour the apostolic mothers and fathers of the Australian nation – the Aboriginal people. Lloyd Hollingsworth poured healing oil on the ground. As another prophetic sign, a boat called “The Pride of Portsmouth” sailed out of the harbour.

Then we walked towards the gate with Anne Gray using her coat of many colours to pave the way by brushing it on the ground. Brian Pickering and Ben Gray said they’d come last as they represented authority (the Australian Prayer Network). When we came through the gate, Peter Walker said, like Ruth “Your people are my people and your God is my God”. The British embraced the Australians saying “welcome home”. John Swindoll, a British pastor, said thanks to the Aboriginal mothers and fathers who looked after the British children Britain had abandoned. There is a 2 rings monument there, a replica of one in Sydney representing an unholy relationship so we moved in the opposite spirit by exchanging rings and having communion and praying and covenanting for relationships to be on the right footing. As the third prophetic sign, wedding bells chimed nearby.

Exercising spiritual authority by binding and loosing as we know is given to the church in Mat 16:18. However binding and loosing over cities and nations are higher levels of strategic warfare and it is good to heed Brian’s warning that these should be corporate activities of churches in unity. I would add that you need to know that God has commissioned you and appointed you to work on this level. God will make this clear to you Himself and others in the body will recognize it through prophetic words etc. Norman was commissioned by the Lord to not only repent of the rainbow serpent on behalf of Aboriginal people but also to take authority over its workings over our nation and we did that with a group of intercessors from various churches in Sydney. They had either prayed on the bridge before or in the locality of the bridge so had local authority because of their tears of intercession over a period of time. They had been waiting for an Aboriginal person to pray with them re the rainbow serpent as we later found out. Norman had been led to take authority over the rainbow serpent before in Cairns in 1998 and in Israel in 1998 at the All Nations Convocation Jerusalem. He did this with some Aboriginal Christians from Elcho Island and with a group of Australians from various churches led by Pastor Noel Mann.

I spent a lot of time asking the Lord if I was meant to join Norman praying on the bridge about the rainbow serpent. I planned to return from a Wagner Leadership Institute conference in Brisbane where Apostle Bobby Jean Merck and Apostle Royree Jensen were preaching to Cairns as our church was hosting 14 YWAMers for two weeks. This was the responsible thing to do rather than having both the pastors away for the first week of their visit, even though I’d organized their itinerary etc before leaving for Brisbane and our elders are very reliable. Norman wanted me to go to Sydney and we always work as a team. The Lord affirmed to me that we are a team and I was the vision carrier for the prayer event. However, I was not settled in my spirit about it and continued to pray as I really believed it was Norman’s mission and my responsibility to Cairns was weighing on me. During praise and worship at the conference, the Lord gave me a personal revelation which finally released me in the spirit to go no matter what the consequences. The Lord then provided the financial miracles for us both to go to Sydney.

What I received from the Lord was actually a shock to me and I hope it is useful to you rather than confusing a topic which is already complex. He said that I could stand in the gap for Aboriginal people because my seed is Aboriginal (my son) and for generations to come my seed will be Aboriginal and I’ll be their ancestor and I’m in that line or lineage just as Rahab and Ruth of a different race became part of the lineage of Jesus, the line of David (Matt 1:5). As it turned out, I

didn't stand in the gap for Aboriginal people on the bridge but I was there to support Norman to do so and I know when the Lord tells me to, I can. (A traditional Aboriginal person, not knowing my family background, could be offended by this however. Some traditional Aborigines call me aunty because of their relationship to my son.)

Speaking of words from others recognizing your national authority, on Friday 6 July 1999 we were weeping and praying outstretched over a banner of Australia with the Holy Spirit dove in the centre and we put a red cross over it. Norman had a prophetic word that as we struck Ayers Rock with our prayers, healing waters would flow out of it across our nation. He also read Ex 17:1-16. (We facilitated a weekly prayer meeting for Australia with a group of intercessors from various churches.)

Pastor Peter Singut of Miracle Christian Centre Boroko, Papua New Guinea happened to be at our prayer meeting and he prophesied over Norman and I that we had a divine rod of authority to rule over the enemies of our God over the nation of Australia (Psalm 110:1-3). He said that God was about to release us into a new realm of spiritual authority in our ministry. Pastor Peter was excited and organized for his church in PNG to be praying in unison with us in Australia at 2am July 14 (2 Chron 7:14) and he made a continuing commitment pray for Australia and our ministry.

This is an excerpt from the Alaskan prophet, Sonja Corazza's report to Brian and Robyn Pickering of her visit to North Qld in July 2000 after she prayed at Ayers Rock (Uluru). "I want to tell you that when the three of us went to Port Douglas to pray from the point where I had seen myself praying in the Spirit, many good things happened and the Holy Spirit revealed to me that Norman had national authority in the Spirit for Australia. As we prayed, I saw that come forth in vision. On the way to Port Douglas the Lord showed me we were to pray for the Coastlands of Australia wherein most of the population lives...we were to pray the fire of God over them by Scripture. Also, instead of mostly concentrating on Cairns they were to pick up the nation and were perfectly located to do so...

Also Norman felt led to read Scriptures on light from Matthew 5 and when he was reading that, in vision, I saw this band of light sweep around the entire coastland of Australia...around the whole nation, a band just wide enough to encompass the population because of course the middle of the country is desert. As he spoke, I actually saw that band of light sweep around the nation two more times during the evening so it is something God is doing with him in your country."

Back to gatekeeping. In biblical times, the elders of the city stood at the city gates and transacted business and made decisions for the city. Gates represent keeping out of the city what you want to keep out and letting in what you think is good for the city. I have a whole message on gates and we've done much prayer over the gates of the city in Cairns. We know if a pastor wants to prevent a move of the Spirit in his church, he can do so. If the churches in a city want to keep the Spirit of God from moving in their city, they can. They are gatekeepers so their role is very important in the spirit.

By the same token, Aboriginal people were given the original stewardship of this land of Australia. Today they share that role with the rest of us. As the original custodians, however, I believe they have a role in opening the gate for a move of God in their own communities whether they are Christian or not and that Aboriginal Christians, when called of God to do so, can open gates even on a national level.

When Pastor Ben Gray, after a word from the Lord called a National Prayer Gathering at Uluru (Ayers Rock) at 2am 14 July 1999 (2 Chron 7:14), 500 intercessors and leaders came from around Australia to repent and pray for healing of the land. The Lord had given Norman and I a word to

take a prayer team to Uluru about a year before but we did not know the timing until Ben's call came so we went.

The traditional owners, notably Tony Tjamawa of the Mutitjulu people welcomed the National Prayer Gathering but asked us not to climb Ayers Rock. The National Park authorities would not allow us into the National Park at 2am in the morning so the Mutitjulu people invited us to spend the night watch at their church near Uluru. We went in buses at 11.30pm and prayed till 4am. About 200 cities were praying around Australia with us including Cairns with a prayer meeting at our church.

A word the Lord gave me at the Olgas (Kata Tjuta) on Monday 12 July was that He had set Aboriginal people as gatekeepers in this land for their own areas across Australia and because the traditional owners of Ayers Rock, the heart of Australia, opened the gates to the National Prayer Gathering, then they were opening the spiritual gateway not just to that area, but to the whole nation. What God was doing in the spirit was that Aboriginal gatekeepers throughout the whole nation who had before closed their doors to the gospel because of the pain that came with it, would now open those gates. I saw gates or doors opening all across this nation. It was like the light turning on all across this nation. (God puts authorities in the land whether those authorities are national park authorities or traditional owners.) I saw Aboriginal gatekeepers all over the country open the gates to the gospel and tell people to "come home" into the kingdom of God. In fact, the land was doing it as well, groaning for the redemption of men and women (Ro 8). Aboriginal people and the land (yes, the land) were also saying "Come home" to non-Indigenous Australians in a spirit of adoption and reconciliation. Aboriginal people are a key to revival.

At the 21st Century Church Conference in Brisbane in February 2000 run by Ps Ben Gray of City Harvest International and Wagner Leadership Institute, Ps Tom Hess from Israel spoke on the need for a 24 hour a day 7 day a week prayer watch. We already had a vision for this because of attending Tom's conference in Israel in 1998. In a prophetic act, Aboriginal gatekeepers, Norman Miller and Muriel Olssen welcomed and ushered in the bride of Christ (Jenny Hagger was dressed in a Middle Eastern wedding dress) through two lines of people representing the prayer leaders of all the states.

It is significant that at the Brisbane conference, Norman honoured the apostolic mothers and fathers of Australia, the Aboriginal people and he honoured the local traditional owners of Brisbane, i.e. he observed the right protocol, before opening the gates to the 24hr prayer watch and removing the stones from the highway. The organizers, by providing Tom Hess from Israel this platform with an audience of over 3,000 Australians (and people from other nations) opened a gateway and paved a highway from Australia to Israel. This will significantly affect the shape of the church in 21st century Australia as the bride of Christ is both Jew and Gentile.

Norman said "I felt strongly on my heart to stand in the gap as an Aboriginal gatekeeper to open the gates for and to birth the 24hour prayer watch in this nation. In a prophetic act, I placed a heart shaped stone on the middle of a map of Australia and then removed it. The meaning was based on Isaiah 62:10:

"Pass through, pass through the gates!
Prepare the way for the people,
Build up, build up the highway!
Remove the stones.
Raise a banner for the nations."

In Jesus' name, I was removing the stones of pride and anti-Semitism and a stony heart (Ezekiel 36:26) so that Australians would have a heart for the 24 hour prayer watch and have God's heart for this nation. The prophetic act spiritually prepared a highway for God's people to be a nation at prayer, day and night, night and day. We need to be watchmen and women on the wall for Israel (Isaiah 62:6), Australia and the nations, truly a house of prayer for all nations (Isaiah 56:7). I gave the stone to Tom Hess to take back to Israel. He had preached on how we needed to remove the stones.

I prayed around the nation state by state, naming them and I said God's response to this nation's GST is - Get Saved Today. I believe we need to pray through for God to release a breakthrough so we can go through and see revival in this nation - a breakthrough anointing," said Norman.

I've used practical examples of gatekeeping from Norman's ministry because we can speak from that experience and we are not aware of other examples at this point. So, in summary, the examples given of gatekeeping were when Norman repented in Coventry, England for Aboriginal attitudes towards the British because of colonization in mid-1997 and when Norman received Roger Mitchell's repentance from Britain to Aborigines in October 1997 in Canberra. This opened the gate we believe for the British – Australian Reconciliation Tour in 1998. In July 1999, the Mutitjulu people of Uluru opened the gate to the National Prayer Gathering and in Feb 2000, Norman and Muriel Olssen opened the gate to the National Prayer Watch. Aboriginal pastor, Peter Walker and Norman and leaders from various ethnic groups opened the gates to revival at that same conference.

*PS We should respect all cultures but also discern practices which do not line up with scripture.

This is unchanged from an article written in 2001 by Barbara Miller from
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