

Personal introduction

- Father of 'five' daughters and 16 grandchildren.
- Thirty years involvement in Aboriginal communities as a pastor of Mission, Baptist and Lutheran Churches. Most of this experience has been with urban (or non-traditional) Aboriginal communities in South Australia.
- Repeated visits to many remote communities in central, northern and western Australia and on the east coast of Queensland and NSW.
- Researcher for "Story of Fire: Continued" publ' 1996. Which dealt with the growth of the church among Aboriginal Australia.
- Presented various short courses on Aboriginal mission history some of which can be view on the web via New Creation Teaching Ministries (1996, 1997 and 2010).

Principle Authors and Articles referred to in this presentation

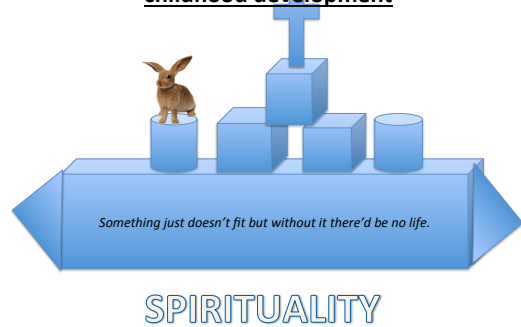
- Prof' Arve Gunnestad.
- Prof' David Hay.
- Prof' Byron Johnson.
- Prof' Michael Kelly
- Kathleen Kovner Kline, M.D.
- Dr. Rebecca Nye.
- Noel Pearson.
- Prof' Michael D. Resnick,
- Prof' Peter Sutton.
- Dr. Nicholas Tata.
- Maj' A. D. Van Breda.
- Prof' Bradford Wilcox.
- Dr Fiona Arney.
- Dr Edwina Farrall.

This conference and the world scene

"In large measure, what is causing crisis of (American) childhood is a lack of connectedness, by which we mean two kinds of connectedness: close connections to other people and deep connections to moral and spiritual meaning".

David Blankenhorn,
president of Institute of American Values

What a faith community can bring to healthy childhood development



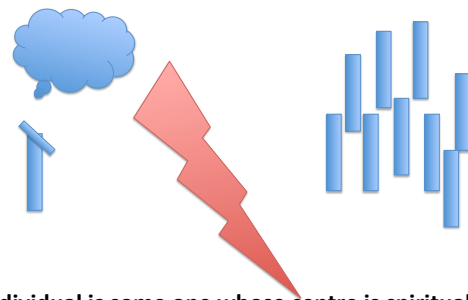
Spirituality

spirituality or "relational consciousness". It is not equivalent to religion or to 'God-talk' but has to do with a person's propensity to relate to his or her inner self, to the environment, to others, to the eternal.



Bahloo helps Mowgli

Why Spirituality?



An individual is some one whose centre is spiritual

A Faith Community: what it is.

commitment



time

Good intent

A faith community is
"a group of people who are committed to one another over time and who model and pass on at least part of what it means to be a good person and live a good life."

Faith Communities and the Family



I BELONG



I CAN LEARN



I'M PROTECTED



I'M VALUED

Intellectual models that value Faith communities

- Intellectual models are evolving.
- Prevention (or ecological model) over a treatment (or deficit model).
- Deficit models (ie., the pharmacological and the At-risk models) focus on illness. The ecological model focuses on health.
- Salutogenic model over a pathenogenic one.
- The pathenogenic model asks, "Why are you sick?"
- The salutogenic model asks, "What makes a person healthy?"

Faith communities and 'Protective' Factors for Resilience



LOVE



HISTORY, HOPE, CARE



STABILITY, IDENTITY



ACCEPTANCE



FRIENDS, FUN, FAMILY

Spiritual Health: Personal and Societal



I'M FORGIVEN



I FIND PEACE



DIFFERENCES ARE VALUED




I'M INCLUDED

Some reasons that people might approach a Faith Community

Stability
Consistency
Acceptance
Trust
Responsibility
Accountability
Dependability
Identity
Community
Affirmation
voluntary
All relational terms.

The religious rites of Baptism and Confirmation are still held in high regard by many Aboriginal people.

And the all important funerals and sorry-camp.

 **KIDS HOPE AUS:**

Built-in safe guards in reputable faith communities



Faith Communities and healthy development of Children

- Faith communities wishing to be involved in the healthy development of Aboriginal children must face up to the destructive influence they have had in the past so that these are not perpetuated.
- A well chosen faith community can provide something as practical as a social outlet or profound and personal as reassurance, hope and purpose.

Australia has a black history



Some of the more critical support we provide for families

Single mums arrived in Adelaide from Central Australia to escape domestic violence. Our faith community provided transport, social outings, emergency food assistance, furniture, substance abuse counseling, referral and advocacy



Teenage girls came to Adelaide to escape sexual abuse. We supported community elders in their efforts to support the girls in their healing process



Pastoral care when this lady's 18 yo son accidentally killed himself while on drugs. We worked with the children to draw up a family tree and with the adults to prepare a eulogy.

Numerous activities of faith communities that relate to the development of resilience

- Social interaction.
- Referral.
- Human resources.
- Self help groups.
- Youth activities.
- Language support.
- advocacy.
- Counseling (dealing with guilt, and shame).
- Sharing ideas & values.
- Voluntary client controlled groups.
- After school care and/or tutoring).

**HAND-UPS NOT HAND-OUTS.
WE ENCOURAGE
'WELFARE RECIPROCITY'
OR, WHAT NOEL PEARSON REFERS TO AS
'MUTUAL OBLIGATION'**

Conclusion

Recognised authorities in America, Europe and Australia are providing a growing body of research to demonstrate the importance of spirituality for healthy childhood development. As established, stable institutions in a local community Christian Churches, along with other faith communities, are ideally placed to help meet these needs.