



STOLEN WEALTH AND INDIGENOUS ISSUES AT THE COMMONWEALTH GAMES

While the Melbourne Commonwealth Games is currently providing Australia with an opportunity to demonstrate to the rest of the world the beauty of our country, the benefits of our society and the true nature of the Aussie character, the Evangelical Alliance also believes that it is healthy and honest to be reminded that within this 'common-wealth' there are serious injustices in the indigenous community which might well be referred to as the result of 'stolen-wealth'.

The Evangelical Alliance supports the aims of the 'Stolenwealth' initiative organized by Australians for Native Title and Reconciliation (ANTaR) and affirms that as long as aboriginal people continue to suffer poor health, low life-expectancy and the distressing effects of other detrimental social conditions there will remain a need to recognize that 'the common wealth' of our society is not yet evenly or fairly distributed.

The national pride and unity which athletic endeavours produce must be tempered with sadness at the recognition that there are still significant divisions in the nation over what is required for true reconciliation.

Christians share common ground with many others in the search for justice and for the reconciliation of indigenous and other Australian people. For Christians the motive for these desires are derived from God's love of justice and from his own work of reconciliation with the world brought about in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. These things are therefore direct implications of the gospel and the Christian way of life.

The positive lesson of the Commonwealth Games is that the athletes are a fine example of the way forward. Their dedication to training, sportsmanship and fair play, and their determination to persevere to the end of the race are the same virtues which are needed when dealing with indigenous issues. Our society needs a dedication to hard work in wrestling with complex issues; a commitment to justice and a fair go for all; and the determination to persist until the situation is fully and finally resolved. As the Games continue so may Australia's commitment to indigenous issues.

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