

# Indigenous Spirituality

## Joan Hendriks

Aunty Joan Hendriks is a distinguished Aboriginal elder, descendant of the Ngugi people, the first inhabitants of Moorgumpin Island, Moreton Bay, Queensland. She teaches and studies at Australian Catholic University, Brisbane, and is an esteemed Indigenous voice on many Australian Government and Church bodies.



### Understanding Liturgy and the Language of the Bible

1. A Search for meaning: the margin in between
2. Gospel and Culture: A New Dreaming
3. Deep Continuity and the New Dreaming
4. A New Creation
5. Yesterday Today and Tomorrow

### The Natural Mysticism of Indigenous Australian Traditions

Clash of Cultures	
70,000 years	230 Years
Family / Group Based	Monarchial / Hierarchial
Land	
Related - Sacred	Owned - Secular
Language	
300 Languages	English
Lore / Law	
Clash of Cultures	
Confilct - Unofficial War	

### People and Places

Who's your family and where you come from creates the essence of belonging to family and affiliation of being in harmony of with the land

Land, Law and language are the three most essential elements that have been the cornerstones of maintaining our culture, our spirituality and ways of living with Mother Earth – the dwelling place of Creator Spirit – our God

This we have continued to be for 70,000 years.

### The Dreaming

- Connects one in a vital way with Mother Earth & Creator Spirit
- Everywhen--Eternal Now
- Ancestral Present
- Sacred Dance
- Celebrations & Ceremonies
- Relate myths & stories of Ancestral Beings according to Laws of the Dreaming

### Dadirri

Living contemplation of the whole environment embracing the living springs within

We call on the Spirit;  
The Spirit calls on us  
The 3 R's of learning

“reading, ‘riting, ‘rithmetic”

Three R's of Learning

1. **Respect** – for the sacredness of dreaming, language, art, spirituality
2. **Relationships** – with nature and nurture; family, kinship, names, totems, food, spirituality of self, family, Creator Spirit
3. **Responsibility** – for education, stories, the sacred and social, dance, music, art

### I Am

I am the land, my soul is the sun. Nature is my mother,

I am mother nature's own son.

The wind is my spirit, running wild, running free.

The water is my mirror, reflecting visions of me.

I am like a great river, that slowly runs dry.

Polluted and abused, I am the river, slowly I die.

I am the child of the earth, created from dust.

I live for the land, taking only what I must

### Jubilee Prayer and Statement of Commitment

Father our Creator You created all things, seen and unseen, Listen to my silent prayer as I stand here before you.

As my weary eyes look back over distant horizons, Back to those days where my people walked. The footprints of my grandfathers are imprinted on the earth and their images become real to me.

I see my Grandfathers standing tall and strong, warriors of long ago. I hear them singing, I see them dancing, and my spirit moves within me. They told me of the emus fighting; picking the scent of our hunters.

The images fade away as I feel the hurt of my people. I can hear the cries of my Grandmothers as they cry for their children. Grandfather, You can see me as I stand here and feel this hurt.

Father Creator, Is this the purpose of my being here. Or is it your plan to reshape my people to be once again the proud race it once was?

Let me walk with you and my Grandfathers towards the dawning of a proud and new nation. I thank you for my Sacred Being. Amen.

## Statement of Commitment

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Catholic people, commit ourselves to the re-awakening of the Journey of our Renewal in Faith, Love, Understanding and Freedom to grow spiritually, to break down barriers in all Churches and accept their individual right to their means of Worship.

As we Journey together towards the Year 2000, the Jubilee of Christ's Birth, we commit ourselves to breaking down and eliminating all injustices that confront our Peoples.

We commit ourselves to bring about change in all Churches in Australia, so that they accept and recognise our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Spirituality and our Right to use our Own Symbols, to Worship and Celebrate the Ceremonies of the Church in Our Own Way

NATSICC Leadership Gathering November 1995

## Understanding the margin - "in Between"

Jesus the True Marginal Person

Lee looks at the margin from the perspective of race and culture. "the marginal person has to live in these two worlds, which are not only different but often antagonistic to each other"

Jesus Christ was a new marginal person par excellence.

Countless witnesses in the Bible testify this claim.

He was a stranger to his own people.

According to the author of the Letter to the Hebrews, Jesus became a friend of the marginalised people; outcasts, tax collectors, Gentiles, women and the poor, and the oppressed... Jesus the True Marginal Person

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According to the author of the Letter to the Hebrews,

Jesus became a friend of the marginalised people;

He was not accepted by the dominant group of his day.

He was a marginal person.

He was human and divine; therefore

He lived in-both worlds

(John Jung Lee: Marginality - The Key to Multicultural Theology.)

## Rainbow Spirit in Creation Adaptation of Genesis 1

Practical Theology adaptation of Milbi Dabaar  
A Resource Book from Wontulp-Bi-Buya College in Queensland

### A Framework for Aboriginal Theology Foundation Text

In the past God spoke to our ancestors many times and in many ways through the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us through his Son.

He is the one through whom God created the universe, the one whom God has chosen to possess all things at the end.  
(Hebrews 1:1-2 GNB)

## A Framework for Aboriginal Theology

### Objectives

1. Identity and Dignity
2. God in Culture
3. Healing, Justice and Reconciliation
4. Community
5. Leadership
6. Pastoral Care and Liturgy

Gospel and Culture: Aboriginal Stories and Customs.



Above: Joan Hendriks (centre in turquoise) with the women's group of the cultural tour



Thelma Parker and Evelyn Parkin (who also gave a presentation on Indigenous Spirituality assisting