

Initiatives of Change Conference:

"AUSTRALIA AS A NEIGHBOUR"

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Session: "Healing journeys", 14 January 2007

Reg Blow:

Australia is a land of opportunity for everyone, everyone except my people. This is my view. It provides a huge amount of funds for Aboriginal groups, organisations and communities to improve the quality of life. But Aboriginal communities still have the highest rate of imprisonment and being under-educated, the worst and poorest housing, the highest unemployment rate in the country.

In some ways it's like a battle zone after the fighting has ended. After 200 years of dispossession, colonisation and the stolen generation, loss of language and cultural identity and worst of all deaths in custody and child abuse, we are all threatened in the aftermath of trans-generational trauma.

We can blame the British, white Australians, even the new Australians, because when you're on the bottom rung of the ladder anyone who comes up creates that much more distance between you and the top. In a way you become a victim of everything in life and once one accepts this life becomes a bit easier. Why? because the victim is not responsible, and can wallow in self pity and 'woe is me'.

That was the situation I was in before I met Moral Re-Armament. I looked at all the nice things that were happening around the place and I wondered why I couldn't have a piece of that action. I worked hard but I didn't seem to make any progress. When my wife and I first came down to Melbourne it was very difficult to even rent a place. At one particular area they were trying to rent us the stable. Of course that just added fuel to my anger about the situation.

We need to accept the fact that we need to play a role in this game of life and that's what Moral Re-Armament's given me - this opportunity to be here, talking about the situation and what we're doing as Aboriginal people to fix it. We're playing a game of catch up, so to speak. It's come to me that in our own strength we can do nothing unless we accept God as our Creator and Redeemer and through God everything is possible. Then, and only then, can we become people in our own right.

As victims we as Aboriginal people thought we had nothing to offer but there are thousands of years of our heritage which we are able to share. We need to start thinking what we can do to contribute to this great country of ours and start changing the thinking and the common concepts which people have of Aboriginal people. In our traditional society sharing and caring was the basis of our life. If we didn't do that we didn't survive. In our situation today we need to go back to basics which is to start caring and start sharing some of the knowledge that we have. By giving we become empowered.

There is also the conservation nature of Aboriginal people. We are our country. This what non-Aboriginal people do not understand about our identity. I identify with my country because that country gives me my economy, gives me my language, gives me my stories and

it gives me my lore. When European people settled here these things were all taken. We're on the trail of recovery, retrieving those essential items that give us back our central identity, so that we know we have been empowered through knowledge, and what we have we can share.

Reg Blow is CEO of the Maya Living Free Healing Association.