

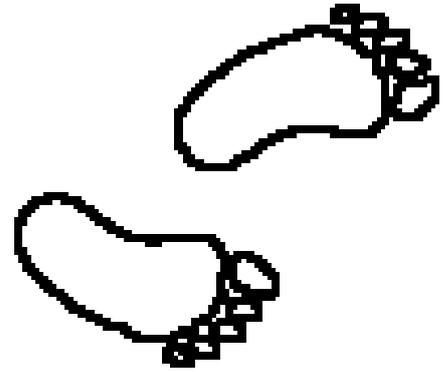
August 2020 (5)  
Issue 134

# The Next Step

Canberra Christian Fellowship  
(in the Methodist Tradition)

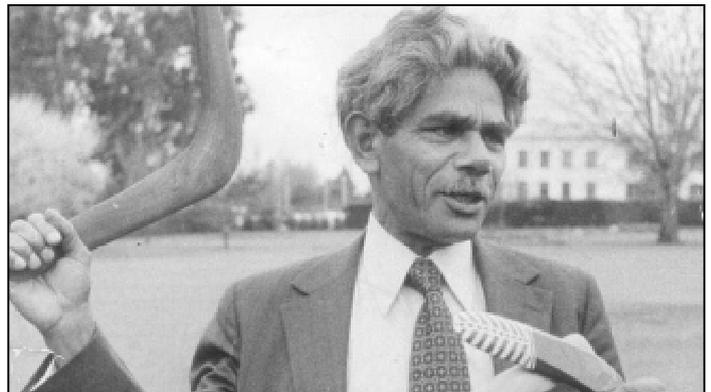
Canberra  
Aboriginal Church

CCF & CAC services resumption  
are currently uncertain.



## Neville Bonner (1922 – 1999)

"Neville Thomas Bonner AO "was born in Ukerebagh Island, a small island on the Tweed River in northern New South Wales. He never knew his father and had no formal education. He worked as a ring barker, cane cutter and stockman before settling on Palm Island, near Townsville, Queensland in 1946, where he rose to the position of Assistant Settlement Overseer." He became "the first Aboriginal Australian to become a member of the Parliament of Australia. He was appointed by the Queensland Parliament to fill a casual vacancy in the representation of Queensland in the Senate, and later became the first Indigenous Australian to be elected to the parliament by popular vote. Neville Bonner was an elder of the Jagera people."



*"I saw my responsibilities as a parliamentarian representing a state and representing the country in these orders of priority. My **first responsibility** was to God because I'm a Christian, my **second responsibility** was to my nation because I'm an Australian, my **third responsibility** was to my state because I'm a Queenslander, my **fourth responsibility** was to the Party that I was a part of and who gave me the opportunity to get into parliament, but interwoven through the whole sequence was my almost all-consuming, burning desire to help my own people, the Aboriginal community, to become respected, responsible citizens within the broader Australian community, retaining where desired ethnic and cultural identity."*

It is easy to imagine a young aboriginal lad making the most of opportunities that came his way and working his way to a position of responsibility in the Australian Parliament. The internet sites I looked at to find his story tended to concentrate on his parliamentary career, glossing over or omitting his pre-parliamentary life, so leaving room for imagination to paint a rosy picture of young Neville steadily climbing the ladder to success.

Fortunately I came across the transcript of a long interview (approximately 4 1/2 hours) with Neville that enabled him to present his story as it was, not as imagination might suggest.

He was born "in a gnyah [temporary shelter] at the foot of a palm tree" and his father left his mother while Neville was just a "tiny tot". His grandfather and grandmother helped raise him, his grandfather teaching him aboriginal culture and bushcraft while his well educated grandmother introduced him to Christianity and encouraged him to speak well - if 'you were able to speak well, people would not notice whether you were educated or not, and it would get you ... through life.'

*"I find that there is no conflict in my Aboriginal spirituality, as with my Christian faith".*

*"There is only one God." "God is a name. You're talking about God -- it's a name. It's an English name. Now every other nationality has a name for their supreme being, so we have a name for our supreme being too. But when I study and look at the Christian faith and the 10 Commandments that were handed down to Moses, I find that the laws of my people are no different; maybe in language of course it's different, but the meanings are the same. We had our laws which are similar if not exactly the same but similar to the laws that were handed down. So, the God that I believe in, is the same God as the white Christians believe in -- it's just a different name. He is the supreme being, he is the creator, the God almighty, God all-powerful, God all-loving, forgiving, the God that I believe in as an Aborigine is the same God as I believe in as a Christian, except he has a different name."*

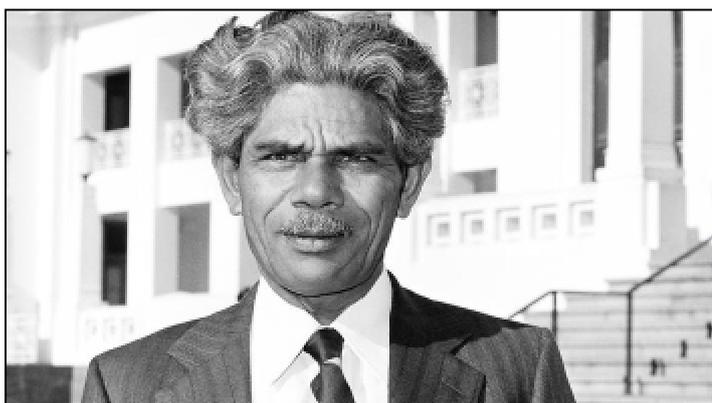
His formal schooling was limited to little more than the 1 year he spent at Beaudesert State School when he was 14-15. He encountered no racism at that school that he remembered but other aspects of his life provided a contrast between the treatment of aborigines and the white population. For some time he lived on the banks of the Richmond River under lantana bushes with sheets of iron retrieved from the dump to help provide shelter.

After both his mother and grandmother had died, Neville moved between N.S.W. and Queensland as he linked up and lived with extended family members. He found work as a dairy hand, banana plantation worker, on cattle stations, as a woodcutter and other jobs.

He met Mona, whom he married, on a cattle station. Mona was born on and had family at Palm Island which had been turned into a penal settlement for aborigines. She returned to Palm Island and Neville voluntarily followed to keep his family together. They were there for 16 years in which time Neville worked his way up to become Assistant settlement overseer being paid two-pound-ten a fortnight while the white overseer who opened the office in the morning and reappeared to close up was receiving seven or eight pound a week.

*"I soon learned that you catch more flies with honey than you do with vinegar, and I learned to weave between the different people in authority, the different white people in authority. I learned to manoeuvre people, I suppose, to get the things done that I wanted to have done for the benefit of myself, my family and other people on the community, and I became quite expert at doing that."*

*"I was achieving those things [improved ... conditions under which Aboriginal people lived with housing and all of those things ...], not by being abusive, not by being discourteous to those in authority, but playing the authorities at their own game, and beating them. I've always said, for Aborigines to achieve, we've got to play the white man at his own game and bloody well beat him. I've been doing that all my life."*



Interested in politics and having been prominent within the One People Australia League (OPAL), a moderate Aboriginal rights organisation, Neville was selected to fill a vacancy in the Federal Senate. *"I was a member of the [Liberal] Party -- fiercely, proudly, a member of the Party, but I was not blindly a member of the Party. I had a conscience, and political parties don't need people with a conscience. They want bottoms on seats, and hands in the air at the right time."* His time in Parliament extended from 1971 to 1983.

*"I didn't go down there blasting everybody about Aboriginal affairs. Because if I had have, in my opinion anyway, ... I would have not lasted so I consolidated myself first, and then I started to speak out."* *"I don't*

*think that they [(activists)] change things as well as they could if they were in the system"*.

At the 1983 election, Neville Bonner was dropped to 3rd place on his party's Senate ticket - an unwinnable position.

He stood as an independent and with preferences directed against him, failed to reach a quota of votes in his own right by just 0.05%.

*"I hope I can still make a contribution somewhere along the line towards helping our people to achieve those things that most Australian white people take as their right."*

Neville Bonner passed from this life in 1999.

ID

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neville\\_Bonner](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neville_Bonner)

<https://atributetoaustralianchristians.wordpress.com/2011/01/06/neville-bonner/>

<https://web.archive.org/web/20071108005537/http://www.australianbiography.gov.au/bonner/interview1.html>

Dear CCF,

My name is Zeal, I am 17 years old and studying year 12 at UC SSC Lake Ginninderra College. I just wanted to send you an email as at my school we are helping with E-waste and are trying to minimise its impact on the Earth. In doing this we have created a small workshop where a group of students are taught to repair and refurbish old devices. I was wondering if you had any old devices lying around, in particular mobile ones such as old iPhones or Tablets. If you do then thats great! We will gladly take them off your hands and repurpose them.

If you would like to know more about this endeavour or have devices that you did want to donate to our program then please feel free to email me back.

I hope you have a wonderful day,

Zeal

Year 12, UC SSC Lake Ginninderra College.

If anyone has devices Zeal could use and would like to donate them, let me (Ian) know and I'll pass on the message to Zeal.

### Prayer Points

Please pray

- for Aboriginal communities all over Australia.
- for leaders, doctors and ministers.
- for revival - that people will seek the Lord.
- for the elderly, those in lockdown in their homes (particularly in Melbourne) and for each other.

and give thanks for the Canberra Aboriginal Church virtual gatherings using ZOOM for around 40 minutes each Sunday from 5pm. - A time of fellowship, worship and delving into God's Word.

**After prayer and discussion, the Canberra Aboriginal Church have decided to delay their service resumption a bit longer until the weather warms and the coronavirus risk, particularly for older and more vulnerable people, is more predictable and the possibility of local outbreaks lessened.**



Teacher: "If I gave you 2 cats and another 2 cats and another 2, how many would you have?"  
 Johnny: "Seven."  
 Teacher: "No, listen carefully... If I gave you two cats, and another two cats and another two, how many would you have?"  
 Johnny: "Seven."  
 Teacher: "Let me put it to you differently. If I gave you two apples, and another two apples and another two, how many would you have?"  
 Johnny: "Six."  
 Teacher: "Good. Now if I gave you two cats, and another two cats and another two, how many would you have?"  
 Johnny: "Seven!"  
 Teacher: "Johnny, where do you get seven from?!"  
 Johnny: "I've already got a cat and you've given me six more!"



A teacher asked her students to use the word "beans" in a sentence. "My father grows beans," said one girl. "My mother cooks beans," said a boy. A third student spoke up, "We are all human beans."



## CCF Service Resumption

Conversations with quite a number of our Fellowship have indicated that they are missing the fellowship and opportunity to worship God together that our weekly services provide.

Those same people are also cautious about resuming our services when there is still heightened risk from coronavirus, even if it is relatively slight. Many have commented on the age and vulnerability to infection of so many of our people.

As a result we are looking at the decision to resume on 6 September and may postpone the resumption date as the Canberra Aboriginal Church have.

Before heading off to CCF on 6 September, check with Ian to see if the service is still on.

I know that phone calls are appreciated in this time of increased isolation, so don't just wait for someone to ring you, but get in first and ring them. Fellowship, even over the phone, is important.

Worshipping God together is a vital part of our faith. I have no doubt that God knows the conditions under which we are currently living, and understands why we are not meeting together at the moment for that purpose. In fact the wisdom that guides us comes from Him.

Perhaps those who feel a strong need for spiritual input in addition to their own personal devotions, could arrange between themselves to meet together for Bible study, a prayer time or some form of small service. That could take place on a day and at a time that suits those involved and need not be at the church but in a home.

A bit over a month ago we heard back from Daniel Pennington concerning Compassion's 'We Rise As One' appeal.

*Just wanted to loop back to you to share the amazing results WE as the church, were able to accomplish together through the We Rise As One campaign.*

*This year we saw the biggest contribution through a single campaign we've ever seen at in Compassion Australia's history; as the Australian church, we were able to raise just over 2 MILLION DOLLARS to contribute to the global appeal of 'We Rise As One'; totally smashing our expectations (and definitely smashing last years' EOFY Appeal).*

*This money will go straight to supporting children and their families through the COVID crisis. It's all about practical, real, help on the ground; food for hungry and starving children, essential medical help for kids and families desperate during this global pandemic, clean drinking water...basic life necessities. It's worthwhile to understand that Compassion is NOT a 'disaster relief' organization as such; Compassion is- and always will be- about wholistic child development. However, as it has been said many times before, we are living in unprecedented times; and sometimes the need of 'wholistic development' is the ability to survive the night. The focus for Compassion right now is about getting CRITICAL aid to the CRITICAL need. Supporting our partnering churches who are already on the ground and who are already working in the poorest, neediest communities of our globe, to meet the felt and medium-term needs of their communities.*

*I just wanted to reach out and share my thankfulness to you for your support for the work we do here at Compassion. I'm thankful for your prayers, your ongoing encouragement and of course for the support you give to the children in the field. We are not out of the woods yet, and if people in your church still want to give via the link they still can, however with what we have raised so far, we can make a big difference.*

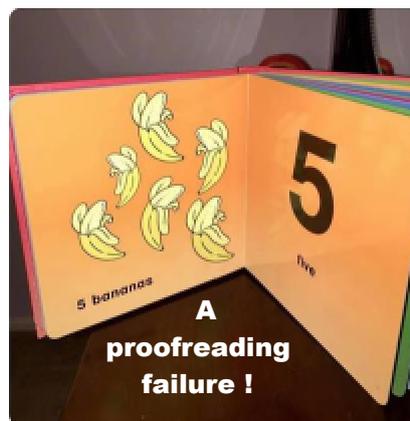
Again, thank you, I look forward to seeing you in real life in the near future ☐

Daniel Pennington  
RELATIONSHIP MANAGER  
SOUTH-EAST AREA TEAM



**WE RISE AS ONE**

Compassion Australia  
PO BOX 1 HUNTER REGION MC NSW 2310



Teacher: "What is the chemical formula for water?"  
Student: "HIJKLMNO."  
Teacher: "What are you talking about?"  
Student: "Yesterday you said it's H to O!"

### Chaplains

Please pray that as coronavirus restrictions are gradually lifted, the chaplains we particularly support will be able to follow the new paths You have set before them. - Mr. Owen Chadwick - Universities chaplaincy, Rev. Bob Prior - Racecourse chaplaincy, Rev. Paul Tabulutu - N.S.W. / A.C.T. Fijian churches



### Devotional material



Prayer

### Contacts

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### Bible Reading



Fellowship by Phone