



Outreach Posters

July 2014

Who's welcome to go to church in Australia? Aussies? Are you an Aussie? You know, a real one... born here, with an Aussie accent, who understands the jokes, the slang, and drinks beer (of course).

"Aussie" can mean different things. It just means an "Australian" for people overseas. Harmless enough. But sometimes we Australians use the word to separate the real deal from the recent arrivals - to suggest 'white' instead of dark skin or someone with the status of Australian royalty. You know, a surfer or a fourth generation farmer rather than a factory worker with an accent. For some Australians it feels awkward and presumptuous calling themselves an, 'Aussie'. Could I really dare to think of myself as an, 'Aussie'? With my accent and dark skin and the small flat I live in above the shop brimming with noisy relatives and my menial job? Don't Aussies have two kids and a backyard pool?

So, is anyone welcome in Church in this country? Since most churches seem to be run by Aussies, could I come to church with my 24 kids and my broken English? Surely you have to know something about religion to go to church? You'd need to be brought up in the right family or come from the right place?

A 2013 Scanlon Foundation report found that 19% of Australians are discriminated against because of skin colour, ethnicity or religious beliefs. That's nearly 1 in 5 'Aussies' facing some kind of discrimination! But surely we're the land of the "fair go". The ones who cheer for the underdog and slash tall poppies where we can?? We love to see the little battler come out on top. Well maybe. Perhaps that's true sometimes - but clearly not for everyone.



Everyone's welcome.

There's one place, however, where it needs to be true. And that's in church. Why? Because Jesus came to die for the whole world – which means people of all nations. The bible has a picture of people from every nation represented in heaven. Heaven is not just for 'Aussies', whoever they are. So it makes sense... church must be for everyone as well!

Jesus said, *"All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out."*

Jesus welcomes everyone who comes to him with open arms. At the moment, your local church has a welcome mat out ready for you because God's people welcome citizens from everywhere. You don't need to look like anyone but yourself or have any special qualifications. And you can't be too young or too old. See you soon!

Dear loving Father, Thank you for creating a wonderful world full of diverse and interesting people. Help us to love each other in our similarities and our differences and rejoice in following you.

John 6:37: All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out.