

**Bishop Hilton Deakin's speech, Hammarskjöld-Papuan tree-planting,
FRWP Office, 838 Collins St, Docklands, 6 December 2020**

I have been retired from active ministry for nearly fourteen years now and I just want to say a few things. In the last half-an-hour or more I have met some of the most wonderful women and men that I would ever care to meet, who have followed the way of goodness for human kind. I sat over there drinking a cup of tea, and they have brought back fond memories of things that we did together, of ways that we talked together, ways in which we walked together. And part of the process--it wasn't the only part of it--was towards the independence of West Papua.

In 1961 I was a very young priest, and I was in Melbourne trying to find ways around how we can understand people like so many of you, all the wonderful ministers of religion who are here for instance, and all the wonderful women and men that I met with--Jacob Rumbiak and Louise Byrne, and all the rest of you; whole lots of you bring back to me wonderful fond memories. And I listened to you very carefully. And I have to say to you in the limited way in which I can do this, I always thank my God for allowing me to have these experiences.

Now in 1961 I was a new priest in the Catholic Church in Melbourne, and I was beginning to find that I needed to learn more and more about the principles and the way-of-thinking about social justice. I learned it when I was in the seminary in Werribee. And I learned a very special way of doing it, and it was French, and it was through the Irish, and it was anti-democratic, and lots of other things. And I read a lot of it, but I wanted to learn more and find out more of what it means to fight for what is right and what is good for human beings whoever and where ever they be: the Aboriginal people of Australia who were my first interest, and then the people of East Timor with whom I worked also. I still feel the extraordinary sense of blessing, and compassion, love and togetherness here with you today with those sorts of memories hovering around. All these wonderful speakers: I'd forgotten them. That's the stupidity of being an old old man. I was eighty-eight the other day, so I haven't got too much longer to go, but I will go with the memory of this particular occasion.

I could not cope with the social justice that was taught to me in the seminary, and I began to look outwards. And one of the first people I listened to was a man called Dag Hammarskjöld. Why I don't know, but by the time I'd finished speaking to him, I thought this man is a very wise person who thinks far more widely, far more up in the air, and far more down below as well and I can learn something from him. But he died in 1961 when I was just beginning to become aware.

But in the meantime, there are people among you, the women and the men who can stand up here and talk to you about independence, talk to you about togetherness, talk to you about the ways which people who don't like you treat you. It's my vision because I happen to be a disciple of Jesus Christ. I put it down to that. And I think in the same way, those who have spoken today and mentioned Jesus are doing the same sort of thing.

This tree is going to be a memorial for Dag Hammarskjöld, is it not? Well you couldn't pick a better fellow to plant a tree for, and watch it grow, and see it mature into something of God's creation.

God be with you. Keep up the fight. Keep up also the sorts of thing that you know are good for your people. And God bless West Papua.