

In St Paul's letter to Timothy he says, "the love of money is the root of all evil," and isn't that the truth?

It's greed, greed, greed, we can get caught up in all the time, wanting this, wanting that, thinking that it will all bring us happiness, fulfilment. And it does for a while, until we see something else we want, and then it all starts again. If someone else wants something, then we want it too, because if they want it, it must be worthy of having, so we must have it. Even the richest among us moneywise want something else: more money, or peace, security, someone to love them apart from the prospect of what's in the will.

As with the individual, so with the nation. Among the luckiest, richest and most favoured nations on earth, Australia pursues resources in the Timor Sea which by any international standard it has no right to.

With its trembling desire for security and with each successive Government's abject crawling for votes, we have descended into excising even the mainland of Australia from itself for the purposes of migration. So by the stroke of a parliamentary pen the entity Australia doesn't exist for an asylum seeker. The same mindset which can twist any number of laws and conventions to argue for the excision from reality of an gigantic continent for certain purposes can certainly do the same with a boundary, a line on a map.

Australia has had disputes with other nations, e.g. New Zealand, over sea borders and they have been decided on half-way line principles. But not with Timor-Leste.

We even have the ludicrous situation where a Government wins an election with the promise of securing "Sovereign Borders" but at the same time refuses to decide on a border in a particular area, like opposite the Timor coastline. If an asylum seeker boat sailed east from Indonesia, rounded the island of Timor, sailed west, then turned south at a particular point, it could sail straight for the non-existent Australia without crossing any border, because there is none.

Friends, we know that there are many good people in Government. We cannot afford to wipe them off. They need us to tell them the facts. They need us to go to them, and with courtesy and respect give them the information they need to make right decisions. We are the civil society. We have a major role to play. In fact, our role, whilst less obvious, is the more long-lasting, because we do not run the risk of losing our seat in civil society at the next election. We need to think our position through carefully, apprise ourselves of the facts and get a good night's sleep.

We have work to do.

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