

# OIKOUMENE

Tasmanian Council of Churches

July 2017

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## The 'Lund' Principle

*Should not the churches act together in all matters except those in which deep differences of conviction compel them to act separately?*

### Living Ecumenism in Tasmania today.

But what is ecumenism? In Wikipedia we read:

*Ecumenism refers to efforts by Christians of different church traditions to develop closer relationships and better understandings. The term is also often used to refer to efforts towards the visible and organic unity of different Christian churches in some form.*

In the Tasmanian Council of Churches, we recognise and witness to the invisible unity we share in Jesus Christ. The adjective *ecumenical* can also be applied to any interdenominational initiative that encourages greater cooperation among Christians and their churches.

The terms *ecumenism* and *ecumenical* come from the Greek οἰκουμένη (*oikoumene*), [the name of this newsletter] It means 'the whole inhabited world', and was historically used with specific reference to the Roman Empire. The ecumenical vision today comprises the celebration of our unity in Jesus Christ, the search for a closer visible unity of the Church (Ephesians 4:3) and the 'whole inhabited earth' (Matthew 24:14) as the concern of all Christians.

So how do we live ecumenically today? When the General Secretary of the World Council of Churches addressed the South Australian Council of Churches last year he said. "You are the World Council of Churches", meaning that ecumenism is not limited to a formal organisation, but lived by the witnesses of Christians everywhere.

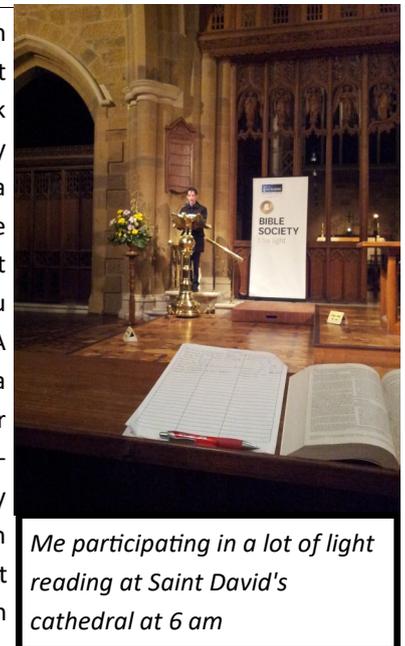
The recent census data has shown some unsurprising, but still worrying data. 30% of all Tasmanian ticked "no religion", up from 22% percent five years ago. Despite the not surprising growth of "no religion" it is interesting to see a growing religious interest through festivals such as Dark MOFO that are filled with various versions of Pagan worship. It is constantly pushed that it is

only "art" or I've even heard people say "a bit of fun". But Dark MOFO is not the only festival in Tasmania where this takes place and I have to start wondering how far you can go before Art and A Bit of Fun become a search for a deeper meaning in life. I believe that Christianity has a real mission in Tasmania to support people in their search for deeper meaning.

And in small ways churches already have. It was wonderful to be able to read the whole Bible during the Dark MOFO festival at Saint David's Cathedral. People from almost all denominations came and read while the doors were open, allowing people to enter into the mystery of God through the reading of scripture, and being a light during a festival of darkness.

But we cannot act as individuals. The nature of ecumenism is changing. A Council setting often doesn't suffice anymore. But many Christians already work together on a different level. Whether it is through joint worship on Sunday in country towns, shared Taizé prayers or the informality of open discussion groups such as Pints of Faith.

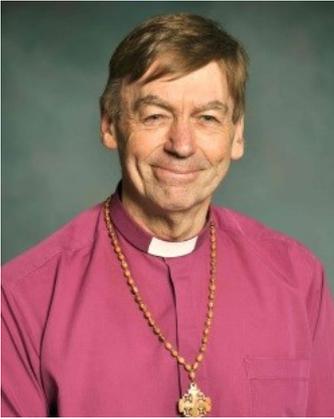
One thing is certain: as church attendance declines we need to find ways in which Christian Churches can come to be viewed as a greater unity. We can no longer be completely independent from each



*Me participating in a lot of light reading at Saint David's cathedral at 6 am*

*continued from front page* -> other. Christ only has one body after all, and we must embrace all our differences to be able to be a church for all. To quote William Alexander Guerry, an Anglican Bishop from America, "If we are to be truly catholic as Christ was catholic, then we need to be broad enough to embrace within its communion every living human soul".

## 2017 TCC Annual Meeting



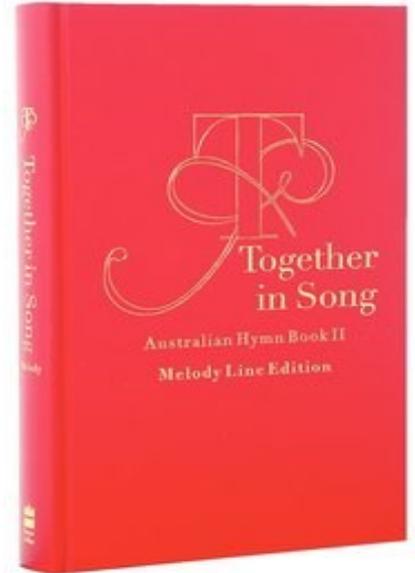
Everyone is invited to attend the annual meeting of the TCC which is to be held on Saturday 16 September in Launceston at the Church of the Apostles. Our main speaker this year will be bishop Philip Huggins. Bishop Philip is currently the President of the National

Council of Churches in Australia. Bishop Philip was ordained into the Anglican Church 1977 and worked as a priest in country Victoria and Melbourne. In 1995 he was consecrated as an assistant bishop for the Diocese of Perth. He was installed as the bishop of Grafton in 1998 and returned to Melbourne as an assistant bishop in 2003. Today he is the regional bishop Oodthenong within the diocese of Melbourne. And apart from serving as regional bishop in Melbourne and as president of the National Council of Churches he is also the chair of the brotherhood of St Laurence and President of the Lowther Hall Anglican Grammar School.

The Meeting will take place at the Church of the Apostles, 44 Margaret St in Launceston from 10 am till 3 pm. Everybody is welcome to attend the meeting as an observer. The TCC's annual meeting is the State-wide gathering of Heads of Churches, Member Churches' delegates, Associated Bodies' delegates and non-member churches' observers. Annual Meetings have been held in Hobart and Launceston in alternate years. Members of the TCC include Anglicans, Baptists, Catholics, Churches of Christ, Quakers, Salvation Army, the Uniting Church as well as Spiritual Care Australia and Jane Franklin Hall. The TCC'S Emergencies ministry has recently been incorporated and as such is also an independent body which is a member of the TCC.

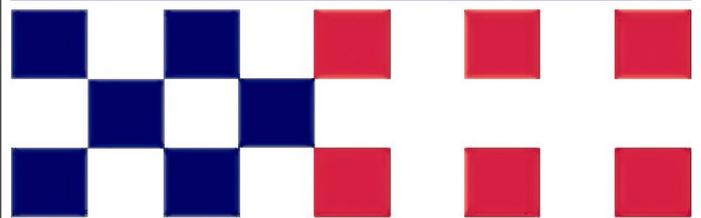
## The end of an Era

The Australian Hymn book company has received notification from HarperCollins, the publisher of this widely acclaimed *Together in Song*, that they will not be renewing their agreements with copyright holders once they expire in early 2018. The result is that *Together in Song* will be out of print after early 2018.



Parishes, schools and other institutions contemplating introducing the hymn book, or those who require additional copies of congregational or full music editions would be well advised to place new orders soon because the book will no longer be available once the copyright agreements have terminated.

## Tasmanian Council of Churches



## EMERGENCIES MINISTRY

The **TCC Emergencies Ministry** is part of the State Government's Tasmanian Emergency Management Plan, with the activation of the regional social recovery committee in the event of a disaster or emergency. The TCC Emergencies Ministry is the primary agency whose sole purpose is to deliver accredited pastoral care in times of crisis. We provide **training** for this Emergencies Ministry: details about our training courses are on [tccem.org.au](http://tccem.org.au). **Contact** our Emergencies Ministry Officer, Pastor Gus Yearsley at [emprojects@tccas.org.au](mailto:emprojects@tccas.org.au).

## A Message from the NCCA President

Jesus have mercy

This prayer of our hearts focuses us in a world of many sorrows.

“Jesus have mercy” Some of us have been praying this for many years. It is a prayer that helps keep us centred in the One who is with us to the end of time.

“All time is God’s time”, as St Benedict reminds us. This is a time in the NCCA’s tory when we must live out the essence of our discipleship: our love for Jesus and our trust that our diverse Australian Church is undergoing renewal, in the divine providence.

There is plenty of analysis as to why renewal is needed. Many books have been written on the matter! The key is to attentively now pray renewal into being, in the Spirit of the One who says “Look, I make all things new” (Revelation 21:5) Hence “Receptive Ecumenism” is so helpful. Hence too, our encouragement that we all pray around noon each day for a change of heart in the human family. Especially given the level of violence and cruelty in the world. Imagine if all our Churches and Chapels were ‘powerhouses of prayer’ people streaming in through open doors to kneel and pray “Jesus have mercy”.

Let us make the space and time for our Saviour’s grace to abide and renew. We actually know, as a matter of fact, don’t we, why Jesus says “Those who abide in me and I them bear much fruit because apart from me you can do nothing”. (John 15.7) Living this truth together, renewal will come as we link worship with care for one another and community engagement. With prayers of gratitude for your all,

**Bishop Philip Huggins**

**ACT FOR PEACE**  
CONFRONTING INJUSTICE TOGETHER  
THROUGH THE **actalliance**



**We're counting on you!**

act for peace is the international aid agency of the National Council of Churches in Australia.

### How Do I act for peace?

#### act for peace Regular Giving

Make a lasting difference in our world by becoming an act for peace Regular Giver. By giving from as little as \$1 a day (\$30 a month), you can help improve the lives of so many people in Australia and across Africa, Asia, the Middle East and the Pacific.



#### Christmas Bowl Annual Appeal

60 years ago, Reverend Frank Byatt placed an empty bowl on the dinner table on Christmas Day. He urged all present to contribute a small gift to the bowl and do something selfless for the people around the world who are victims of disease, poverty and violence.

Thousands of people **act for peace** each year by giving to the Christmas Bowl, and many have also become Regular Givers.

#### Leave a Gift in Your Will

Please consider leaving a gift in your Will to **act for peace**. If you are interested in receiving more information, please indicate overleaf.

#### Be Informed

Please visit our website: [www.actforpeace.org.au](http://www.actforpeace.org.au) for inspiring stories from the field. A variety of giving options are also available.

## The Ecumenical Movement in Australia

As Frederik has raised the question of 'Living Ecumenism in Tasmania today' in his lead article, I thought it might be helpful to outline the development of the Ecumenical Movement in Australia, and the Tasmanian Council of Churches place in it.

The modern ecumenical movement began to take shape as the 19th century drew to a close. Initiatives among students and between Church mission agencies led the way. Australia saw the formation of the Australian Student Christian Movement (1896) and the National Missionary Council (1926). Out of the devastation of World War II sprang the Australian Committee for the World Council of Churches (1946). This developed into the Australian Council of Churches which, in 1994, gave way to the National Council of Churches in Australia. It is also worth noting that the Tasmanian Council of Churches was established on the 27th April 1946, at a State-wide meeting of denominational representatives at Evandale. This means that the TCC was established in the same year as the Australian Committee for the World Council of Churches, the first State Ecumenical Council. We have a very rich heritage.

The movement for Christian unity in Australia was, initially, an Anglican and Protestant affair. Eastern and Oriental Orthodox Churches came in, in strength, during the 1960s and 70s. For Catholics, the 2nd Vatican Council opened up fresh possibilities for relationships with other Churches, and the transition to the National Council of Churches in Australia (1994) saw the Catholic Church become a full participant in Australia's national ecumenical body. It is also worth noting that the Catholic Church in Tasmania was the first Catholic Church in Australia to become a Member Church of a State Ecumenical Council on the 18th November 1970, some 24 years before the Catholic Church in Australia became a Member Church of the National Council of Churches in Australia. Once again the TCC led the way.

The NCCA is its nineteen member Churches in their commitment each to the others and all to the world for which Christ died. It works in collaboration with state ecumenical councils around Australia. It is an associate council of the World Council of Churches, a member of the Christian Conference of Asia, as is the Anglican Church of

Australia and the Uniting Church in Australia, and a partner of other national ecumenical bodies throughout the world. These nineteen member Churches are: the Anglican Church of Australia, Antiochian Orthodox Church, Armenian Apostolic Church, Assyrian Church of the East, Chinese Methodist Church in Australia, Churches of Christ in Australia, Congregational Federation of Australia, Coptic Orthodox Church Diocese of Sydney & affiliated regions, Diocese of Melbourne & affiliated Regions, Greek Orthodox Church, Indian Orthodox Church, Lutheran Church of Australia, Mar-Thoma Church, Religious Society of Friends (Quakers), Roman Catholic Church, Romanian Orthodox Church, The Salvation Army, Serbian Orthodox Church, Syrian Orthodox Church and the Uniting Church in Australia.

To quote from the NCCA Constitution: "The National Council of Churches in Australia gathers together in pilgrimage those Churches and Christian communities which confess the Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour according to the Scriptures and commit themselves to deepen their relationship with each other in order to express more visibly the unity willed by Christ for his Church, and to work together towards the fulfilment of their mission of common witness, proclamation and service, to the glory of the one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit."

The National Council of Churches in Australia is an ecumenical council of member Australian Christian Churches, of which the Tasmanian Council of Churches is a proud partner. As we come to our Annual Meeting in September, may we all endeavour to be there as we celebrate 'Living Ecumenism in Tasmania today'

**President Jeff**