

OIKOUMENE

TASMANIAN COUNCIL OF CHURCHES

163 Macquarie Street, Hobart (GPO Box 1130 Hobart 7001)

March 2004

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?

From the General Secretary

The creation of a website for the Tasmanian Council of Churches has been an outstanding issue for me for some time and part of my reluctance to respond to the idea has been because of the extra time required to ensure the site is maintained and updated. Having just returned from the Annual Staff Meeting of the National Council of Churches at which our discussions were frequently drawn to their website www.ncca.org.au, I wonder whether or not we really need to go ahead with one of our own. The NCCA site is excellent, providing heaps of information on the work of the Council and educational resources available.

If you are not already a frequent visitor I encourage you to take a look at the site. In particular I draw attention to the material for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, the Decade to Overcome Violence, reviews of Mel Gibson's film 'The Passion of the Christ', the National Aboriginal Torres Strait Islander Ecumenical Commission and don't miss out on the Youth Network, especially the Journey of Promise.

Indigenous issues continue to be of vital concern to the Church. I am pleased, in this issue of the Newsletter, to have been able to invite Bridget Cousens to share her recent experience at Tingha in northern New South Wales.

Val Graydon

ABOUT FACE EXPERIENCE

ABOUT FACE is a Uniting Church faith and culture exchange for young adults in the 18—30 age group. **BRIDGET COUSENS**, a member of the North Hobart UC congregation, participated in About Face 6 which took place during January. Her placement was at Tingha, a small town in north west NSW. Here is Bridget's report.

My ABOUT FACE experience was awesome. It was an eye opening experience full of excitement, hard times, brilliant times and very confusing times. It was about MY faith and MY culture and how that was similar and different to the faith and culture of my family in Tingha, northern NSW.

A lot of people have been asking me what kind of activities we did while we were in Tingha. Our days were full of lots of sitting around and talking, just generally hanging out. Most of the time we were with the kids and the young teenagers swimming, driving to town and sitting on the verandah playing cards. This was partly because we were the first ABOUT FACE group to ever to go Tingha, therefore making it a bit unknown to everyone.

We were automatically made to feel like a part of the family and it was an honour to be made so welcome and treated like equals amongst the community there. There were challenging times while on our trip, small challenges such as finding it really hard to sit around for hours on end and not really knowing what was going to happen next.

I guess that's where the different lifestyles come in, city girls in the country!

However, in the time of sitting around, fishing, playing cards, we heard lots of stories. Aunt, the main lady who looked after us, was a child in the stolen generation or the lost generation as she likes to call it. Her stories of pain and anger were told with a smile on her face, however we knew inside it hurt her to tell us. She said that we were the first white fellas she had told these stories to and that it was a part of the process of healing for her to be able to do that.

Most days we went up to the lagoon for a swim with the young kids and teenagers. Those times were always spent having great and deep conversations with the teenage girls about anything and everything. It was an eye opener for us and we learnt a lot. Young pregnancies were everywhere. 12 and 13 year old girls with babies were not uncommon. The thing that stood out to me was that this wasn't seen as a concern and the support in their families was so very strong.

I struggled a lot with the racism and, as a result, the violence. Questions came up in my head all the time ... *Why can't we all be accepted as equals? Why is it so hard for us to accept those who are different?* Or maybe we do accept them but we don't see them as equal.

I learnt a lot of things while I was away. I learnt to chill out, I learnt patience, I learnt



Bridget is pictured (centre) with two of her fellow About Face participants.

to sit and be quiet. I learnt how to talk about and express my faith to kids who had never met a Christian as young as me; they thought it was only for old people like Aunty Sue. I learnt how easy it is to judge others when they are different (meaning I started to think how horrible some of the white people were) but I also learnt how to stand back and see that we are all the same no matter what colour, what age, sexuality or religion.

What I also learnt is that the question isn't *How can we help the Aboriginal people?* But it is *How can we help each other.*

What does 2004 and beyond hold for me? This year my focus is on telling my story to those who want to hear it. So please invite me along to your church, school, youth group and I'll be there. I think it is really important to not keep my story to myself as that defeats the point of learning and telling everyone's stories.

And beyond 2004—I'm going to go back to Tingha to visit my family!

Bridget Cousens



EASTER CELEBRATIONS



You are invited to be part of the **Awakening Prayer Vigils** on Good Friday.

Hobart Vigil is at Parliament House steps and will be from 6pm Friday—6 am Saturday. Moonah Vigil is at Benjafield Park, Hopkins Street from 6am—midnight Good Friday

All are encouraged to take this opportunity to pray together at this special time of year.

If you would like more information about the Prayer Vigils and how your church might get involved, please contact the Awakening office on 6229 1939.

Come and celebrate the Resurrection of Christ at the

EASTER DAWN SERVICE
on Sunday 11 April at 6.30 am
at the Playground on top of the Hobart Domain
(area facing bridge).

This is a wonderful way for all churches to come together to rejoice in the living Christ.

An Ecumenical event hosted by Hobart City Ministers.

**AWAKENING
EASTER MARCH**

Easter Sunday Afternoon

Join your fellow Christians across the nations by meeting at the Cenotaph on the Hobart Domain at 2.00 pm and proceed to Parliament House gardens for a free family festival and celebration from 3—5 pm.

Churches from all over Hobart will be participating on the day. Live entertainment, refreshments and activities for children and adults.

More information from the Awakening Office on 6229 1939 or e-mail brenton@fusion.org.au

TCC ANNUAL MEETING— SATURDAY 1ST MAY 2004

Saturday 1st May (“May Day”) is the date of the TCC’s Annual Meeting to be held at the Hobart Salvation Army Citadel, 180 Elizabeth Street, Hobart from 9.30 am—4.00 pm.

The theme for the day will be ***A New Vision for Churches Working Together in Tasmania***. Keynote speaker will be Dr. Jill Tabart and her address will be during the morning session at approximately 11.30 am. Jill is a former President of the Tasmanian Council of Churches, a former moderator of the Uniting Church in Tasmania, and former President of the Uniting Church National Assembly. Jill is the current Chair of the National Council of Churches’ Working Group on the Decade to Overcome Violence.

In addition to the delegates representing Member Churches of the TCC, you are ALL WELCOME to come and hear Jill Tabart. If you would like to stay for lunch, please advise the TCC office on 6234 2543 as we will need to have numbers for catering.

Please put this date in your diary NOW—and plan to be there to be part of the ecumenical journey in Tasmania!



NCCA Mantle, used at inaugural service when NCCA was formed in July 1994, will be a focal point at the AGM

SIMPLY SHARING WEEK 16-23 MAY 2004

Simply Sharing Week is about making a difference to the injustice and poverty in the world. This year money raised is going to assist the people of East Timor. East Timor is Australia’s newest neighbour and on May 20th this year will celebrate its second anniversary of independence as the poorest country in Asia.

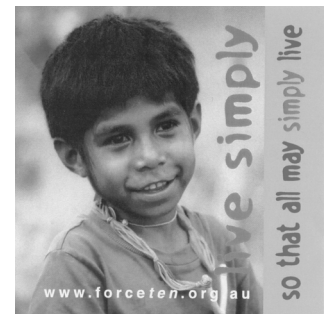
Simply Sharing Week is from 16-23 May, but you can hold your events at any time you choose.

You can be involved by

- Getting your free Simply Sharing Week Kit from the TCC office (6234 2543) or at www.forceten.org.au
- Get together with others from your school, youth group or church to organise an event to have fun, learn more about social justice and raise money for a better world.
- Contacting the TCC Office if you would like a speaker for your event.

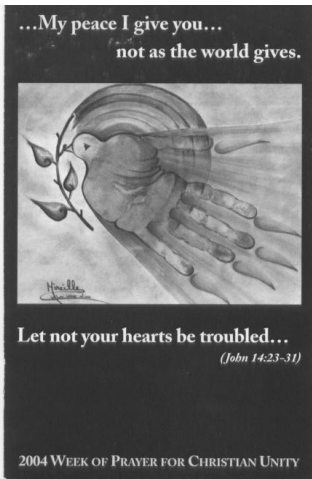
Help give East Timor a birthday feast that will last for years to come!

Buy a “Live Simply” fridge magnet for \$4.00 and be reminded of how blessed you are to have a full fridge, while at the same time giving the gift of food to the people of East Timor.



Magnets are available in packs of 10 (minimum order) and can either be ordered through the TCC Office (phone 6234 2543 or e-mail tcc@trump.net.au) or directly through *forceten*, Locked Bag 199, Sydney NSW 1230.

Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 23-30 May



The theme for the 2004 Week of Prayer for Christian Unity is from John 14:23-31. *My peace I give to you....not as the world gives.*

It is a great privilege to be part of a long chain of Christians throughout the world reflecting on a text and praying together for the unity of the Church and for the world.

This year the quest for peace in the Middle East forms the particular backdrop to the celebration and meditations for the Week. The choice of the theme also comes out of the conviction of the Churches in the Middle East that Christians throughout the world stand in solidarity with the hopes and sufferings of the people of that region. They seek from us the gift of prayer and spiritual support and the common desire for Peace.

Week of Prayer for Christian Unity resources are now available from the TCC office—an order form is enclosed with this newsletter.

Ecumenical Liturgy and Daily Guide leaflets are also available on the website at www.ncca.org.au



CHRISTMAS BOWL UPDATE

TCC would like to thank all supporters of Christmas Bowl who have been busy over the past months. We had community launches for the Appeal in both Hobart and Launceston this year and we were grateful to have the involvement of school choirs and drama groups for those occasions. Emele Duituturaga (pictured below with the girls from St. Michael's Collegiate Choir) was a wonderful ambassador for Christmas Bowl and her enthusiasm was infectious!

Our shopping centre collections in November/December were well supported in all areas and we express gratitude to our 250 volunteers around the state who made this possible. The total collected in shopping centres throughout the state was \$30,693.00—an excellent result. Without our volunteers this would not happen.

Thanks, too, to all Church Treasurers who have forwarded donations through to the National Council of Churches. If you haven't yet forwarded donations from your Parish/Congregation, please do so as soon as possible. Your assistance means that Christmas Bowl projects can be more effective more quickly!



Photograph courtesy of the Hobart Mercury

TCC GENERAL SECRETARY VISITING CHINA

TCC General Secretary, Rev'd Val Graydon, has been offered the opportunity to undertake a study tour to China in April on behalf of the National Council of Churches. The tour will include monitoring of programs supported by Christmas Bowl through Christian World Service.

When Val returns to Tasmania at the end of April she will be looking forward to sharing her experiences with congregations/groups around the state.

If you would like Val to conduct a workshop, speak to your congregation/corps/group, please contact the TCC office on 6234 2543 to make a booking for her to visit you.

Our prayers and blessings are with Val for a safe and rewarding journey as she heads off to China straight after Easter.

ECUMENICAL WORKSHOPS

Scots-Memorial Uniting Church is hosting an ecumenical Workshop on **Saturday 22 May at St. Andrew's Hall, 29 Bathurst Street from 10.00am—1.00pm** to be conducted by Val Graydon following her return from China. If you would like to register for this event, please contact either the TCC Office (6234 2543) or Scots-Memorial Office (6231 4498).

Val will also preach at the 10.00 am service at Scots-Memorial Church on Sunday 23 May.

Sandy Bay Holy Spirit Catholic Church is hosting a similar workshop at Holy Spirit Church, 275 Sandy Bay Road on **Saturday 29 May from 1.30—4.00 pm..** Please advise the TCC Office if you would like to register. Val is also available to speak at a service in the Sandy Bay area on Sunday 30 May. Would you like it to be yours?

Please support these events in your area and learn more about the work of Christian World Service throughout the world.

SOME EXCITING CHANGES WITH THE TCC'S COMMISSIONS

Two new Commissions are in the process of being formed (replacing the former World Justice and Development Commission).

First is the Christian World Service Commission. If you have a heart for CWS work (including Christmas Bowl, *forceten*, etc.) or could offer ideas and encouragement for the promotion and education of these programs in churches around the state, and would like to be part of this development, please advise the TCC's General Secretary, Rev'd Val Graydon, on 6234 2543, or contact your Head of Church directly to express your interest.

The second is a new Peace and Justice Commission which will incorporate issues relating to the Decade to Overcome Violence. People across the state who have a special interest in peace and justice issues at home and abroad would be appropriate for this group. Never has there been a time when peace and justice issues have been more important. Again, let Val know if you are interested in being part of this group.

Anglicare's Family & Relationship Education *Making Great Relationships Fantastic*

This program conducts more than simply workshops for engaged couples. It also produces a wide range of workshops and seminars for counsellors, marriage celebrants, health care professionals, office workers, plant operators, church groups, community groups, college students etc. We also do "prepare" and "Enrich".

So what can you expect from our workshop for engaged couples? Issues about family background, intimacy, communication, parenting, financial and legal matters will be addressed. This is a relevant and inexpensive way to enjoy the benefits or improved relationship satisfaction, parenting skills and sense of well being.

Workshops complement the work of civil and religious celebrants who use "Prepare" or similar programs, or who address issues of faith and religious conviction.

More details from the Anglican website (<http://www.anglicantas.org.au>), or Anglicare's website (<http://www.anglicare-tas.org.au>), or contact Les Whittle ph. 6234 3510 or e-mail l.whittle@anglicare-tas.org.au

NEWS FROM TABOR COLLEGE TASMANIA *AN INTRODUCTION TO CHRISTIAN LEARNING AND TEACHING*

This new and exciting course will be offered during the second half of Semester 1 (commencing 13 May) and the first half of Semester 2 (concluding 16 September). The course will be held on Thursday afternoons from 4.00—6.00 pm.

It will explore the nature, purposes and practice of Christian learning and teaching and will draw upon relevant biblical material, and the work of significant contemporary Christian educators. (A more detailed outline is available from Tabor's office).

The course is offered at Diploma, Bachelor or Graduate Diploma levels and will be of particular value to:

- Christian teachers working in Independent schools
- Clergy who are interested in and have some responsibility for the church's educational ministry
- All those involved in Christian Education ministry with children, youth or adults.

The course facilitator is the Rev'd Dr. Tom Wallace, recently retired to Tasmania. Tom is a former Director of Education in the Anglican Diocese of Sydney and former Director of the Anglican Schools' Commission in the Diocese of Perth. His post-graduate studies have been in Christian Education and he is widely recognised as a gifted and able Christian educator.

Further information from the Principal of Tabor College, John Morse, mobile no. 0407 972 912.

NEW RESOURCES AVAILABLE

Overlapping the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity is the Week of Prayer for Reconciliation. Two outstanding resources related to indigenous issues are now available from the TCC Office (or direct from the National Council of Churches).

Unfinished Business "with the consent of the natives" is an ecumenical Resource Kit on Treaty produced by the New South Wales Ecumenical Council.

This resource addresses the injustices that have continued through the years to our indigenous population. It is offered as a further contribution by the churches to the reflection and action that is necessary to deal with this "unfinished business" - and so continue the process of reconciliation, the journey of healing.

National Sorry Day is on 26 May, followed by the Week of Prayer for Reconciliation (27 May—3 June). Why not get a group together to study and actively respond to the challenges contained in this kit.

The National Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Ecumenical Commission (NATSIEC) has produced an 'Information Pack' with excellent resources. The Human Rights: 10 Point Action Plan enclosed with this newsletter is just one of the pamphlets contained in the pack. This kit will also assist churches to make decisions about their appropriate responses to reconciliation issues.

For more information, visit www.ncca.org.au/departments/natsiec.



PRESIDENT'S 40TH ANNIVERSARY



Congratulations to TCC President, the Rev'd Canon Robert Legg OAM who celebrated the 40th Anniversary of his Ordination on February 24th (Saint Mathias Day).

Our prayers and blessings to Robert for his continuing ministry.