



OIKOUMENE

TASMANIAN COUNCIL OF CHURCHES

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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?

From the President



Soldiers of Christ, Arise (*Ephesians 6: 10-18*)

We have seen the news, heard the broadcasts, and read the reports of the worldly war against the Body of Christ in the Middle East, in Asia, in Africa. Those who so war against the Church know not with Whom they are dealing, which is all the more reason for us to pray for Christ's enemies. The Church knowingly proclaims Christ's resurrection from the dead.

With our brothers and sisters in Christ in Syria, Iraq and other lands who are sorely persecuted and killed for their faith, we share "in the suffering and kingdom and patient endurance that are ours in Jesus" (Revelation 1: 9). It is to prayer and spiritual discipline we are called, as we claim for them and ourselves, in the face of worldly disaster, devastating destruction and defeat, the spiritual victory of the cross of Christ which is itself ours and theirs eternally. I beseech all members of our Member Churches throughout Tasmania, to join with those beyond our shores united in prayer to claim afresh these lands in the Name of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace, that the Body of Christ may be there restored and greatly increased.

Seekers of a better life

At the most recent meeting of the TCC Executive we discussed that the obligation to welcome to our land those who seek safety and who would loyally contribute their lives and livelihoods to our great country is more than a question of policy; it is a question of justice and mercy, of nation-building and long-term social development. The movements of peoples around the globe is as inevitable and enduring as the tides of the oceans, and it is a wise and prudent government that seeks to shrewdly and wisely harness rather than simply hinder this phenomenon of human life on this planet, to the betterment of Australian society. A statesmanlike response would be both humane and just. Likewise, as the Church, we should embrace those who so come to our shores with the love of God and the message of life in Christ which has both eternal merit and contemporary claim on their lives.

TCC Emergencies Ministry

This month we welcomed to the staff of the Tasmanian Council of Churches Pastor Gus Yearsley of Hobart who has taken up the role of the TCC Emergencies Ministry (TCC EM) Project Officer. This is a 1.5 day a week position for 9 months to develop the TCC EM as he works with our volunteer regional co-ordinators and trainers and Government authorities, including liaising with the State Emergency Service, in co-ordinating pastoral support and care as part of the State's Emergency Management Plan. We were privileged to have Stuart Stuart, the State Manager of the Victorian Council of Churches Emergencies Ministry (VCC EM), address the TCC's Annual Meeting this year. Stuart spoke of the work of the VCC EM and how it provides outreach, psychological first aid, personal support and emotional spiritual care to those recovering from state emergencies. Our own TCC EM is based broadly on that model.

Vale His Excellency the Governor

I represented the TCC at the dignified and moving State Funeral of our much loved late Governor, Peter Underwood, which was fittingly held in the Federation Concert Hall in Hobart. Our condolences are extended to Mrs Underwood and her family at this time.

David Morris,
President, Tasmanian Council of Churches



Tasmanian Community farewells Governor

In a state funeral service attended by community leaders, by members of his family, and by many other members of the community, the Governor of Tasmania, his Excellency Peter Underwood AC, was farewelled by the Tasmanian Community.

Among the dignitaries attending the service at the Federation Concert Hall on 21st July included the Governor General, Sir Peter Cosgrove AK, Mr. Underwood's predecessor as Governor, Mr. William Cox AC, and the Chief Justice and Lieutenant Governor, Mr. Alan Blow OAM.

The Tasmanian Council of Churches was represented by its President, Mr. David Morris. The Dean of St. David's Cathedral, the Very Rev. Richard Humphreys, read lessons from the Scriptures during the service.

Among the music presented by the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra and the TSO Chorus were sacred pieces, including C.H.H. Parry's "I was glad" (based on Psalm 122), and Ralph Vaughan Williams' setting of "The Old Hundredth".

Prior to his service as Governor, Mr. Underwood served as a member of the Supreme Court of Tasmania for 23 years, including three years' service as Chief Justice.

A private interment was held following the state funeral.

WWI Memorial Service

On Monday, 4th August, an ecumenical service at St. David's Anglican Cathedral in Hobart marked the 100th anniversary of the beginning of the First World War.

The service was planned by representatives of the State government and of the Tasmanian Council of Churches. The service was one of a number of services held around Australia, and around the world, to mark the anniversary. Member churches of the TCC whose representatives participated in leading the service included the Anglican Church, the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers), the Roman Catholic Church, The Salvation Army, and the Uniting Church.

In his address, the Rt. Rev. Chris Jones (Assistant Bishop of the Anglican Diocese of Tasmania) said, "To have real meaning, let each of us leave here and be more resolute in finding peace."

At the conclusion of the service, the bells of the Cathedral were rung in remembrance of those who were killed in the war. This was part of a national ringing of bells at 11:00 a.m. on the day of the anniversary of the outbreak of war.



The coffin of His Excellency the Governor is carried out of his State Funeral at the Federation Concert Hall.



Above: The congregation gathers for the WWI memorial service at St. David's Cathedral.

Below: Jenni Bond from the Religious Society of Friends lights a candle in memory of the dead and as a sign of our commitment to peace.



The next ***Oikoumene*** will be published in November, 2013. All material for publication should be received at tcctas@bigpond.net.au or at PO Box 166, New Town 7008 by the end of October.



STOP PRESS!!!!: Congratulations to *The Tasmanian Catholic* and to *Connections* for once again bringing a swag of awards back to Tasmania following the recent meetings in Canberra of the Australasian Catholic Press Association and the Australasian Religious Press Association. Well done!



TCC Annual Meeting, 2014



Above: Stuart Stuart informs the Annual Meeting about Emergencies Ministry.



Stuart Stuart addresses TCC AGM on emergencies

The major presentation at the 2014 Annual Meeting of the Tasmanian Council of Churches was given by the Rev. Stuart Stuart, State Manager of the Emergencies Ministry programme of the Victorian Council of Churches.

The VCC's Emergencies Ministry programme began in 1977. It was active in the community response to the Ash Wednesday fires in 1983. In 1993, the Department of Human Services agreed to recognise the VCC as the lead agency for the response of faith communities to emergencies.

The Black Saturday fires in 2009 saw 1300 fires across the State, with 173 fatalities, 2133 properties destroyed, directly affecting 78 communities and 25 municipalities.

In these, and similar, emergencies, chaplains trained by the VCC Emergencies Ministry have provided support to people affected by the emergencies. These chaplains come from a variety of faith backgrounds: Christian churches which are members of the VCC, Christian churches which are not members of the VCC, and faith communities other than Christianity. All are trained by the VCC's Emergencies Ministry. In the actual emergency, all are co-ordinated in their work by the VCC's Emergencies Ministry.

While some chaplains are ordained ministers of religion, some are not. Many of the chaplains are lay people nominated by their churches or faith communities as being appropriate people. Regardless of their previous education, all chaplains (ordained or lay) need to be provided with adequate training, in order to develop the appropriate skills required for the responsibility.

Following the 2013 Tasmanian bushfires, in which the TCC was involved in responding to pastoral needs in fire-affected areas, the Tasmanian Council of Churches has adopted this Victorian model in developing its own Emergencies Ministry programme.

TCC Officers elected

The 2014 Annual Meeting of the Tasmanian Council of Churches elected officers for the coming year.

Mr. David Morris, currently serving as President, was elected for a second year in this office.

Father Michael Delaney was also re-elected as Secretary.

The Rev. Ross Ellwood was elected as Vice-President. Ross has previously served as a representative of the Anglican Diocese on the TCC Executive. Ross is the rector of the Glenorchy-based Northside Anglican Parish, serving communities in the northern suburbs of Hobart. Prior to this ministry, Ross was the rector of the Buckland parish on the East Coast.

Mr. David Peters, a lay member of the Anglican Church, was elected as Treasurer of the TCC. He has been serving as Treasurer since January, following the move of Major Graham Roberts to Melbourne. David also received an OAM in the recent Queens Birthday Honours List. Congratulations, David!



L.: The Rev. Ross Ellwood.

R: David Peters OAM





Iraq Crisis Appeal

(Note: this information for the appeal was produced before the killing of hostages by ISIS, the reports of the persecution of the Yazidi minority, and proposals for military action. These events give added emphasis to the urgency of this appeal.)

In the past few weeks, violence has been spreading across Iraq, resulting in an urgent humanitarian crisis. We are deeply concerned by the reports of indiscriminate and extrajudicial killings.

Minorities in Iraq, including Christians, are particularly vulnerable as sectarian tensions increase.

Over 1 million civilians, mostly women and children, have been forced to flee their homes. Most have fled with nothing and urgently need help now.

Through our partner on the ground, Act for Peace is responding fast to the crisis by providing food parcels, hygiene kits, blankets and cooking sets, but we urgently need more funds to scale up our response.

Two camps are being established in Erbil and Dohuk to provide much needed shelter to displaced families. But the demand is great and many people are currently living in schools, mosques, tents, abandoned buildings and open public spaces.

Terrified and homeless, families are exposed to searing heat, often without anything to eat or drink. Please give generously to support displaced families today.

See more at: <http://www.actforpeace.org.au/Get-Involved/>
or ring (toll-free)
1800 025 101 .

Emergencies Ministry



TCC makes Emergencies Ministry appointment.

The Tasmanian Council of Churches is pleased to announce that Pastor Gordon (Gus) Yearsley, Executive Pastor at Grace Christian Church in Hobart, has accepted appointment to the position of the TCC's Emergencies Ministry Project Officer "to assist in the development of the Tasmanian Council of Churches' Emergencies Ministry and the implementation of the Emergencies Ministry Program".

This will be a liaison and coordinating role, providing support to the Emergencies Ministry team, including the representatives of the TCC on regional emergency committees, and the volunteer chaplains and support workers from member churches, non-member churches, and other faith communities. The Project Officer reports to the President and Executive Working Group of the TCC.

Gus has taken up his position in the week beginning 15th September. The appointment is for one-and-a-half days per week for a period of nine months.

Gus is a pastor in the Australian Christian Churches, with a previous professional background in the marine sciences. He is married and is the father of three children. His recreational interests include soccer and cycling.. Following the 2013 Tasmanian bushfires, Gus was heavily involved in the relief efforts based in Sorell.

Please welcome Gus to the TCC's team, and uphold him in your prayers.

Praying, Worshipping, and Learning Together



Pints of Faith

Pints of Faith continues as a gathering for young adults offered by Catholic Youth Ministry Tasmania.

In Hobart, **Pints of Faith** will continue at the Hotel SoHo, normally on the first Thursday evening of the month, from 6:30 until 9:00.

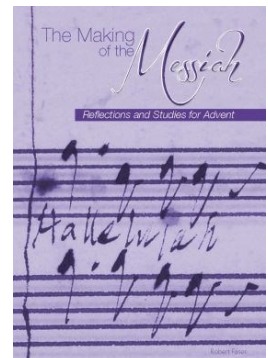
In Launceston, **Pints of Faith** will happen, as announced, at the Cock and Bull British Pub.

Please ring Catholic Youth Ministry on 62086274 for more information about **Pints of Faith**, and other CYM programmes.



<http://2015.parliamentofreligions.org/>

The Making of the Messiah by Bob Faser: small-group reflections on Handel's *Messiah* for Advent.. Available from MediaCom at \$11,75/copy. Please ring MediaCom on 1800 811 311





Syria Crisis Appeal

Right now, thousands of innocent people are fleeing Syria every day to protect their families from bloodshed, violence and death. They are forced to leave everything behind, often taking nothing but the clothes on their backs. And it is getting worse every day. That's why we need your help.

Act for Peace desperately need your support to provide emergency relief packs to the families fleeing in Syria. We are working hard with our Partners to provide support to displaced refugees both in camps and staying in urban areas.

But we cannot keep up with the increasing numbers of refugees. Families are missing out on basic living essentials like clean water, food, shelter, hygiene and health supplies.

But You Can Help. Please help by giving an emergency relief pack to help a family in need. Let them know they are not alone.

See more at: <http://www.actforpeace.org.au/Get-Involved/>
or ring
1800 025 101 .



Praying, Worshipping, and Learning Together

All Saints' Young Adults engage in dialogue

The Young Adults' group from All Saints' Anglican Church, South Hobart is spending many of its Friday evenings engaged in ecumenical and interfaith dialogue.

In planning their programme, the members of the group indicated a desire to know more about other faith communities, including other Christian churches, but also including faith communities outside the Christian faith.

The parish's youth leader, Gemma LeMesurier, saw this as a good opportunity to expand the group's horizons. Contacts were made with a variety of other faith communities. Some of these were other Christian denominations (including Roman Catholic, Greek Orthodox, Friends, Latter-day Saints) while contacts were also made with other faith communities in Hobart from outside the Christian faith (such as the Buddhist and Baha'i communities).

In the opening session, the TCC's Liaison Officer, the Rev. Dr. Bob Faser, gave a talk to the group on the possibilities and limitations of ecumenical and interfaith dialogue. (A copy of this talk, with the title "The Great Ecumenical Slow-Cooker" follows below.)

Each week, the group gathers for a brief time of contemplative worship in the church (using some of the worship songs of the Taizé Community). Following the worship, the group moves to another room in the church's grounds where their visitors speak of their experience of faith and life, followed by a time of open discussion.



Above: a group of Anglican and Latter-day Saints young adults gathering for dialogue. (No prize is offered for spotting the middle-aged ecumenical staffer with them.)

"The Great Ecumenical Slow-Cooker"

(by Bob Faser)

Many thanks for inviting me, not only to be part of this series of sessions about the great variety and diversity of the world of faith, but also to be involved in introducing this series.

Over the next few weeks and months, you'll hear people from a variety of faith perspectives, some of whom are part of the Christian faith and some of whom are not. And I hope to get to many of these sessions myself.

There will be a great diversity among the people you'll hear from.

Among the Christians you'll hear from will be people from the Roman Catholic Church, from the Greek Orthodox Church, from the Society of Friends (also known as Quakers), and from the Latter-Day Saints (also known as Mormons).

Among those outside the Christian faith, you may hear from members of the Jewish, Muslim, Buddhist, and Baha'i communities. (And, possibly, some of these sessions may need to be at times other than your normal Friday evening meeting time, because Friday evenings will be difficult times to find a speaker from either the Jewish or Muslim communities to come and visit this group.)

First of all, there's a question of the language we use. We'll use words such as "ecumenical", "interfaith", and "multifaith". These terms aren't really identical.

"Ecumenical" comes from the Greek word for house *oikos*. Other high-powered English words that come from *oikos* include "economics" and "ecology". The term "ecumenical" is usually used to refer to relations between groups of Christians. So, for example, the global dialogue between the Anglican and Roman Catholic churches is an ecumenical dialogue.

"Interfaith" and "multifaith" activities involve people from distinctly different faiths: Christians and Jews, Christians and Muslims, Muslims and Hindus. If it involves people from two faith groups, it's an "interfaith" activity. If it involves more than two faiths, it's "multifaith". For a number of years, I was a member of the national dialogue of the Uniting Church and the Jewish community. This was an interfaith activity. Some people use the term "ecumenical" when speaking of an interfaith or multi-faith activity. I try not to.

After this, I'd like to make a few other points.

1. First of all, there's the reason for doing this.

This is not to try to convert anyone else. No one who will be speaking to your group will be trying to make you anything other than Christians. No one who will be speaking to your group will try to make you anything other than Anglicans. Similarly, your intent will not be (or at least, should not be) to turn Quakers into Anglicans or Baha'is into Christians. (continued on p. 9)



Gaza Crisis Appeal

(This information for the appeal was produced before the truce between Israel and Hamas came into effect. The truce provides a greater opportunity for long-term development, leading to greater opportunities for authentic peace and more effective results for aid in this area.)

The people of Gaza urgently need your help. More than 1,800 people have lost their lives already with the number rising every day. Thousands have been injured and over 1.7 million people have been affected by the destruction of water, electricity and waste infrastructure.

Act for Peace's partner on the ground provides medical care and trauma support, work which will be increasingly needed in dealing with the impact and aftermath of the war. According to the UN, at least 60,000 children will need trauma counselling, and that number could increase.

Please help us send emergency funds to those in need by making a generous gift today.

See more at: <http://www.actforpeace.org.au/Get-Involved/>
or ring
1800 025 101 .

The Corflutes have landed!

By the way, while we're on the subject of Act for Peace, a supply of corflute signs for the 2014 Act for Peace Christmas Bowl appeal have arrived in the TCC Office. Please contact Bob Faser on 0418-307-449 to organise a way to pick up your congregation's sign(s).

From the Liaison Officer

“The Great Ecumenical Slow-Cooker” (Continued from p. 7)

Neither is our goal to create some sort of religious porridge, blancmange, stew, or curry, with a little bit of this and a little bit of that, all thrown into “the Great Ecumenical Slow-Cooker”.

- The point of the whole ecumenical enterprise is simple, it is to be part of God’s answer to Jesus’ prayer in John 17 “... that they all may be one” Particularly, and I feel very strongly about this, it’s about enabling any Christian to receive the eucharist in any Christian church in the world. (Progress has been made in this area in many churches, but there is still a long way to go.)
- The point of the whole interfaith exercise is that, in our world of conflict, people of faith are called to be peacemakers. People of faith are far more effective peacemakers if we understand each other’s beliefs and practices.

To do this well we need to encounter each other on each other’s own terms. In these conversations, you’ll be hearing contributions from:

- Roman Catholics being Catholic, without apologising for being who they are;
- Mormons being Mormon, without apologising for being who they are;
- Baha’is being Baha’i, without apologising for being who they are.

And you’ll be participating in these conversations as Christians being Christian, and as Anglicans being Anglican, without apologising for being who you are.

And, in my observation, people who know a reasonable amount about faith traditions other than their own become better-informed and more committed members of their own faith communities.

By learning some accurate information about Roman Catholics, Greek Orthodox, Quakers, and Mormons from members of their own communities, this will enable you to be better-informed and more committed Anglicans.

By learning some accurate information about Jews, Muslims, and Baha’is from members of their own communities, this will enable you to be better-informed and more committed Christians.

And by encountering you and your faith position, this process is helping the others become better Catholics, better Quakers, better Jews, and so on.

2. Secondly, we all need to spend some time thinking about our beliefs about people of other faith perspectives. To be able to engage in these conversations, we need somehow to reach the point in our own minds where we can say, here are people of faith – whose faith stance is clearly different from ours – but whom we can see that God recognises as being part of the people of God.

3. Thirdly and finally, there’s an idea I’d like to share with you about an important thing that happens when people of faith share with each other across the normal borders of our faith traditions.

This idea is called “Holy Envy”. It comes from the late Krister Stendhal, a Swedish Lutheran who served both as the Bishop of Stockholm and as the Professor of New Testament at Harvard Divinity School. He was active in both ecumenical and interfaith relations.

Stendhal coined the phrase “Holy Envy” to speak of the experience when – either in ecumenical relations or in interfaith relations – a participant in the dialogue sees something in another faith tradition that leads him or her to say, “I wish my faith tradition had a bit of that.”

It doesn’t mean that the person wants to become part of that other community. It doesn’t mean that the person wants to throw a few bits of both communities into “the Great Ecumenical Slow-Cooker”. It simply means that here is an aspect of another faith community that provokes the person to say, “I wish we had a bit of that”: in other words, “Holy Envy”.

To give some examples, from the perspective of a member (and a minister) of the Uniting Church speaking to a group of Anglicans, there are two things about your church (at least two) that provoke this sense of “Holy Envy” in me.

- The first is in the area of worship. I honestly wish that worship in the faith tradition of which I’m part would be characterised by a similar sense of beauty and elegance as I see in Anglican worship, not just at its best (as you find it here at All Saints’) but even at its “average”.
- The second is in ministry to people who are “occasional” worshippers. I honestly wish that the denomination of which I’m part would be as comfortable as most of the Anglican churches I know as we minister to people who merely turn up to church at Christmas, ... or at Easter, ... or for Baptisms, ... weddings, ... or funerals.

In any event, if you experience this “Holy Envy” some time during this series of gatherings, this will make the whole exercise worthwhile.

Bob Faser, *TCC Liaison Officer* (You may also want to read Bob’s blog “*A funny thing happened on the way ...*”, which can be found at <http://revdocbob.blogspot.com.au>.)