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# Sharing

NEWSLETTER OF THE NSW ECUMENICAL COUNCIL INCORPORATED



*The Gift of Each Other  
Learning From Other Christians*  
A Parish Workbook on Receptive Ecumenism  
Published by the New South Wales Ecumenical Council  
2013

## New book explains Receptive Ecumenism

BY JOAN WILCOX

**The latest study booklet produced by NSW Ecumenical Council's Theological Reflection Commission was officially launched jointly by Sydney's Catholic and Anglican Archbishops, His Eminence Cardinal George Pell and the Most Reverend Glenn Davies. It is entitled "The Gift of Each Other: Learning from Other Christians."**

Cardinal Pell pointed out that it was only since Vatican II that Roman Catholic people were permitted to associate with people from other Christian denominations. During his tenure at Ballarat East and Bungaree, he himself was part of an Anglican/Catholic dialogue, and he remains supportive of ecumenical endeavours. He sees it as important that churches work together in today's increasingly secular society.

Archbishop Davies recalled that when being rebuked at school for talking in class, he was reminded that he had two ears and only one mouth, and should use these in proportion. So it is with us: we Christians should learn to listen to each other far more than talk about our own beliefs and practices, many of which are cultural rather than theological.

This is the aim of the booklet – to learn from each other. No denomination has all wisdom. Dr Davies quoted St Paul, who wrote concerning the Body of Christ "The eye cannot say to the hand, 'I have no need of you,' nor again the head to the feet, 'I have no need of you.' We all need each other." Thus it is with Christians of different traditions.

The booklet was commended for its content and its layout. It costs \$5 and may be ordered from the website [www.nswec.org.au](http://www.nswec.org.au) or by ringing Kathy on (02) 9299 2215



Doug Hewitt, General Secretary of NSW Ecumenical Council, Cardinal George Pell, Anglican Archbishop Glenn Davies and Fr Shenouda Mansour, President NSWEC at the launch

## Report from the WCC Assembly

Saturday 22 February  
at 9.30am

at Strathfield Uniting Church  
Carrington Ave, Strathfield

Experience worship and songs; hear from Bible Study leader Revd Dr Jione Havea, and member churches delegates; take away prayer resources on the theme of justice & peace



God of life,  
lead us to  
justice and peace

# WCC 10th Assembly in Busan, Korea

## MESSAGE OF THE ASSEMBLY Join the Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace

**By the tender mercy of our God, the dawn from on high will break upon us, to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace. Luke 1:78-79**

Dear Sisters and Brothers, we greet you in the name of Christ.

We gathered in the Republic of Korea at the 10th Assembly of the World Council of Churches (30 October – 8 November 2013). Coming from 345 member churches of the fellowship and from partner organisations in the ecumenical movement, we joined in prayer, shared stories from our local communities and took to heart strong messages of agony and hope. We are thankful for the many engaging statements released. Our common pilgrimage traced the theme “God of life, lead us to justice and peace.”

In the city of Busan, we journeyed together on a road of transformation – we pray that as we are being transformed ourselves, God will make us instruments of peace. Many of us travelled to other parts of Korea where we witnessed the open wounds of a society torn by conflict and division.

How necessary is justice for peace; reconciliation for healing; and a change of heart for the world to be made whole! We were encouraged by the active and committed churches we encountered; their work bears bountiful fruit.



Australians who attended the WCC Assembly in Busan pose for the cameras



Orthodox Christians greet each other



As they do in Korean worship drums played an important part of prayer time at the Assembly



Archbishop of Canterbury, Most Revd Dr Justin Welby



Revd Michael Lapsley, South Africa, as Preacher

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Left: Closing Worship began with the Washing of Feet  
WCC General Secretary, Revd Dr Olav Tveit, as the servant

Left Bottom: Scenes at the Closing Worship

Below: Plenary sessions brought many challenges for those attending. Many stories from the experience of attending the Assembly will be shared at a report day to be held on Saturday 22 February 2014, at the Uniting Church, Carrington Ave, Strathfield, commencing at 9.30 am. This day session will be part of the Half Yearly meeting of the NSW Ecumenical Council.



## From the Message of the Assembly

God our Creator is the source of all life. In the love of Jesus Christ and by the mercy of the Holy Spirit we, as a communion of the children of God, move together towards the fulfillment of the Kingdom. Seeking grace from God we are called, in our diversity, to be just stewards of God's Creation. This is the vision of the New Heaven and Earth, where Christ will "fill all in all" (Eph 1.23).



# Give to the Christmas Bowl



*They were really useful and help me learn more while I'm at school, which is good because when I grow up, I want to become a doctor to help my country. Thank you for your help." - Adela*

After years of poverty and injustice, the people of Afghanistan are slowly re-building their country. One of the ways they are doing this is through education, a program that the Christmas Bowl supports.

It is unusual for girls like Adela to be in school because children, especially girls, are made to work instead. Most women are forced to go to work at a young age, in order to help support their family.

Because the Taliban is against girl's education, for girls, just going to school can mean risking their life. Girls' schools in Afghanistan are regularly attacked, injuring and even killing students. As a result, many schools have been forced to close and even when they are open, parents often decide to keep their daughters at home.

Without access to education, girls face a lifetime of poverty and oppression. Women without an education are more likely to get married younger, have more children and have very few job opportunities. Their children are also more likely to live in poverty.

Currently, only 13% of women in Afghanistan are literate. Half of all schools do not have buildings and there are not many textbooks or teaching materials for us to use.

Act for Peace's program partner in Afghanistan has supplied tables, chairs and blackboards, trained teachers and given school bags. Your gift to the Christmas Bowl can help children like Adela.



## Taizé Prayer in Canberra

During a brief visit to Canberra in October, Brother Matthew from the Taizé Community, led an afternoon reflection time for 30 people within the grounds of the St Mark's Theological College and the Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture. In the evening over 100 gathered to pray at the City Uniting Church. These prayer times continue to attract many young people.

## A Perspective on Ecumenism

BY CLIVE H NORTON

**Contributions to the work of the NSW Ecumenical Council are coming from a variety of different sources, as well as through denominational channels.**

Recently the Annual General Meeting of Anglicans Together, a Sydney-based group, decided to contribute \$5,000 to the work of the Council. Rev Clive Harcourt-Norton, who was at that meeting, and spoke in support of the decision, reflects on the significance of ecumenism from an Anglican point of view:

“By the accident of my birth and family, I grew up as an active member of the Church of England, but by the age of fifteen I was an outspoken ecumenist. As an Anglican and a committed ecumenist I was appointed as the first State Secretary of the NSW Ecumenical Council in 1962.

“The 1920 Lambeth Conference of all Anglican bishops was of crucial significance for the understanding of ecumenism in

the Anglican Church. That Conference took up the theme, already discussed previously at earlier Lambeth Conferences, and issued its Appeal to all Christian People, a ground-breaking ecumenical statement.

Clive values “ the history of the melding of different aspects of Christian commitment and socio-political history that forged Anglicanism over centuries: Augustinian and Celtic, the long struggle for civic freedom from the tyranny of king & queens, the slavery and violence imposed by the wealthy on the powerless. The world-wide Anglican Church only has significance as it leads the ecumenical Way of Jesus.”

Such contributions are vital to the continuing work of the Council and Anglicans Together are thanked for their support.



## Christmas Message 2013

The joy of Christmas is the birth of Our Lord God and Saviour Jesus Christ. Jesus was born in a humble stable, surrounded by the animals in the manger. The three wise men came from the East bearing their gifts: gold, frankincense, and myrrh. On Christmas day, Christians express their love for each other by the exchange of gifts. Christmas is a time when we have the joy of giving. Christmas is a time we remember the Incarnated Logos, God who took flesh and became fully man and fully God. It was Jesus who took that step for us to know Him, through being born in a stable.

### What is a gift we can give back to our community we live in?

The greatest gift we can give is a renewal of faith, hope and love. How can we support those who are in most need in our society? Who are they? Some of these people that we need to think about are: the original people of this land, the Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders; the poor and the needy; the homeless people; asylum seekers and refugees; and women and children trapped in domestic violence situations. Let us sow faith to those who have lost faith in society and community. Let us sow hope to those who have lost hope in the processes of society and the church.

Let us give love to those who are in need of love. We all need that the encouragement to show that God is love!

At this time of Christmas, we need to think of others who are less fortunate than we who live in Australia. There are many around us globally that are challenged by climate change, political and economic uncertainty. Your participation in the ecumenical movement will assist in the process of social justice and peace. Giving to the Christmas Bowl is one way to show solidarity with the suffering world in the fellowship of Christ who was incarnated for us on Christmas Day.

On behalf of the NSW Ecumenical Council, we wish all our member churches a joyful Christmas and a blessed new year. I look forward to working with you in 2014.

**God bless, Fr Shenouda Mansour  
President NSWEC**



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