

From Liz Stone – Associate Interim General Secretary

Dear All

Thank you for contributing to the real sense of opportunity, change, renewal and re-focusing our role and purpose as the National Council of Churches in Australia (NCCA) and its Commissions and agencies.

I am privileged that +Phil Huggins as Interim General Secretary has asked me to work with us all to take the NCCA through the implementation of the governance review while assisting in the day-to-day management of NCCA Secretariat for the next five months. In that time I hope NCCA will have identified a new General Secretary and a new governance structure (with advice from the Governance Review Working Party) that takes NCCA forward to the opportunities that present us today.

NCCA are currently seeking to recruit a General Secretary

The key attributes are:

- Strengthening relationships between churches in Australia
- Dialogue, leadership and initiative
- Strategy, policy and projects

For more information please go to: <http://www.ncca.org.au/home/employment>

A Future Not Our Own

It helps now and then to step back and take a long view.

The Kingdom is not only beyond our efforts, it is beyond our vision.

We accomplish in our lifetime only a fraction of the magnificent enterprise that is God's work.

Nothing we do is complete, which is another way of saying that the kingdom always lies beyond us.

No statement says all that could be said.
No prayer fully expresses our faith. No confession brings perfection, no pastoral visit brings wholeness.

No program accomplishes the Church's mission.

No set of goals and objectives include everything.
This is what we are about. We plant the seeds that one day will grow.

We water the seeds already planted
knowing that they hold future promise.
We lay foundations that will need further development.

We provide yeast that produces effects far beyond our capabilities.

We cannot do everything, and there is a sense of liberation in realizing this.

This enables us to do something, and to do it very well.
It may be incomplete, but it is a beginning, a step along the way, an opportunity for the Lord's grace to enter and do the rest.

We may never see the end results, but that is the difference between the master builder and the worker.

We are workers, not master builders, ministers, not messiahs. We are prophets of a future not our own.

In memory of Oscar Romero (1917-1980) Accessed 20 August 2014 at:

http://www.journeywithjesus.net/PoemsAndPrayers/Ken_Untener_A_Future_Not_Our_Own.shtml

Praying with the Eastern Churches

Patriarch's Prayer (+Louis Raphael Sako, Chaldean Catholic Patriarch)

Lord,

The plight of our country is deep and the suffering of the Christians is heavy and frightening us,

Therefore we ask you Lord to assign our lives, grant us patience and courage to continue to witness our Christian values with trust and hope.

Lord, peace is the base of any life:

Give us peace and stability to live with each other without fear, anxiety, with dignity and joy, glory to you forever.

Joint Prayers and Fasting for the Suffering in the Middle East

From Fr Shenoude Mansour -

The members of the Council of Bishops of the Eastern Churches met last week on Tuesday 26th August 2014 and declared a 3 day joint fasting and prayers for the Middle East.

This will commence on the 10th September to the 12th of September 2014.

It would be appreciated that the attached notice of the event is widely circulated within your network and promoted accordingly.

There are joint prayer times each day of the fast as follows:

1- Wednesday 10/09/2014: 7.30pm, at **Mar Ephrem the Syrian Church- located: 82 Joseph Street, Lidcombe, NSW 2141**

2- Thursday 11/09/2014: 7.30pm, at **St. Antonious & St. Paul Coptic Church- located- 29 Bolton Street, Guildford, NSW 2161**

3- Friday 12/09/2014: 7.30pm, at **St. Tomma the Apostle Church, - located - 66-78 Quarry Road, Bossley Park, NSW 2176**

The NCCA and the NSW Ecumenical Council wish to stand and walk with the Eastern Churches at this time.

In solidarity, we are walking with them in this journey, feeling their pain and suffering for the persecuted people in the Middle East.

Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Matthew 5:11

Another glimpse into the extent of the suffering...

WCC calls for increased humanitarian response and responsibility to protect populations in Northern Iraq — World Council of Churches

<http://www.oikoumene.org/en/press-centre/news/wcc-calls-for-increased-humanitarian-response-and-responsibility-to-protect-populations-in-northern-iraq>

Act for Peace Iraq and Gaza appeal



Thank you to all churches who have contributed to our appeal assisting the vital humanitarian work of our ecumenical partners in Iraq and Gaza. To make it easier to get involved, we are now distributing 150,000 emergency appeal envelopes and prayer resources to churches around Australia. Please do not hesitate to download or order resources via actforpeace.org.au or freecall on 1800 025 101.

Churches may wish to use these resources at any time as well as on Sunday 21st September which is International Day of Peace.

This is an excerpt from our ecumenical partner, Christian Aid, providing assistance in Iraq describing the situation:

Families grabbed what they could and ran for their lives. Many without transport walked in the 45°C heat, waiting for hours at security checkpoints with thousands of others desperately trying to escape the terror. Many left their cars while waiting at the checkpoint, worried that IS militants would arrive at any minute. Some braved gunfire as they crossed the path of fighting between IS militants and Kurdish Peshmerga forces.

*Over 34,000 individuals displaced from the Ninewa area have passed through the Sulaymaniyah checkpoint in recent days – all in search of refuge. All in fear of their lives. Hundreds of displaced families, many of them Christian, have begun arriving at churches in the city of Sulaymaniyah. Many arrived in their pyjamas, having left home hurriedly. First they sought sanctuary in Erbil, but when the churches in Erbil became so overcrowded that people began sleeping in public parks, they journeyed on to Sulaymaniyah in search of space. They came with little money and few belongings. Some women have newborn babies; many have children. **All of them were scared to death and showing signs of trauma.** Since the three city churches have been filled, a secondary school has been opened for additional families and many tears have been shed as they talk about leaving their homes and businesses and losing everything. Many talked of never returning home again. They just want to leave Iraq. They say they are not wanted here.*

We are appealing for the protection of persecuted Christians, and all in need of protection who have fled in fear of their lives.

We are endeavouring to assist our partners to be able to provide life-saving assistance to 50,000 people displaced in northern Iraq. This includes emergency items such as food parcels, hygiene kits and blankets.

- \$40 can provide a food ration pack for one displaced family
- \$110 can buy a survival kit including blankets
- \$500 can pay a doctor for a month

There is much more information on our website, actforpeace.org.au about what our partners are doing to assist and how you can get involved.



The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) and Islamic Relief Worldwide (IRW) have signed a Memorandum of Understanding to cooperate in humanitarian work. The signing is the first official cooperation between a global Christian and a global Islamic humanitarian organization. - See more at: <http://www.lutheranworld.org/news/lwf-and-islamic-relief-sign-memorandum-understanding>

Other News

Kathy's retirement - Last week we celebrated Kathy Moroney's retirement and her 26 wonderful years of service with NSW Ecumenical Council. Nola arranged a gorgeous lunch at The Grace in the City, where we were all touched by the stories that Kathy shared. Throughout these years, Kathy has met Pope John Paul II, Nelson Mandela and an abundance of leaders and community members that support the Ecumenical movement. We all wish Kathy blessings for her future plans and for her to enjoy quality time with her family.



Events, Seminars & Forums

About FACE – Is a national activity of the Uniting Church in Australia. FACE stands for Faith and Cultural Exchange and is run in partnership with the National Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress. The next program will run for 2 weeks from 5-18 January 2015, and is open to anyone over the age of 18. This will involve sharing with the Congress National



Conference in Tasmania; and debriefing items on living in Congress communities across Australia. Applications for 2015 close 26 September 2014. To find out more visit www.aboutface.org.au

The NSW Ecumenical Council - *Achieving Peace with Justice* Forum was a huge success. Some pictures of the day include speakers and Welcome to the Country Didgeridoo players Gumaroy Newman and Quinto. The theme and workshops were centred around affirming and strengthening faith and commitment for "the long haul".



26th Annual National Prayer Breakfast – Will be held at Parliament House, Canberra on Monday 27th October 2014. Dr Michael Spence, Vice Chancellor and Principal of the University of Sydney will be addressing the Forum.

Jubilee Australia will be hosting several forums around 'The Future of Bougainville: Community perspectives on the Panguna mine'. In 1989 the Panguna mine was shut down, after local communities lost their land, rivers and traditional ways. It is estimated that over 10,000 people have died as a result of this mine and the long civil war that followed. Now Rio Tinto subsidiary Bougainville Copper is considering reopening the mine. Information on events to launch Jubilee's report on 'Voices of Bougainville Copper: Nikana Kangsi, Nikana Dong Damana (Our Land, Our Future)'

<http://www.jubileeaustralia.org/index.html>

Active Faith Australia are hosting a training day on the 13th September at Salvation Army Blacktown NSW. Contact Sarah-Jane Alley sj@activefaithaustralia.com or 0422 258 620.

UN World Conference on Indigenous Peoples will be held on 22-23 September 2014. 'Today, there are some 370 million indigenous peoples in the world. They represent remarkable diversity — more than 5,000 distinct peoples in some 90 countries. They are still among the most disadvantaged and vulnerable populations, with many of them struggling to remain on their lands'.

The National Council of Churches in Korea (NCCK) proudly announces that we will be celebrating the mark of 90 years since their inaugural assembly as the Chosun Christian Joint Council on September 24th, 1924.

International Conference on Migration Social Disadvantage and Health 11-13 Feb 2015 – Please submit abstracts before the 15th Sep 2014. To register go to <http://www.international-migration-conference2015.net.au/>

4th National Conference on the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Refugees "Towards a Better World". 1-3 October 2014, Australian Catholic University, North Sydney campus. Visit www.acmro.catholic.org.au Australian Catholic Bishops Conference – Australian Catholic Migrant and Refugee Office.

Letter of Gratitude from the Australian Government

To all Churches, Nationwide for participating in the Church and Cathedral Bell ringing for the National Memorial Service for Victims of Flight MH17.



Australian Government

Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet

ANDREW FISHER BUILDING
ONE NATIONAL CIRCUIT
BARTON

Bishop Philip Huggins
Interim General Secretary
National Council of Churches in Australia
Locked Bag Q199
Queen Victoria Building NSW 1230

Dear Bishop Huggins

The National Memorial Service for Victims of Flight MH17 was a deeply moving occasion that provided the families and the nation with an opportunity to remember those lost in this tragedy.

The service will long be remembered by the many thousands of Australians who either attended St Patrick's Cathedral or experienced the broadcast on television.

I wanted to take this opportunity to express my deep gratitude on behalf of the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet for your valuable contribution to this poignant occasion.

Yours sincerely

A blue ink signature, appearing to read 'Lindsay Youman', written over a horizontal line.

Lindsay Youman
Acting Assistant Secretary
Ceremonial and Hospitality Branch
Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet

26 August 2014