

OIKOUMÉNĒ

TASMANIAN COUNCIL OF CHURCHES

96 Margaret St Launceston Tasmania 7250
E-mail: tcctas@bigpond.net.au Phone: 6334 3942

December 2008

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?

TCC EXECUTIVE OFFICER RESIGNS

Brad Taylor has announced his resignation as TCC Executive Officer. Brad says that the main reason for his resignation is the lack of resources available to the TCC to carry out its work.

It has been a privileged time for me working as Executive Officer for the Tasmanian Council of Churches. However, I have found that the work load is, in my opinion, beyond my capabilities given that I am only employed half-time and also given the lack of financial and other resources available to the Council.

I said at the beginning of my appointment that "These are, without a doubt, challenging times for the world community, the Australian nation and Tasmania, let alone the churches. Yet, intrinsic to such times are the opportunities that together we begin to envisage, and then to embrace, in rising to meet these challenges.

I realise that I have only been in the role of Executive Officer a short time and many are bound to be disappointed at my leaving after such a short time. I did know that the position would be challenging and had hoped to be able to play a part in the necessary re-shaping of the Executive Officer/ General Secretary role.

I do feel that I have made the right decision for myself and for the TCC, and that my decision to resign will help the necessary re-shaping of the ecumenical journey in Tasmania as embodied by the Council of Churches into the future.

We have to remember at times like these that this journey, the ecumenical journey, is not ours to direct - it is *God's gift and initiative with us* that we choose to embark on together. The word for ecumenism comes from the Greek word for household *oikos*. This basic word is extended to refer to an inhabited area or a race and then to 'the whole inhabited world' in *oikouménē*.

It is God's household that we are graciously invited into, God's cosmos that we are invited to journey in. Let us engage in the work of ecumenism equally graciously. Please keep the Executive and the TCC in your thoughts and prayers in the months ahead and into 2009.

ECONOMY, ECOLOGY & ECUMENISM

Brad Taylor

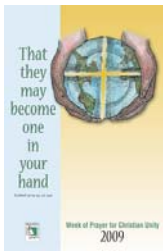
What do these three seemingly unrelated words have in common? The answer is that they all come from the same basic Greek word for household - *oikos*. In the current context of economic, ecological, and some might say, ecumenical crisis, I think that this basic connection with *oikos* bears some reflection.

In the earlier Church something is described as ecumenical - *oikoumenikos* (*oecumenicus* in Latin) because it pertains to *hē oikouménē* - 'the whole inhabited world'.

Ecology also derives from the Greek for household - *oikos*. The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary (SOED) describes it as "the branch of biology that deals with organisms' relations with one another and to the physical environment in which they live". I note the key role of a sense of 'relationship'.

Economy likewise derives from *oikos*, coming from the Greek word for 'stewardship' - *oikonomos*, the manager of the *oikos* - the household. The SOED defines economy as "the management or administration of the resources ... of a community". I note again the key use of a relational term "community".

As I reflect on these three words, intimately bound together in their common derivation from *oikos*, I sense that there is an important gift that we offer the world as churches just in being ecumenical, in being together for 'the whole inhabited world'. I suspect that our living of this ecumenical gift is not indifferent to our current ecological and economic crises. I sense also that in our ecumenical journey, there are important insights for us in pondering the deeper connection of these three words: 'ecology', 'economy' and 'ecumenism'.



WEEK OF PRAYER FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY 24 to 31 May 2009

'That they may become one in your hand'

(Ezekiel 37:17)

In 2009, the **Week of Prayer for Christian Unity**, as is traditional in the southern hemisphere, is being held in the 8 days leading up to the feast of Pentecost (May 24-31).

The theme is taken from Ezekiel 37:17. It is the prophetic action of two sticks representing the broken people of God, broken into two nations Judah and Israel, being joined together in Ezekiel's hand, so to become one stick.

Various **resources are now available** on the world wide web. The Annual global text jointly prepared and published by the *Pontifical Council for Christian Unity* and the *Commission on Faith and Order of the World Council of Churches* is available now on the WCC website at:

<http://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources.html>

Click on the link down the page for: "Week of prayer for christian unity". Australian resources are expected to be available shortly on the NCCA website:

http://www.ncca.org.au/departments/faith_and_unity/weekofprayer

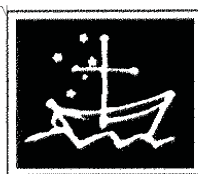
Resources and ideas are also available from the **Graymoor Ecumenical & Interreligious Institute**, a ministry of the Franciscan Friars of the Atonement. Note that these resources are adapted for use in North America.



A member of this community, Fr Paul Wattson developed the Church Unity Octave, first observed 18 - 25 January 1908 at Graymoor in Garrison, New York. This Octave was the forerunner of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. The Institute's webpage is:

http://www.geii.org/wpcu_index.htm

Local church congregations across Tasmania are encouraged to use the available resources creatively in arranging ecumenical events in their communities to engage with the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity.



Advance Notice

**TCC ANNUAL
GENERAL
MEETING**

**SATURDAY
30 MAY 2009**

**Salvation Army
18 Kay Street,
Kings Meadows 7249.**

Continued from page 1, Ecology, Economy & Ecumenism

One often hears the current economic crisis portrayed as, fundamentally, a crisis of trust. Because of the 'unexpected' failure of some investments, those with financial reserves no longer trust enough to lend those dollars, exacerbating the crisis.

In reality a worsening "trust deficit" has been documented for some time, and goes to the very core of contemporary economic, civil and political institutions. Individually and corporately, many, borrowers and lenders, have been more or less complicit in a certain level of deceit around ability to service debt or the risk involved in an investment, giving rise in the first instance to the so called "toxic debts" at the genesis of the current crisis.

This 'trust deficit' is more crucially a failure of our sense of community, our sense of living together in a shared space - in the *shelter of each other*. This lack of a sense of community is also at the root of our ecological crisis. We have lost a sense that we are part of 'the Great Community of life.' Yet a renewed sense of community is precisely the gift that we bring to a broken world as churches together in the ecumenical journey. ■

act for peace, the Christmas Bowl, the Christian World Service & all that!

A world of need

2008 is the 60th anniversary of: the founding of the World Council of Churches (WCC), the promulgation of the UN Declaration on Human Rights, the founding of the World Health Organisation (WHO), as well as being the 60th anniversary of the Christmas Bowl. These initiatives of a generation ago saw many hopes expressed and sustained as well as, on occasion, disappointed.

On 9 December 2009 the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), released its report *State of Food Insecurity in the World 2008*, announcing that there are now estimated to be 963 million people or 14% of the world's population going hungry each day. This is up by 40 million on 2007.

**Now almost 1
billion people go
hungry each day**

act for peace

act for peace is the international aid agency of the National Council of Churches in Australia (NCCA). This agency was formerly called *Christian World Service (CWS)*.

The Christmas Bowl has perhaps been the most well known event associated with the CWS, now **act for peace**. It was initiated in Melbourne in 1948 by the Rev'd Frank Byant placing a bowl on the Christmas dinner table and asking

act for peace Donations
FREECALL **1800 025 101**

for contributions from his dinner companions for those in need. It is now the longest running international aid appeal in Australia.

The Tasmanian Council of Churches (TCC) has been a consistent and strong supporter of the Christmas Bowl and the *CWS* for many years.

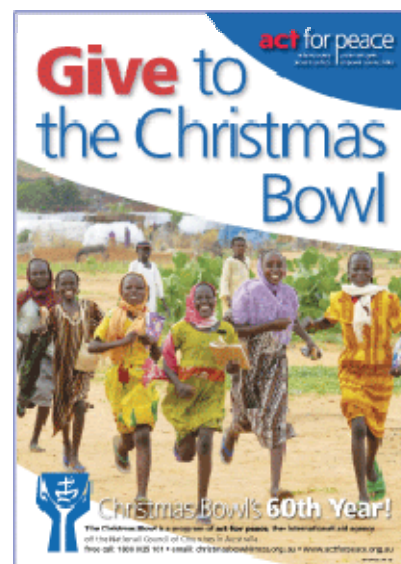
The NCCA's **act for peace** is itself part of a global alliance of church and related bodies working in international aid - **ACT - Action by Churches Together** or **ACT International**, (ACT).

ACT International is signatory to the *Code of Conduct for The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and NGOs in Disaster Relief*. As well, **act for peace** is a member agency of the Australian Council for International Development (ACFID) and so is a signatory to the *ACFID Code of Conduct*.

Changes...

Currently under negotiation, changes are in store for 2009 with regard to how **act for peace** is administered and funded at the national and state level.

Whatever these changes might bring for state ecumenical bodies, the TCC included, it is clear that more aid is intended to be delivered to aid programs and *this* intention has to be applauded and supported.



The Christmas Bowl is not the only way that you can support the work of **act for peace**. You can also become a regular giver.

Heartfelt thanks are due to all the volunteers and supporters who have helped over many years to realise the strong contribution that Tasmania has made to *CWS* and now, **act for peace**.

Further information can be obtained from the following websites:

ACFID

<http://www.acfid.asn.au/>

act for peace

<http://www.actforpeace.org.au>

act for peace regular giving

http://www.ncca.org.au/actforpeace/regular_giving

ACT International

<http://act-intl.org/>

FAO Newsroom

People hungry rises to 963 million
<http://www.fao.org/news/story/en/item/8836/>

International Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and NGOs Code of Conduct:

<http://www.ifrc.org/publicat/conduct/index.asp>

Christmas Bowl's 60th Year!

The Christmas Bowl is a program of **act for peace**, the international aid agency of the National Council of Churches in Australia. Please act for peace and give to the Christmas Bowl!

free call: 1800 025 101 • email: actforpeace@ncca.org.au • www.actforpeace.org.au



Parliament of the World's Religions

December 3-9, 2009 Melbourne

The Parliament is expected to attract 8,000 participants from around the world in what will be the biggest interfaith event ever held in Australia. Senior leaders including the Governor of Victoria and the Anglican and Catholic Archbishops of Melbourne are among the event's patrons. The Dalai Lama is expected to address the closing Plenary of the Parliament.

For information and registration details see the Parliament's website at:

<http://www.parliamentofreligions2009.org/home.php> or contact:

Office of the Parliament of the World's Religions, Melbourne, 2009
The Hub, 17 Waterview Walk, Docklands, Victoria, 3008 Australia
Phone: (03) 8622 4809 Fax: (03) 9417 0899
E-mail: info@parliamentofreligions2009.org

A number of **Pre-Parliamentary events** are being organised in Tasmania, details should be available in your local church community or via the TCC.



The Council, Executive
& Executive Officer of the
Tasmanian Council of
Churches

Wish all readers of
OIKOUMÉNĒ
A happy and holy
Christmas!

ECUMENICAL RESOURCES ON THE WORLD WIDE WEB

eNews Services

Subscribe page for the NCCA
<http://www.ncca.org.au/subscribe>

CCA News (Christ. Conf. of Asia)
<http://www.cca.org.hk/resources/resframe.htm>

Christian Conference of Asia
<http://www.cca.org.hk/home1.htm>

Subscribe page WCC-eNews
(World Council of Churches)
<http://onlineservices.wcc-coe.org/wccregistration.nsf>

WCC Main site
<http://www.oikoumene.org/>



INTERFAITH ENGAGEMENT TOUR

From 26 February to 20 March 2009 (Tasmania: 17-20 March), the Uniting Church in Australia, Synod of Victoria and Tasmania will host **Uniting through Faith**, an Interfaith engagement tour encompassing Uniting Church congregations and schools, universities, interfaith groups and Islamic institutions across Victoria and Tasmania.

The tour will deeply engage participants in a range of formal activities, including forums and lectures, as well as informal activities such as gatherings over meals, day trips and retreats.

The fourteen Indonesian participants in the tour have been selected for their leadership experience in interfaith dialogue between Christian and Muslim communities in Indonesia, and for the personal qualities and experience that they bring to the process of interfaith dialogue.

For more information please contact:

Jessica Butcher
Uniting through Faith Coordinator
T: (03) 9251 5245
E: Jessica.Butcher@victas.uca.org.au
<http://victas.uca.org.au/resources/commission-for-mission/uniting-through-faith>



Uniting Church in Australia
SYNOD OF VICTORIA AND TASMANIA



National Council of
Churches in Australia
Safe Church Project

Safe as Churches? IV Conference 2009

11 – 13 June, 2009

Adelaide West Uniting Church, Adelaide, South Australia

Building on the past 3 'Safe as Churches?' Consultations, the National Council of Churches in Australia is pleased to announce that the Safe as Churches? IV Conference 2009 will take place in Adelaide, South Australia from 7pm on Thursday 11th – 2.30pm on Saturday 13th June 2009.

Heads of Churches, Professional Standards Directors and other Practitioners from churches across Australia and New Zealand will be invited to this conference.

An extensive program is currently being planned with opportunities for theological reflection, professional development and nourishment for the work to be done in creating safer churches.

Mark these dates in your diary now and watch out for further conference updates.

For further information about the conference or to register your interest, please contact Tracy Lethbridge at tracy@bridgeevents.com.au.