

# MINUTES OF THE 4TH NATIONAL FORUM

6 – 10 JULY 2001

## WELCOMES

Mrs Joy Murphy, speaking for the original people of the area, extended a welcome to the National Council of Churches in Australia.

Participants were welcomed by the President, as well as by Dr. John McLean (Vice-Principal of St Hilda's College) and the Rt Revd Nabil Kachab (President of the Victorian Council of Churches).

## PRESENT AND APOLOGIES:

The list of participants and apologies are listed in Appendix I

## TIMETABLE AND AGENDA

01.07.01 **IT WAS RESOLVED** *that the proposed timetable and agenda be adopted, subject to such variations as may be approved in the course of the meeting.*

## ADMISSION TO MEMBERSHIP

The General Secretary presented a recommendation from the Executive regarding the application for membership from the Congregational Federation of Australia.

01.07.02 **IT WAS RESOLVED**

1. *to receive the Congregational Federation of Australia as a member of the National Council of Churches in Australia;*
2. *that the Revd Alan Filipaina and Mr Keith Lyons be seated as the CFA's delegation to this meeting of the National Forum.*

## APPOINTMENT OF COMMITTEES

01.07.03 **IT WAS RESOLVED**

1. *that the following be appointed as a Steering Committee for this meeting of the National Forum: Mrs Elizabeth Harrington [chair], the Revd Dr Lance*

*Steicke, Colin Wendell-Smith, Ms Shehara Viswanathan, the Rt Revd Nabil Kachab, [General Secretary, staff];*

2. *that the Steering Committee be asked to make any proposals it deems necessary regarding the ordering of business;*
3. *that the following be appointed as a Nominations Committee for this meeting of the National Forum: Bishop Richard Appleby [chair], Archbishop Aghan Baliozian, Ms Natasha Lawrence, Bishop Peter Ingham, the Revd Dr Morag Logan, [Mr Caesar D'Mello, staff];*
4. *that the Nominations Committee be asked to bring recommendations as follows:*
  - 4.1 *6 persons to be elected members of the NCCA Executive, pursuant to Clause 9.02 [c] of the constitution;*
  - 4.2 *a chairperson plus 16 persons to be elected members of the Faith and Unity Commission, such Commission to be based for the time being in Melbourne;*
  - 4.3 *a chairperson plus 12 persons to be elected members of the Commission for Christian World Service. [Note: this Commission is authorised to coopt up to 6 persons];*
  - 4.4 *12 persons to be elected members of the Aboriginal and Islander Commission, [additionally one to be nominated by the Aboriginal and Islander Commission to the NCCA Executive for appointment as chairperson];*
  - 4.5 *a chairperson plus 7 persons to be elected members of the NCCA Youth Network, noting the recommendation that such Network be based for the time being in Sydney. [Note: this Network will be seeking authority to coopt up to 4 persons];*
  - 4.6 *6 persons to be elected members of the Finance Committee, such committee to be based for the time being in Sydney [note: 3 members of the Committee are appointed by CWS, and its Chair, the Treasurer, is appointed by the Executive];*
  - 4.7 *a Convenor/s plus 12 persons, at least two thirds of whom to be women, to be elected members of the Network on Women and Gender Relationships, such Network to be based for the time being in Sydney;*
  - 4.8 *a Chairperson plus 12 persons to be elected members of the Social Justice Network, such Network to be based for the time being in Sydney;*
  - 4.9 *a Chairperson plus 14 persons to be elected members of the Commission on Mission, such Commission to be based for the time*

*being in Sydney. [Note: this Commission has authority to coopt up to five members, particularly from non-member churches and interdenominational mission agencies];*

- 4.10 *at least 6 persons, Sydney-based, to be appointed members, and recommended for appointment as Directors, of NCCA Limited.*

## **BUSINESS TO BE CONSIDERED**

### **01.07.04 IT WAS RESOLVED**

1. *that the National Forum agree to give consideration to -
  - i) *recommendations from the Executive, from the Council's commissions, networks, committees, working groups, and from the report of state ecumenical bodies;*
  - ii) *recommendations from the steering and nominations committees;*
  - iii) *any motion moved in the name of one member church and seconded in the name of another;*
  - iv) *any motion or amendment deemed to have arisen out of the debate;**
2. *that the deadline for resolutions moved by member churches be 2 pm on Monday 9 July;*
3. *that comment be sought from the Treasurer prior to action being taken on any recommendation or motion that has financial implications, with the mover of any such recommendation asked to indicate what the practical implications are likely to be.*

## **MINUTES**

- 01.07.05 **IT WAS RESOLVED** *that the Executive be authorised to approve the Minutes of the National Forum.*

## **PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS**

The Revd Dr Lance Steicke, the President of the NCCA, delivered his address. (see Appendix III)

# REPORT OF THE GENERAL SECRETARY

The Revd David Gill presented his report. (see Appendix IV)

## NEW GENERAL SECRETARY:

Bishop Peter Ingham (Convenor of the Search Committee) presented a report and recommendation from the Executive regarding the post of NCCA General Secretary.

01.07.06     **IT WAS RESOLVED** *to appoint the Revd John Henderson as General Secretary of the National Council of Churches in Australia, for six years from 1 January 2002.*

## EXECUTIVE

The General Secretary introduced the report of the Executive, highlighting the following – the participation of heads of churches, the style of decision-making, the application of the Congregational Federation of Australia, relationships with people of other faiths, the Pilgrimage to the Heart and the Decade to Overcome Violence.

01.07.07     **IT WAS RESOLVED**

1.     *to receive the report;*
2.     *to adopt the Decade to Overcome Violence as a focus for the life and work of the NCCA, asking that the Executive establish a group to coordinate its implementation;*

## FAITH AND UNITY

The Revd Dr Ray Williamson presented the *Australian Churches – Covenanting Together* draft document highlighting the 3 different kinds of agreements and the questions the churches had asked the Commission to prepare, and the Commission's mandate.

Discussion ensued regarding the document.

01.07.08     **IT WAS RESOLVED**

1.     *to receive the draft document “Australian Churches Covenanting Together”;*
2.     *to request the Faith and Unity Commission to revise the document in the light of the Forum discussion and circulate it*

*to the member churches for further consideration at the November 2001 meeting of the Executive;*

- 3. to commend to the member churches the proposal that their commitment to the covenanting process be further affirmed in an appropriate manner during a meeting of the NCCA Executive in 2002;*
- 4. to encourage member churches to explore new possibilities for covenanting in the future – beyond 2002; and*
- 5. to request the Faith and Unity Commission to facilitate conversations to continue the covenanting process.*

After further discussion, agreement was reached on the wording of a Declaration of Intent, to be read by representatives of member churches in the context of an ecumenical service on the evening of Sunday 8 July.

### **Declaration of Intent**

*As representatives of member churches of the National Council of Churches in Australia,*

*We RE-AFFIRM our commitment to one another as partners on the ecumenical journey;*

*We BELIEVE that we are being blessed in our generation to witness the action of the Spirit in drawing the churches in a common search for a fuller expression of unity;*

*We REJOICE in all we have in common and GIVE THANKS for the richness of our diversity, though recognising that our disunity is a hindrance to the church's mission;*

*We RECOGNISE ONE ANOTHER as Communities of Faith, Hope and Love, committed to following Christ, and pledged to serve God's kingdom;*

*We therefore MAKE A COMMITMENT TO EACH OTHER to engage in an ongoing process of growing together (covenanting), not knowing what visible form unity, which is God's will and gift, may take, but believing that, by taking the steps to which we now commit ourselves, we shall be led to grow ever more deeply into that unity.*

The Revd Dr Morag Logan, the Revd Peter Kriewaldt and Bill Jaggs presented the Faith and Unity report.

They spoke of the theological documents that the Commission had discussed, the visit of the Revd Dr Alan Falconer, Director of the WCC Faith and Order Commission, the bilateral dialogues, the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity and the steps the churches were taking towards a more visible unity.

01.07.09     **IT WAS RESOLVED**

1. *to receive the report of the Faith and Unity Commission;*
2. *that member churches involved in bilateral dialogues in Australia be requested to ensure that their dialogue group(s) keep the NCCA Faith & Unity Commission informed of reports and other developments from their respective dialogues.*

## ADDRESSES AND GREETINGS

At an international Evening on Saturday 7 July,

- **Dr Ahn Jae Woong**, General Secretary of the Christian Conference of Asia, spoke on Asia's challenge to the Australian churches;
- **The Revd Valamotu Palu**, General Secretary of the Pacific Conference of Churches, referred to her Council and the importance of its ties with Australia;
- **The Revd Danny Guka**, from the Papua New Guinea Council of Churches, spoke about the churches' role amidst PNG's current difficulties.
- **Beth Ferris**, from the international affairs section of the World Council of Churches, brought greetings from the WCC.

On Sunday 8 July, Beth Ferris addressed the National Forum on "Refugee Policy – A Global Dilemma, A Challenge for Christians" (See Appendix V).

## FINANCE COMMITTEE

Mr John Thomas, Treasurer of the NCCA, presented the report and tabled the financial statements for 1998, 1999 and 2000 that had been adopted by the Executive.

He reported that Mr George Khoury had been appointed the internal auditor of the NCCA.

He also reported that Mr David Cohen (Anglican Church) had been appointed by the Executive to succeed him as Treasurer.

01.07.10      **IT WAS RESOLVED –**

1. *to receive the report;*
2. *to thank Mr John Thomas for his work as Treasurer of the NCCA and his support of the Council.*

## COMMISSION ON MISSION

The Revd Kevin Zwar, chair of the Commission, presented the report, highlighting the two seminars that the Commission had organised. He indicated that the Hugh Mackay pre-Forum event had attracted 175 people who had spoken very highly of its value.

01.07.11 **IT WAS RESOLVED** *to receive the report.*

## NETWORK ON WOMEN AND GENDER RELATIONSHIPS

Ronis Chapman, Co-Convenor, presented the report.

She tabled the *Directory of Women's Groups in Australian Churches* and highlighted plans for a series of seminars on Building a Culture of Peace.

01.07.12 **IT WAS RESOLVED**

1. *to receive the report;*
2. *that the Network on Women and Gender Relationships be redesignated the Gender Commission, with the Commission requested to prepare a revised mandate for consideration by the Executive;*
3. *to invite the Aboriginal and Islander Commission to nominate a member of the Gender Commission;*
4. *to request the Executive to explore the possibility of engaging a research officer to assist the work of all currently unstaffed entities of the NCCA.*

## CHRISTIAN WORLD SERVICE

Archbishop Ian George, chair of the Commission, presented the report asking that the garbled last 4 paragraphs on page 51 be deleted.

He thanked the CWS staff, especially the departed Michael Brown and Maureen Postma.

He highlighted the Christmas Bowl, the work of the particular programme units and proposals for encouraging closer cooperation between denominational agencies.

01.07.13 **IT WAS RESOLVED –**

1. *to receive the report;*
2. *to urge member churches to include within the mandates and objectives of their mission, aid, development and refugee agencies an affirmation or reaffirmation of their commitment to ecumenical cooperation in Australia and overseas;*
3. *to call on member churches to cooperate in every way possible in the support and promotion of the Christmas Bowl, Force Ten, and emergency and other programmes of CWS;*
4. *that, subject to the constraints of the constitution, the Executive be authorised to act on recommendations emerging from the group appointed to consider governance issues associated with CWS;*
5. *to endorse Refugee Sunday and commend it to all member churches;*
6. *to encourage the Australian Government's implementation of the UNHCR guidelines to determine refugee status and to express grave concern in regard to the restrictions applied to the Temporary Protection Visas (TPV) (Number 785) with a view to no further TPVs being issued and Protection Visas (Visa Number 866) being used instead.*

## **ABORIGINAL AND ISLANDER COMMISSION**

Mr Peter Sabatino, AIC Executive Secretary apologised for the absence of the Chair.

He stated that the question of autonomy for AIC was no longer a priority and touched on the May 2001 public statement by the NCCA Executive on the *Bringing Them Home* report and the churches.

He then presented the results of an AIC review of church involvement in the reconciliation process, and of church responses to the *Bringing Them Home* report.

01.07.14 **IT WAS RESOLVED**

1. *to receive the report;*  
*( relating to the Reconciliation Process )*
2. *that the National Forum reaffirm a commitment to develop, in partnership with the AIC, mechanisms whereby the churches*

*through the NCCA can more effectively advocate on behalf of Indigenous people;*

3. *that member churches be urged to support financially the organising of a National Summit of Indigenous church organisations; (Salvation Army – against)*
4. *that member churches be encouraged to take further their efforts to express the Gospel in ways which recognise and respect Indigenous spirituality; (Salvation Army abstained)*
5. *that member churches be encouraged to maintain and implement, within their training for ministry, cross-cultural and anti racism programs;*
6. *that member churches be urged to develop a vision and a plan of action for their ongoing involvement in reconciliation, drawing upon the Roadmap for Reconciliation as a resource;*  
  
*(relating to the “Bringing Them Home” report )*
7. *that member churches which do not have a detailed and accurate record of their involvement in the separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children from their families be urged to undertake this research; (Salvation Army abstained)*
8. *that member churches be encouraged to ensure that Stolen Generations history is included in their school curricula and in the professional training offered to church employees;*
9. *that member churches be urged to dialogue, as a matter of priority, with their Indigenous members and organisations, about supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people accessing their records;*
10. *that member churches be asked –*
  - (a) *to ensure, through accessing cultural training, that their counselling and healing services are appropriate and responsive to the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people; and*
  - (b) *to support the training of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in counselling and healing;*
11. *that member churches be encouraged to determine their responses to the recommendation by the NCCA Executive (May 2001) for the establishment by the Council of Australian Governments of a national fund as part of the healing process.*

## ECUMENICAL LEADERSHIP FUND

Sr Trish Madigan, a member of the Ecumenical Leadership Fund Committee, spoke to the report, in the absence of the Chair, Dr Reg Walker.

She drew attention to the ELF brochure and to the two young people who had received assistance from the Fund who were present at the Forum. The two, Loretta Faranda and Fiona Sharwood, spoke of their experience, and how the Fund had helped them.

01.07.15 **IT WAS RESOLVED** *to receive the report.*

## YOUTH NETWORK

Ms Ingrid Clanchy, Youth Secretary, presented the report, highlighting the youth suicide seminar that had been held in Sydney.

Shehara Viswanathan (Uniting) interviewed six young participants – Derek Wagner (Lutheran), Fiona Sharwood (Roman Catholic), Natasha Lawrence (Churches of Christ), Anna Wilkinson (Friends), Jim Attia (Coptic Orthodox) and Claire Vincent (SCM) - on what ecumenism meant to them and their experience of the ecumenical movement.

01.07.16 **IT WAS RESOLVED**

1. *to receive the report;*
2. *that projects of the NCCA Youth Network be commended to member churches;*
3. *that the Youth Network be based for the time being in Sydney;*
4. *that the Youth Network be authorised to coopt up to 4 persons;*
5. *to note the social commentary of Hugh Mackay at the pre-Forum Mission consultation, who considered young people “signposts of the world to come,” and to ask the Executive to seriously consider extending the involvement and support of young people in all policy and operational mechanisms (Executive, commissions and networks) of the NCCA;*
6. *to put the formation, development of and listening to young people as a matter of priority in the dreams, visions and plans for the future of the NCCA;*
7. *that following consultation with the Financial Controller, the draft budget of the Youth Network for 2002, presented at the National Forum, should be considered with full rationale and*

*explanation at the November 2001 meeting of the NCCA Executive.*

## SOCIAL JUSTICE NETWORK

Ms Shehara Viswanathan, a member of the Social Justice Network, presented the report, in the absence of the Chair, Associate Professor Michael Horsburgh.

She highlighted seminars the Network had organised and reported that the Network would be working closely with other Australian peak bodies on matters of shared concern.

01.07.17                    **IT WAS RESOLVED** *to receive the report.*

## NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE

Bishop Richard Appleby presented the report of the Nominations Committee. It was noted that the General Secretary is ex officio a member of the Executive and all commissions, networks, working groups and committees, and that the Treasurer is ex officio a member of the Executive.

### ■ EXECUTIVE

01.07.18                    **IT WAS RESOLVED** *that the following be appointed members of the Executive until the next ordinary meeting of the National Forum.*

<i>Ms Loretta Faranda</i>	<i>Roman Catholic</i>	<i>WA</i>
<i>The Revd Dr Morag Logan</i>	<i>Uniting Church</i>	<i>VIC</i>
<i>The Revd Erica Mathiesen</i>	<i>Anglican</i>	<i>NSW</i>
<i>Ms Julia Pitman</i>	<i>Uniting Church</i>	<i>SA</i>
<i>The Rev Gloria Shipp</i>	<i>Anglican</i>	<i>NSW</i>
<i>The Revd Denis Stanley</i>	<i>Roman Catholic</i>	<i>VIC</i>

(Note: For a full list of Executive members, see Appendix VI)

### ■ FAITH AND UNITY COMMISSION

01.07.19                    **IT WAS RESOLVED** *that the following be appointed members of the Faith and Unity Commission:*

<i>Bill Jaggs</i>	<i>Friends</i>	<i>VIC</i>
<i>Major Jim Weymouth</i>	<i>Salvation Army</i>	<i>VIC</i>
<i>Major Graham Roberts</i>	<i>Salvation Army</i>	<i>VIC</i>
<i>The Revd Meryl Blair</i>	<i>Churches of Christ</i>	<i>VIC</i>
<i>Sr Margaret Jenkins</i>	<i>Roman Catholic</i>	<i>VIC</i>
<i>The Revd Gerard Kelly</i>	<i>Roman Catholic</i>	<i>VIC</i>
<i>The Revd Peter Cross</i>	<i>Roman Catholic</i>	<i>VIC</i>
<i>The Revd Peter Kriewaldt</i>	<i>Lutheran Church</i>	<i>VIC</i>
<i>The Revd Graham Perry</i>	<i>Uniting Church</i>	<i>VIC</i>
<i>The Revd Dr Chris Mostert</i>	<i>Uniting Church</i>	<i>VIC</i>
<i>The Revd Dr Morag Logan</i>	<i>Uniting Church</i>	<i>VIC</i>

<i>Mr Sobhi Jim Attia</i>	<i>Coptic Orthodox</i>	<i>VIC</i>
<i>The Revd Dr Charles Sherlock</i>	<i>Anglican</i>	<i>VIC</i>
<i>The Revd Dr Colleen O'Reilly</i>	<i>Anglican</i>	<i>VIC</i>
<i>The Revd Richard Treloar</i>	<i>Anglican</i>	<i>VIC</i>
<i>The Revd Vladimir Ivenkov</i>	<i>Antiochian Orthodox</i>	<i>VIC</i>

01.07.20 **IT WAS RESOLVED** that the Faith and Unity Commission be authorised to appoint its Chair, and the Executive to fill the remaining vacancy.

## ■ CHRISTIAN WORLD SERVICE COMMISSION

01.07.21 **IT WAS RESOLVED** that the following be appointed members of the Christian World Service Commission:

<i>Harold Wilkinson</i>	<i>Friends</i>	<i>ACT</i>
<i>Lt. Col. Ray Wilson</i>	<i>Salvation Army</i>	<i>NSW</i>
<i>The Revd John Gilmore</i>	<i>Churches of Christ</i>	<i>VIC</i>
<i>Bishop David Cremin</i>	<i>Roman Catholic</i>	<i>NSW</i>
<i>The Revd Michael Delaney</i>	<i>Roman Catholic</i>	<i>TAS</i>
<i>Mr Peter Schirmer</i>	<i>Lutheran</i>	<i>NSW</i>
<i>The Revd Gregor Henderson</i>	<i>Uniting Church</i>	<i>ACT</i>
<i>Ms Debbie Carstens</i>	<i>Uniting Church</i>	<i>NSW</i>
<i>Archbishop Aghan Baliozian</i>	<i>Armenian Apostolic</i>	<i>NSW</i>
<i>Fr Anastasios Bozikis</i>	<i>Greek Orthodox</i>	<i>NSW</i>
<i>Archbishop Ian George (Chair)</i>	<i>Anglican</i>	<i>SA</i>
<i>The Revd James Minchin</i>	<i>Anglican</i>	<i>VIC</i>
<i>Ms Mandy Tibbey</i>	<i>Anglican</i>	<i>NSW</i>

01.07.22 **IT WAS RESOLVED**

1. to authorise the Christian World Service Commission to coopt up to six additional members;
2. that one of these members should be a youth representative.

## ■ ABORIGINAL AND ISLANDER COMMISSION

01.07.23 **IT WAS RESOLVED** that the following be appointed members of the Aboriginal and Islander Commission:

<i>Ms Marceil Lawrence</i>	<i>Churches of Christ</i>	<i>VIC</i>
<i>Mr Max Wright</i>	<i>Churches of Christ</i>	<i>SA</i>
<i>Ms Elsie Heiss</i>	<i>Roman Catholic</i>	<i>NSW</i>
<i>Ms Joan Hendricks</i>	<i>Roman Catholic</i>	<i>QLD</i>
<i>The Revd Shayne Blackman</i>	<i>Uniting</i>	<i>QLD</i>
<i>Ms Lurleen Blackman</i>	<i>Uniting</i>	<i>QLD</i>
<i>The Revd Sealín Garlett</i>	<i>Uniting</i>	<i>WA</i>
<i>The Revd Salatelu Joe</i>	<i>Anglican</i>	<i>QLD</i>
<i>Rev Gloria Shipp</i>	<i>Anglican</i>	<i>NSW</i>
<i>Mr Eric Deeral</i>	<i>Lutheran</i>	<i>QLD</i>

01.07.24 **IT WAS RESOLVED**

1. that the Executive, on the advice of the Commission, be

- authorised to fill the three vacancies.
2. that the Aboriginal and Islander Commission be authorised to appoint its Chair.

## ■ YOUTH NETWORK

01.07.25 **IT WAS RESOLVED** that the following be appointed members of the Youth Network:

<i>Ms Emily Chapman-Searle</i>	<i>Friends</i>	<i>ACT</i>
<i>Mr Kent Crawford</i>	<i>Uniting</i>	<i>NSW</i>
<i>Capt David Godkin</i>	<i>Salvation Army</i>	<i>NSW</i>
<i>Ms Hanna Schulz</i>	<i>Lutheran</i>	<i>SA</i>
<i>Ms Natasha Lawrence</i>	<i>Churches of Christ</i>	<i>VIC</i>
<i>Mr Michael Armstrong</i>	<i>Anglican</i>	<i>NSW</i>
<i>Mr John Turk</i>	<i>Antiochian</i>	<i>NSW</i>
<i>To be announced</i>	<i>Roman Catholic,</i>	

01.07.26 **IT WAS RESOLVED** to authorise the Youth Network to

1. coopt up to four additional members;
2. appoint a Chairperson.

## ■ FINANCE COMMITTEE

01.07.27 **IT WAS RESOLVED** that the following be appointed members of the Finance committee:

<i>Mr John Pocknall</i>	<i>Anglican</i>	<i>NSW</i>
<i>Mr David Penny</i>	<i>Roman Catholic</i>	<i>NSW</i>
<i>Mr Ron Brown</i>	<i>Uniting</i>	<i>NSW</i>
<i>Ms Wendie Wilkie</i>	<i>Uniting</i>	<i>NSW</i>
<i>Mr Fred Hanania</i>	<i>Coptic Orthodox</i>	<i>NSW</i>
<i>Mr Ian Minnett</i>	<i>Salvation Army</i>	<i>NSW</i>

## ■ COMMISSION ON GENDER

01.07.28 **IT WAS RESOLVED** that the following be appointed members of the Commission on Gender:

<i>Ms Debbie Armanious</i>	<i>Coptic Orthodox</i>	<i>NSW</i>
<i>The Revd Glynthia Finger</i>	<i>Churches of Christ</i>	<i>QLD</i>
<i>Ronis Chapman</i>	<i>Friends</i>	<i>ACT</i>
<i>Ms Bernice Moore</i>	<i>Roman Catholic</i>	<i>NSW</i>
<i>Ms Rosemary Breen</i>	<i>Roman Catholic</i>	<i>NSW</i>
<i>Ms Suzanne Safar</i>	<i>Syrian Orthodox</i>	<i>NSW</i>
<i>Ms Alicia Simpfendorfer</i>	<i>Lutheran</i>	<i>NSW</i>
<i>Ms Shehara Viswanathan</i>	<i>Uniting</i>	<i>NSW</i>
<i>Ms Lisa Wriley</i>	<i>Uniting</i>	<i>NSW</i>
<i>Ms Julia Baird</i>	<i>Anglican</i>	<i>NSW</i>
<i>The Rev Philip Bradford</i>	<i>Anglican</i>	<i>NSW</i>

<i>Professor Moira Kelly</i>	<i>Antiochian</i>	<i>NSW</i>
<i>Major Geanette Seymour</i>	<i>Salvation Army</i>	<i>NSW</i>

01.07.29 **IT WAS RESOLVED** that the Commission be authorised to appoint its Chair.

## ■ SOCIAL JUSTICE NETWORK

01.07.30 **IT WAS RESOLVED** that the following be appointed members of the Social Justice Network:

<i>Valerie Joy</i>	<i>Friends</i>	<i>NSW</i>
<i>Mr Daniel Ertas</i>	<i>Syrian Orthodox</i>	<i>NSW</i>
<i>Dr Michael Costigan</i>	<i>Roman Catholic</i>	<i>NSW</i>
<i>Ms Sandie Cornish</i>	<i>Roman Catholic</i>	<i>NSW</i>
<i>The Revd Ann Wansbrough</i>	<i>Uniting</i>	<i>NSW</i>
<i>Ms Rosemary Miller</i>	<i>Uniting</i>	<i>NSW</i>
<i>Mr Heshmet Grace</i>	<i>Coptic Orthodox</i>	<i>NSW</i>
<i>Ms Ivonna Danbergs</i>	<i>Lutheran</i>	<i>WA</i>
<i>Assoc. Prof. Michael Horsburgh</i>	<i>Anglican</i>	<i>NSW</i>
<i>Ms Jenny Davies</i>	<i>Anglican</i>	<i>NSW</i>
<i>Major George Lingard</i>	<i>Salvation Army</i>	<i>NSW</i>

01.07.31 **IT WAS RESOLVED** that the two vacancies be filled by the Executive, one being a young person, and that the Network be authorised to appoint its Chair.

## ■ COMMISSION ON MISSION

01.07.32 **IT WAS RESOLVED** that the following be appointed members of the Commission on Mission:

<i>Mr Mike Ebsen</i>	<i>Churches of Christ</i>	<i>NSW</i>
<i>Ms Marilyn Judd Smith</i>	<i>Churches of Christ</i>	<i>NSW</i>
<i>Mr Martin Tuelin</i>	<i>Roman Catholic</i>	<i>NSW</i>
<i>The Revd Jim Mulroney</i>	<i>Roman Catholic</i>	<i>NSW</i>
<i>The Revd Terry Bell</i>	<i>Roman Catholic</i>	<i>NSW</i>
<i>Sr Marg Moore</i>	<i>Roman Catholic</i>	<i>NSW</i>
<i>The Revd Kevin Zwar</i>	<i>Lutheran</i>	<i>NSW</i>
<i>The Revd Bill Fischer</i>	<i>Uniting</i>	<i>NSW</i>
<i>The Revd Helen Richmond</i>	<i>Uniting</i>	<i>NSW</i>
<i>The Revd Marcos Tawfik</i>	<i>Coptic Orthodox</i>	<i>NSW</i>
<i>Miss Sonia Berberian</i>	<i>Armenian Apostolic</i>	<i>NSW</i>
<i>The Rev Geoff Smith</i>	<i>Anglican</i>	<i>NSW</i>
<i>The Rev John Thew</i>	<i>Anglican</i>	<i>NSW</i>
<i>Major Philip Cairns</i>	<i>Salvation Army</i>	<i>NSW</i>

01.07.33 **IT WAS RESOLVED** that the Executive be authorised to fill the one vacancy, and the Commission be authorised to appoint its Chair.

## ■ NCCA LTD

01.07.34 **IT WAS RESOLVED** *that the following be appointed Directors of NCCA Ltd:*

<i>Mr Ron Brown</i>	<i>Uniting</i>	<i>NSW</i>
<i>Ms Wendie Wilkie</i>	<i>Uniting</i>	<i>NSW</i>
<i>The Revd Dr Bruce Kaye</i>	<i>Anglican</i>	<i>NSW</i>
<i>Mr David Cohen</i>	<i>Anglican</i>	<i>NSW</i>
<i>Fr Brian Lucas</i>	<i>Roman Catholic</i>	<i>NSW</i>
<i>General Secretary (ex-officio)</i>		

## STATE ECUMENICAL COUNCILS

The Revd Russell Morris and the Revd Bob Faser presented the report.

01.07.35 **IT WAS RESOLVED**

1. *to receive the report;*
2. *to cooperate with the state councils to prepare a submission to the Glenburnie Programme seeking its assistance to develop and publish further resources that can be used nationally to encourage local ecumenical cooperation and covenanting;*
3. *request the Faith and Unity Commission to include state ecumenical councils in the distribution of information on national bilateral dialogues.*

## MOTIONS FROM MEMBER CHURCHES

■ **RE GENERAL MATTERS** (Moved by the Religious Society of Friends, seconded by the Uniting Church)

01.07.36 **IT WAS RESOLVED**

1. *to ask the Executive to act on the proposal in paragraph 2.2 of the report of the General Secretary to initiate a review of how the Council is measuring up to the objectives in paragraph 4 of the constitution;*
2. *that the Executive be asked to consider and develop appropriate means by which membership of NCCA can be displayed visually by member churches;*
3. *that the Executive address the interconnectedness between Commissions, Networks, Dialogues and State Ecumenical*

*Bodies with a view to improving communication through such means as mutual exchange of decisions and minutes;*

4. *that the General Secretary designate be invited to attend the November meeting of the Executive.*

## ■ RE FAITH AND UNITY COMMISSION AND ITS RESOURCES (Moved by the Anglican Church, seconded by the Churches of Christ)

- 01.07.37 **IT WAS RESOLVED** *to thank the Faith and Unity Commission for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity worship materials. Given the rich complexity of these materials it is requested that a simplified package also be made available, employing about 10% of the words and a good graphic designer so as to make the materials more available.*

## ■ RE REPORTS OF THE PRESIDENT AND THE GENERAL SECRETARY (Moved by the Lutheran Church, seconded by the Anglican Church)

- 01.07.38 **IT WAS RESOLVED** *that the address of the President and the General Secretary's report be referred to the Executive to be used as the basis for future directions of the NCCA.*

## ■ RE THE CHRISTMAS BOWL (Moved by the Uniting Church, seconded by the Anglican Church)

- 01.07.39 **IT WAS RESOLVED** *to call on member churches to cooperate in every way possible in the support and promotion of the Christmas Bowl, Force Ten, and emergency and other programmes of Christian World Service.*

## ■ RE SOCIAL JUSTICE SUNDAY (Moved by the Anglican Church, seconded by the Churches of Christ)

- 01.07.40 **IT WAS RESOLVED** *to ask the Executive to investigate the possibility of regenerating the annual ecumenical Social Justice Sunday accompanied by a joint study document and appropriate worship resources.*

■ **RE ECUMENICAL TERTIARY EDUCATION** (Moved by the Uniting Church, seconded by the Anglican Church)

01.07.41 **IT WAS RESOLVED** *that member churches be urged to support ecumenical tertiary education as a high priority of the churches' ministries in order that future generations might believe (John 17:21).*

■ **RE INTERFAITH DIALOGUE** (Moved by the Uniting Church, seconded by the Coptic Orthodox Church)

01.07.42 **IT WAS RESOLVED** *to endorse the interfaith dialogue currently taking place in Australia and to support the ongoing discussions with the Australian Federation of Islamic Councils regarding discrimination on religious grounds both within Australia and overseas.*

■ **RE THE COPTIC ORTHODOX CHURCH** (Moved by the Antiochian Orthodox Church, seconded by the Uniting Church)

01.07.43 **IT WAS RESOLVED**

1. *to send a heartfelt message of support to our brothers and sisters of the Coptic Orthodox Church and their head, His Holiness Pope Shenouda III, Pope of Alexandria and Patriarch of the See of St Mark, acknowledging that the recent attack is the latest in a series of acts of persecution against Christians in Egypt and praying that our Lord will strengthen His Holiness Pope Shenouda III and that justice and peace will prevail not only in Egypt but throughout the world;*
2. *to express solidarity in sorrow for the grief caused to our brothers and sisters, the Coptic Christians, at the denigration of their Church, its holy sites and its priesthood, and the physical attacks on individuals which have been reported in recent times;*
3. *to request that this resolution be communicated to the Coptic community in Australia and to assure their clergy and people of the prayers and support of the Australian churches;*

■ **RE INTERFAITH INITIATIVES** (Moved by the Anglican Church, seconded by the Roman Catholic Church)

01.07.44 **IT WAS RESOLVED** *that the Executive be invited –*

1. *to explore by what means representatives of the major world faith traditions in Australia may meet for consultation;*
2. *to report to the member churches seeking further direction, and*
3. *to take such steps as may be approved by the member churches.*

■ **RE WITNESS AMID PLURALISM** (Proposed by the Anglican Church, seconded by the Coptic Orthodox Church)

01.07.45 **IT WAS RESOLVED** *that the Executive be invited to consider how the churches may –*

1. *share the experience and history of those churches which have lived and ministered in multi-faith societies; and*
2. *be given resources to assist their faithful witness to Christ in pluralistic and multi-faith Australia, in the face of the increasing theological, evangelistic, pastoral and liturgical concerns arising in our social institutions.*

■ **RE THE DETENTION REPORT** (Moved by the Churches of Christ, seconded by the Roman Catholic Church)

01.07.46 **IT WAS RESOLVED** *that the Detention Report be noted and the recommendations be attended to by CWS in consultation with the Executive.*

■ **RE OVERSEAS AID ISSUES** (Moved by the Anglican Church, seconded by the Uniting Church)

01.07.47 **IT WAS RESOLVED** *to ask CWS to liaise with the Australian Council for Overseas Aid (ACFOA) to raise overseas aid issues during this federal election year.*

■ **RE AGED CARE** (Moved by the Salvation Army, seconded by the Uniting Church )

01.07.48 **IT WAS RESOLVED**

1. *to call on the Australian Government to recognise the urgent capital funding needs of the not for profit aged care sector; and*

2. *that noting the increased Government financial commitment for the operational needs of aged care, to urge the Government to fund capital requirements for refurbishment and replacement of facilities in order to meet accreditation requirements.*

■ **RE THE NATIONAL FORUM** (Moved by the Anglican Church, seconded by the Lutheran Church)

01.07.49                    **IT WAS RESOLVED**

1. *that at the next Forum the Executive Report include a summary of action taken on resolutions of this Forum;*
2. *that the financial statements for the previous financial year be circulated to participants of this Forum as soon as possible following this Forum;*
3. *that in future the most recent audited financial statements available be included in the papers circulated to participants prior to the Forum.*

■ **RE MANAGEMENT ISSUES** (Moved by the Uniting Church, seconded by the Religious Society of Friends)

01.07.50                    **IT WAS RESOLVED** *to request the General Secretary to review the policy of the Council in relation to the staff, including the possibility of a personnel committee.*

## THANKS

It was noted that this was the Revd David Gill's last National Forum as General Secretary.

On behalf of the Forum, Ms Shehara Viswanathan, Ms Elizabeth Harrington, Major Graham Harris, Archbishop Aghan Baliozian and the Revd Professor James Haire paid tribute to David Gill's leadership, his commitment to the Council and his vision of the wider ecumenical movement.

01.07.51                    **IT WAS RESOLVED**, *in closing, to record thanks to the Principal and staff of St Hilda's College, particularly Coral Finlay (Conference Officer), to the Victorian Council of Churches and especially its General Secretary, Maureen Postma for its efforts in hosting the gathering and planning the public act of worship; to Archbishop Saliba, Fr Nabil Kachab, the Revd Dr D'Arcy Wood and others who hosted and prepared that ecumenical service; to all others who led*

*worship and Professor James Haire for our Bible studies; to our overseas guests; to members of the steering and nominations committees; to the Revd Kim Cain our coopted media staffer from the UCA (Vic Synod); to the stewards, and to NCCA staff, especially Wilma Viswanathan; and to the President who led the Forum with grace and wisdom.*

## CONCLUSION

The gathering closed with a service of worship.



# APPENDICES

**LIST OF  
PARTICIPANTS  
BIBLE STUDIES  
PRESIDENT'S  
ADDRESS  
REPORT OF THE GENERAL SECRETARY  
REFUGEE POLICY – A GLOBAL  
DILEMMA, A CHALLENGE FOR  
CHRISTIANS  
NEW  
EXECUTIVE  
CONSTITUTION OF THE NCCA**





# LIST OF PARTICIP ANTS

Appendix I





NATIONAL  
COUNCIL OF  
CHURCHES IN  
AUSTRALIA

# PARTICIPANTS

## TS

### 3 OFFICERS

President:

General Secretary:

Treasurer:

The Revd Dr Lance Steicke

The Revd David Gill

Mr John Thomas

### 3 HEADS OF CHURCHES

Archbishop Peter Carnley

Archbishop Paul Saliba

Archbishop Aghan Baliozian

Bishop Mar Meelis Zaia (apology)

The Revd Peter Overton

The Revd Allan Filipaina (acting)

Bishop Suriel

Archbishop Stylianos (absent)

The Revd Mike Semmler

Colin Wendell-Smith

Archbishop Francis Carroll

The Revd. Dr Gabriel Popescu

represented by the Revd Dumitru Coman

Anglican Church of Australia

Antiochian Orthodox Church

Armenian Apostolic Church

Assyrian Church of the East

Churches of Christ in Australia

Congregational Federation of Australia

Coptic Orthodox Church

Greek Orthodox Church

Lutheran Church of Australia

Religious Society of Friends

Roman Catholic Church

Romanian Orthodox Church

Commissioner K Brian Morgan  
Commissioner Douglas Davis  
The Very Revd Zeki Zitoun  
represented by the Revd Iskandar Aphrem  
The Revd Professor James Haire

The Salvation Army - Eastern Territory  
- Southern Territory  
Syrian Orthodox Church  
Uniting Church in Australia

### **3 DELEGATES OF MEMBER CHURCHES**

#### **a ANGLICAN CHURCH OF AUSTRALIA**

Bishop Richard Appleby  
Archbishop Ian George  
Bishop Philip Huggins  
The Revd Canon Robert Legg  
The Revd James Minchin  
The Revd Dr Colleen O'Reilly

The Revd Dr David Powys  
Deaconess Margaret Rodgers  
Bishop David Silk  
Bishop John Stewart  
The Revd Janet Turpie-Johnston  
The Revd Sophie Watkins

#### **a ANTIOCHIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH**

The Rt Revd Nabil Kachab

#### **a ARMENIAN APOSTOLIC CHURCH**

Ms Sonya Berberian  
Mrs Agavni Karian

#### **a ASSYRIAN CHURCH OF THE EAST**

Deacon Genard Lazar  
Deacon Antwan Mikhail

#### **a CHURCHES OF CHRIST IN AUSTRALIA**

The Revd Glynthia Finger  
Ms Lynette Leach  
Ms Natasha Lawrence  
The Revd John Gilmore

#### **a CONGREGATIONAL FEDERATION OF AUSTRALIA**

Mr Keith Lyons

#### **a COPTIC ORTHODOX CHURCH**

The Revd Daniel Al-Antouny  
The Revd Shenouda Mansour

The Revd Marcos Tawfik

a **GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH**

The Revd Chris Dimolianis  
The Very Revd Elias Kentrotis

✠ **LUTHERAN CHURCH OF AUSTRALIA**

The Revd Peter Kriewaldt  
The Revd Lionel Otto (apology)

Mrs Marlene Pietsch  
Mr Derek Wagner

a **RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS**

Bill Jaggs  
Beverley Polzin  
Anna Wilkinson

a **ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH**

Mr Michael Brown  
Bishop Ted Collins  
Ms Loretta Faranda  
Mrs Elizabeth Harrington  
Bishop Peter Ingham  
Sister Patricia Madigan

Bishop Michael Putney  
Ms Fiona Sharwood  
The Revd Denis Stanley  
Mr Raymond Trevaskis  
Ms Marie Turner  
Ms Vicki Walker

a **ROMANIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH**

The Revd Dumitru Coman

a **THE SALVATION ARMY: EASTERN TERRITORYSOUTHERN TE**

Major Philip Cairns  
Major Lyn Middleton

Lieut.Col. Peter Callander  
Major Jim Weymouth

a **SYRIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH**

The Revd Iskandar Aphrem

## a UNITING CHURCH IN AUSTRALIA

The Revd Hamish Christie-Johnston  
The Revd Terence Corkin  
The Revd David Ingleton  
Mr Peter Jung  
The Revd Dr Morag Logan  
Ms Joan McRae-Benson

The Revd David Reichardt  
The Revd Eric Smith  
Ms Stephanie Tashkoff  
Ms Shehara Viswanathan  
The Revd Don Whebell  
The Revd Marie Wilson

## 3 DELEGATES OF STATE ECUMENICAL BODIES

Conference of Churches of WA  
NSW Ecumenical Council  
Northern Territory Council of Churches  
Queensland Churches Together  
South Australian Council of Churches  
Tasmanian Council of Churches  
Victorian Council of Churches

Ms Ivonna Danbergs  
The Revd Alaistair Christie  
Bishop Ted Collins  
The Revd Timothy Jaensch  
Bishop Phillip Aspinall  
Dr Rosemary Dobber

## 3 GUESTS

Beth Ferris  
Dr Ahn Jae Woong  
The Revd Danny Guka  
The Revd Valamotu Palu

World Council of Churches  
Christian Conference of Asia  
Papua New Guinea Council of Churches  
Pacific Conference of Churches

## 3 OBSERVERS FROM NON-MEMBER CHURCHES

Seventh-Day Adventist Church

Pastor Ray Coombe

## 3 OBSERVERS FROM ECUMENICAL ORGANISATIONS

Australian Church Women  
Australian Student Christian Movement  
Australian Religious Press Association  
Inter-Church Trade & Industry Mission

Mrs Marj Dredge  
Ms Claire Vincent  
The Revd Robert Wiebusch  
Dr Peter Marshall

### 3 OBSERVERS FROM NCCA COMMISSIONS AND NETWORKS

Aboriginal and Islander Commission  
Commission for Christian World Service  
Commission on Faith and Unity  
Commission on Mission  
Ecumenical Leadership Fund  
Commission on Gender  
Social Justice Network  
Youth Network

The Revd Kevin Zwar

Ronis Chapman

Mr Sobhi (Jim) Attia

### 3 OBSERVER/EXECUTIVE OFFICERS OF STATE ECUMENICAL BODIES

Conference of Churches of WA  
NSW Ecumenical Council  
Northern Territory Council of Churches  
Queensland Churches Together  
South Australian Council of Churches  
Tasmanian Council of Churches  
Victorian Council of Churches

The Revd Eira Clapton  
The Revd Dr. Ray Williamson

-----  
The Revd Russell Morris  
The Revd Vikki Waller  
The Revd Bob Faser  
Ms Maureen Postma

### 3 STAFF

Mr Caesar D'Mello  
Mr Malcolm Dodd  
Mr Peter Sabatino  
Ms Wilma Viswanathan  
Ms Ingrid Clanchy

Mr Jamie Isbister  
Sr Loreto Conroy  
Ms Athena Tzigeras

nominations committee  
finance; assisting with registration  
worship, liaison with Aboriginal and Islander participants  
minutes, registration, administration and secretarial  
liaison with young participants,  
assistance with administration  
liaison with overseas guests

displays

### 3 COOPTED STAFF

The Revd Kim Cain  
CWS – Victoria  
VCC Office (Jean Hillier)

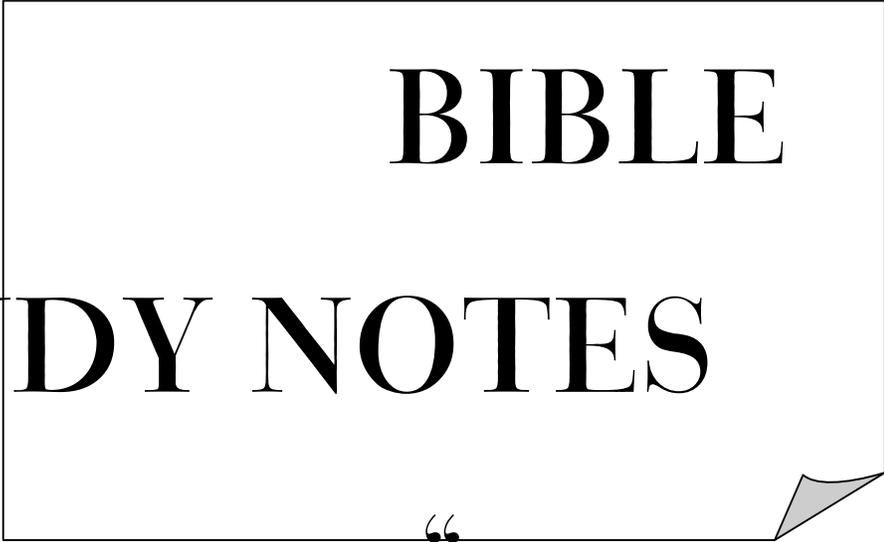
media  
assistance with registration, administration and secretarial  
literature sales

### 3 STEWARDS

Ms Lisa Jackson  
Ms Taryn Harding  
Ms Vanessa Valdez  
Mr Antonio Ramos







**BIBLE  
STUDY NOTES**

**MISSION AT A TURNING  
POINT ”**

Appendix II

# MISSION AT A TURNING POINT

**“DISCIPLESHIP - CAESAREA PHILIPPI”**  
(Mark 3:13-35)

## INTRODUCTION

It never ceases to amaze me that Mark made it into the canon of the New Testament. It speaks of such failure on the part of the disciples, more crass and blatant than in the other three gospels. It is a quite incredible statement of the sense of power of the grace of God and the Holy Spirit's guidance that Mark and I and II Corinthians were included, for they are documents of human failure too.

### MARK 3: 13-35

Let us look at the main lines of the passage:

13-19: Jesus goes to an uninhabited place in which to set apart the nucleus of the New Israel, the Twelve (cf. Mt. 19: 28; Lk. 22:30). They are

- (a) to be with him;
- (b) to proclaim the Good News Event, and
- (c) to interact with the forces of evil (casting out devils). Then they are named. Many we do not know of. However, the sociological work on Galilee of Jerome Murphy-O'Connor and Sean Freyne (e.g. S. Freyne, Galilee, Jesus and the Gospels) is important here. Fishing in the Sea of Galilee in the economic circumstances of the First Century was big business. Galilean fishing syndicates were raising credit a thousand kilometres from their operations. Although fishing is not explicitly mentioned here, the name of one of the syndicates ("Sons of Zebedee") is given. These were no lakeside bumpkins; they were major operators. The name "Peter" ("Rock": Kephas) is a dig at subsequent failure. So is "Sons of Thunder" ("Boanerges"). Simon is a Zealot, a member of a fairly radical nationalist movement. We are dealing with an influential group of competent operators.

20-21: Two factors are significant here: Jesus' immense popularity and therefore opportunity to influence the people; and the way in which he unnerves the people with his exousia ("authority").

22-27: In the Mt./Lk. version (Q/Mt. 12:22-26; Lk. 11:14-18) this Beelzebub controversy follows from an exorcism. There is academic discussion over the spelling of Beelzebub vs Beelzebul. Beelzebub was the god of Ekron (II Kg. 1:2). The point is: Jesus is seen from the side of Jerusalem (regarded in Mark as the place of evil) as an Evil Force. Therefore, his controversy with Judaism is seen in terms of a fight of spirits. Verse 27 reminds us of Isaiah 49: 24-25. All this is "parable", i.e. a story presenting an existential crisis for the hearers.

28-30: The central point of the section. What is this sin against the Holy Spirit? It has to do with Jesus' very being.

31-35: A whole new understanding of community and even of existence is represented here. One's very being is related to one's relatives; so the sociological studies of Galilee reinforce.

It seems fairly certain that Mark was put together in Rome around 70 CE/AD. Its connections with Galilee too are very important.

Let us imagine its situation.

The Neronian persecution has taken place. Tacitus sets out for us the appalling record of what happened to members of the Roman Church:

“They were not only put to death but put to death with insult, in that they were dressed up in the skins of beasts to perish either by the worrying of dogs or on crosses or by fire or, when the daylight failed, they were burnt to serve as lights by night.” (Gwatkin’s translation, Vol 1, p78)

Tradition, accepted by the church in the absence of other evidence, records that the two leading apostles, Peter and Paul, perished in this onslaught. This would be devastating for the mixed Gentile/Jewish church. It would not be surprising if the number of apostates was high. How many would be able to face up to the prospect of an agonising death by fire or crucifixion or being torn apart by dogs, deliberately starved to make them more vicious? It should be noted that, from very early days, the concept of the believer being identified with his Lord in suffering and death appears to have loomed large. Paul seeks a share e.g. in the sufferings of Christ (Phil 3:10); he seeks to fill up what is lacking in the sufferings of Christ as an “example to the members of the church to follow his steps” (2.21f). The passage on fasting is an example. It has to do with the death of Jesus and the fasting expressive of sorrow that belongs to that time. The present time with Jesus present is the time of joy. It is also the time of the presence of Peter, and the period of a wedding celebration: “Can the wedding guests fast while the bridegroom is with them?. The days will come when the groom is taken away from them. And then on that day they will fast” (2.19f). The verb apairo can imply a use of force. Jesus was “torn away” from the twelve and the church by the crucifixion. Similarly Peter (and Paul) shared this experience of being “torn away” by hostile authorities and martyred. The church in the aftermath of the persecution of 64AD knew something of the distress expressed at the time of the violent death of Jesus and it could take comfort in this identification.

The believing community at Rome we can surmise had its own considerable portion of defectors. It may have been expressed in all sorts of ways, giving up membership of the community and so not being brought before the authorities; keeping their identify secret; clearing out altogether in an act of sheer panic and yet wanting back; under the strain of torture and its physical agony reaching breaking point and willy-nilly denying Christ; perhaps there were those within the community who betrayed others to the authorities for gain, a pagan son his Christian father or a pagan mother her converted daughter, utterly resentful of her leaving the pagan gods. The list of failures could be multiplied. The unit on sin without forgiveness could meet such a situation” “All sins and transgressions will be forgiven” – what a sweeping statement! Then the salutary finish: “but the sin against the Holy Spirit will never be forgiven” (28-30). Many of those who had failed had never lost their faith in Christ. If in a moment of agony and stress, they lost their true identify in an involuntary denial; they had never in their hearts lost touch with Christ. Perhaps there were those who thought that there was no acceptance for them. Their sin was too great, too heinous.

## **MARK 8: 27-38**

This section is the beginning of the second major part of Mark’s Gospel. The first part, up until 8: 26, is crammed full of activity on the part of Jesus. He heals, he teaches, he moves from one place to another. Crowds are drawn to him; Jewish leaders begin to show their opposition. Two impressions, among others, are left: the furious activity of Jesus. and in addition a strange inability on the part of his closest followers to understand what he is about.

From our passage (i.e. from 8:27) it is of a different kind altogether. It moves more leisurely. We are now made to think about Jesus and what he is about. The structure is that of a journey. It begins

with Jesus as far away from his own area as possible, out in pagan Caesarea Philippi. Caesarea Philippi, the ancient Paneas, on the slopes of Mount Hermon, was rebuilt by Herod Philip, whose name it bears to distinguish it from Caesarea on the coast, the seal of the Roman government. Mark traces a journey which Jesus makes as he moves south from there through Galilee, along the Jordan through Jericho and up to Jerusalem. On this journey Jesus teaches his disciples about himself and about how they are to be disciples. It is no chance that this takes place on a journey, it is a kind of pilgrimage. Mark draws this out by continually referring to Jesus as being on the way or on the road at the head of his disciples.

Although he begins in pagan Caesarea Philippi, strangely he enters deeper and deeper into the area of estrangement from God as he reaches the so-called Holy City of Jerusalem. We know from earlier, in Chapter 3, that the struggle between him and the authorities from Jerusalem begins in Galilee. He is associated with Galilee, they are associated with Jerusalem. Each side points to the power of evil spirits in the other. For Jerusalem stands over against God's apocalyptic act in Jesus.

But what does Jesus teach his disciples about himself on this pilgrimage to the estranged city? - this anti-pilgrimage? Chiefly what is going to happen to him; he says it on three different occasions: "I am going to be delivered into the hands of men/people who will kill me; and when I am killed, after three days I will rise". This is to happen in Jerusalem; hence the journey is a journey to that place. We can see by now how the end of the story is beginning to dominate what precedes it. The three predictions that Jesus makes of what is going to happen to him are brief. They do not need to be lengthy. Mark's readers already know the full story and what is going to happen when Jesus reaches Jerusalem.

However, each time Mark gives one of the predictions he goes on immediately to drive home its implications for the disciples. If he is about to take up his cross, then they must take up theirs. If he is not about to demand his rights as a true leader of the Jewish people and so be saved by God from humiliation, then they too must learn what in fact it means to be humble, and he sets before them a child and tells them that their behaviour should resemble the child's. If he is king of the Jews and does not assert his kingship with worldly authority, then they must learn that the ideal for them is not ruling over people but serving others as a slave does.

If the religious centre of Judaism is to demonstrate that it is, in fact, the centre of estrangement and alienation from God, the Jesus' way of pilgrimage is the opposite. It is God's anti-pilgrimage, over against Jewish pilgrimages. God in Christ becomes totally alienated from religiosity, from playing religion, by hanging on a gibbet close to a Holy Feast. God in Christ enters into full humiliation in religious terms, if religiosity, playing religion, means demonstrating religious rights. God in Christ becomes the slave of all, if civil religiosity, playing civil religion, means asserting that he behave in Jerusalem's terms as to how that estranged place thinks a king of the Jews should behave.

Those, like Peter, who do not see that, are indeed Satan, standing, like Jerusalem, against the way of the presence of God in Jesus Christ. So Jesus links his fate to the way of discipleship. In that way Mark makes our understanding of Christian life depend on our understanding of God's action in Christ. It should be noted that, from the earliest days of Christianity in Rome, the concept of the believer being identified with his or her Lord in suffering, death and resurrection appears to have loomed large. Paul seeks a share, e.g., in the sufferings of Christ (Phil. 3: 10). He asks to fill up what is lacking in the sufferings of Christ (Col. 1: 24). Peter, in 1 Peter (2: 21 - 22), talks of the vicarious suffering of Christ as an "Example to the members of the church to follow his steps".

So Christian discipleship is comprehensible only in Christ. This stands in stark contrast to the outwardly successful activities of the Pharisees. They most successfully in first century Judaism were able to combine sectarian movements and mainline aspirations. They were outstanding experts in propagating religious comprehensiveness. However, Christian discipleship stands over against successes. For Christian discipleship is only comprehended in God's strange actions in Jesus' anti-religiosity pilgrimage. Our identity in him comes from God; it is given to us by God's grace. It stands over against all self-conscious discipleships, all posings, all self-validated pilgrimages with predetermined outcomes, and optimal results. Despite ourselves, it is given to us. For Jesus, in his resurrection message speaks first to Peter, the one who has gone further than the other disciples in denying Jesus, the one who goes against God's will, and says that he is going before him into Galilee, the place not estranged by religiosity. There he will see him, as he told him. Discipleship is not self-justification; it is gift.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

**The following factors need to be noted:**

1. Those called to be disciples are confrontational to religious institutions.
2. The situation in Rome was a re-run of Passion Week. So it is for all Christian life and existence.

# **MISSION AT A TURNING POINT**

## **“APOSTLESHIP - DAMASCUS ROAD”**

(Acts 9: 1-19)

## INTRODUCTION

There is a phrase which is sometimes used : a Damascus road experience. What is such an experience? Acts contains three accounts of what happened to Paul: 9:1-19, 22:4-16, 26:9-18. There has been much discussion whether these describe a conversion or a commission or something else. The account occurs three times in Acts, apart from the references to it in the Pauline letters. Why was it given so much significance? Who was this Paul, about whom it is written, anyway? The Acts of Paul and Thecla, Section 3, describe him as follows: "A sturdy little bald-headed, bow-legged man, with meeting eyebrows and a rather prominent nose."

He was a very major problem to the Early Church. First, the ablest arch-enemy of Christianity had become its most articulate evangelist. Second, and perhaps even more problematic, was Paul already a missionary before his conversion, taking part in a Jewish proselytising campaign? (Schoeps and Bornkamm). The evidence is somewhat elusive. In part it consists of the unspoken presumption that the Christian Paul could not have taken such an overwhelming interest in the Gentiles if, before he met with Christ, he had not also been concerned about their fate. More substantial evidence may be found in Gal. 5:11 where Paul asks, "And I, my friends, if I am still advocating circumcision, why is it I am still persecuted?" From this it has been assumed that before his Christian baptism Paul had practiced the calling of a Jewish preacher of circumcision. However, the juxtaposition of two "stills" means that this interpretation is not necessarily implied. We might draw a picture of Paul being heavily involved before his conversion in a Jewish proselytising campaign. This would certainly help us to see his later struggles in a new light.

### ACTS 9: 1-19

Against this background we have a picture of a number of events occurring for Paul: the call-vision is the tradition of Jeremiah, the reception of the Holy Spirit, and baptism. The conversion is separated by three days from the reception of the Spirit and baptism.

Let us overview the passage:

1-9: Paul, the arch-enemy of the Christians, is presented, armed with letters presumably from the Jerusalem Sanhedrin to the synagogues of the Jewish community in Damascus, a major Jewish colony. It may have had close connections with the Qumran community. The right to arrest Jewish fugitives is mentioned in 1 Mac.15:21. The three accounts differ in detail but agree on the central conversation between Jesus and Paul:

"Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?" "Tell me, Lord", he said, "who are you."

The voice answered, "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting."

It is not clear whether Paul alone heard Jesus (22.9) or also those journeying with him (9:7), whether he alone saw the light (20:11) or whether those also with him (22:9; 26:13 – strangely unlike Paul they are not made blind by the light). These variations seem not significant, for there is no indication that anyone other than Paul saw Jesus. We can safely conclude that Paul's experience was quite different from that of any of his fellow travellers.

10-19: A number of factors indicate that Paul's three-day experience was a unified crisis, extending from his conversion and re-orienting right through to this reception of the Spirit and his baptism. First, in the three accounts there is no distinction between the commissioning he receives on the road and that which he receives from Ananias. In ch.9 the commissioning comes solely through Ananias; in Ch.26 the whole commission is received outside Damascus. Paul, it appears, did not distinguish the means and the times of God's dealings with him. It was all the one event and experience, and it was impossible to disentangle the various elements in it.

Second, Paul's blindness lasts for three days. From the background above we can see that his entire world-view had been shaken, especially if he had been a Jewish proselytiser. He was not converted in an instant. That is what the blindness means. He was shattered. He had to let the

pieces of his shattered life re-assemble themselves round the new fact which had broken in upon him. It was only when this was done, and this faith had been re-created from its deepest levels, that he was ready to take that step of commitment after which he could not go back.

Third, in ch.22, Ananias has to persuade him to take the final step of baptism. It all runs together: conversion, a sense of commissioning, re-orientation, receiving the Holy Spirit and baptism.

Note: in verse 5, Paul calls Jesus "Lord" (kurie); this could equally be "sir" or "the one who clearly is putting me in subjection". Again: in verse 17 Ananias calls Paul "brother" (adelphos); it is used 19 times in Acts to mean "fellow Jew".

### **CALL-VISION AND THE HOLY SPIRIT**

A number of factors need to be borne in mind here:

First, there is the very important phrase in 1 Cor. 15:8. Within 1 Cor.15:8, there are two expressions which require a little further examination. Of the first of these, "last of all", could be taken to mean "least in importance", and this would agree with verse 9. "Extromati" has been variously translated into English. It probably means something like "an abortion". This can hardly be taken in a strictly literal sense but might signify that he had been born before his time or without the preparation necessary, the preparation which the other apostles had through their earthly fellowship with Jesus. It is likely that the term was not his own choice but had been used about him by his critics "that he was as much an ugly parody of a true apostle as an abortion is of a healthy infant born at the proper time," **Paul uses it against himself. Yet he went through the call-vision, gift of the Spirit and baptism experience. This was the miracle.**

Second, the coming of the Spirit overcame the Evil Inclination, or "yeser harā" in him. In popular Judaism the Evil Inclination was in all people, for Jews it could be partially controlled by strict adherence to the Law. It is referred to in the Damascus Document (CD) 19:20-23:

"Each man did what was good in his eyes, and each one chose the stubbornness of his heart, and they kept not themselves from the people and its sin but lived in license deliberately, walking in the ways of the wicked, of whom God said, "Their wine is the poison of serpents and the head of asps is cruel" (Deut 32:33). The serpents are the kings of the peoples and their wine is their ways".

At Qumran, the "stubbornness of his heart" (syrwt lbw) is synonymous with "the thought of his yeser": as the Manual of Discipline 5:4-5 shows. The Torah, for them, would be the antidote to rabbinic traditions. Paul, however, discerns an antinomy between being "led by the spirit" and being "under the Law" (Gal 5:18). For him the Spirit alone, sundered from the Torah, is the antidote to the yeser, and in Gal 5:17, Paul goes on to describe the battle between the yeser and the Spirit. For Paul, the change to his life comes from the outpouring of the Spirit of God, and the recreation of humanity.

## **MISSION AT A TURNING POINT**

### **"THE CHURCH AS THE BODY OF CHRIST – ROME"**

(Romans 12: 1-18)

## INTRODUCTION

In this ethical section, Paul speaks about “one body in Christ”. What does this phrase mean? To understand it, we need to look at a number of backgrounds.

## ROMANS 12: 1-18 - BACKGROUNDS

**First**, the **pictures** which Paul uses for the Church. The Church in Rome was in the process of formation. It was formed of Christians of Jewish descent, and Christians of Gentile, or non-Jewish descent. It would seem that the Christians of Jewish descent had had very considerable economic power. They had, however, suffered political oppression. In 49CE they had been expelled from Rome by the Emperor Claudius, along with all other Jews. On Claudius' death in 54CE, shortly before Paul wrote Romans, they had been allowed to return. The Gentile Christians had, on the other hand, much more political influence, although in all likelihood they were largely economically disadvantaged. They also probably had the numbers, they were in the majority. So here was the Church in Rome a minority of the economically powerful and politically oppressed, and a majority of the poor, but politically correct. It was the perfect situation for chaos, as it is in every situation where these factors exist. What probably existed was a collection of rather poor Gentile house-churches, and at least one rather grand synagogue, now converted into a Church building. But, did they meet together? Paul actually never calls from the Church (*ecclesia*) He also is somewhat unhappy in other parts of his writing using the obvious Jewish terms for them from the Old Testament. The obvious term to use for the Church was the Old Testament phrase *the People of God*. He does use it a little in I Corinthians 6: 16ff, but is not too happy with it. He also uses the phrase *the Temple*, but again he is not too happy with that phrase. It was strongly associated with Jewish Christianity. Indeed, the Jewish Christian leaders in Jerusalem were referred to as the *styled, the pillars* of the Temple. In fact, there were two famous pillars at Solomon's Temple, named Jachin and Boaz (I Kings 7: 15-22). Paul takes up a new picture, *the Body of Christ*. This is his picture for the **united, multi-ethnic, socially-diverse and theologically-varied Church**. It is a picture related to Christ, and also related to God's Spirit. A spirit was what God breathed into Adam's clay body in Genesis. The Church could therefore be understood as *the Body of Christ*, the Second or New Adam.

## IMPLICATIONS

So, **second**, what are the implications of this image of the Body of Christ? We see a number of factors. **First**, the Church is the Body of Christ, the New Adam, the *Proper Man*, in Luther's language, the Real Human Being as God intended as we would say. The Church is not the Body of Christian Enthusiasts. The Church does not pretend it acts as if it is the Risen Jesus. Nor does it shove the Risen Jesus out of the way, and say it will carry out God's mission for him instead. It is the Body of Christ. It cannot live without Christ as its head. Without Christ as its head, it does not just deal in futility; it actually symbolises sin, the very turning away from God. With Christ as its head, it does not struggle for no meaning, its meaning is there.

**Second**, the Church as the Body of Christ is where the Spirit of God has come. It thus lives in the overlap of the two ages (see too I Corinthians 10:11). The new age has entered from beyond into the life of this Body of Christ. The ethical injunctions of verses 9-18 of this chapter 13: 8-14, point to this inbreaking. In the First Century CE there was considerable discussion both in Rabbinic circles and among sectarian grouping as at Qumran as to how the *evil inclination* (the *yesser hara*) in humanity could be described and controlled. The Shepherd of Hermas, Mandate, 12.2.4 of the Second Century CE, probably reflects Jewish instruction material from about the time of Paul. In order for Jewish people to resist the innate evil inclination in them, it suggests being clothed in *righteous desire* (*endusai ten epithumian tes dikaiosumes*), a Good Inclination, through observance

of the Law and specific exercises and attitudes, for each group. Paul never speaks of this. Rather in 13:14 he speaks of “putting on the Lord Jesus Christ”, and here, in our passage, he speaks of identity with Christ in His body. The body of Christ is an image from the world beyond.

**Third**, the picture of the Body of Christ has a democratic element in it too. Indeed, this democratic element may have been an additional aspect brought in from the Greek city state in Paul’s thinking. Everyone has got some gift, and all display the fruit of the Spirit from the new, inbreaking world in our ethical lives. People who “prophesy”, that is, have inspired declarations of God’s purposes (cf Deut.13:1-5), need those who have generosity. Those who teach this identity in Christ’s body need the compassionate. But note the nature of this democracy! Each function does not stand on its own. Each task is meaningless outside its sole identity marker in the body of Christ.

**Fourth**, the picture of the body of Christ needs to be seen over against the social perceptions of First Century CE Roman society. First, in the world of Early Christianity, social groupings were based on kinship, ethnic issues, power and politics. Kinship was the central factor of social organization. The kinship group was the focus of individual loyalty and had decisive influence over individual identity and self-awareness. Security was grounded in the community, sharing as it did common interests, values and activities. Hence, the most basic unit of social awareness was not the individual. Individual consciousness was subdued relative to the predominance of social consciousness.

Second, religion, like other social factors, was enmeshed in kinship and politics. Membership in a religious community was not necessarily based on religious relationships, but on bonds of kinship that gave structure to religious associations. Membership in religious groups was involuntary or voluntary. Involuntary members belonged to a religion because, for example, they were born into a particular family. Voluntary membership derived from choice and resulted in a created kinship group. The struggle of the Christian community in Rome as a totality can be seen in terms as to which of these two types it in fact belonged.

Third, there is considerable evidence of intense expressions of emotion, through outbursts of anger, aggression, violence, and pugnacity. Moreover, these appear to have been socially acceptable.

Fourth, in such an atmosphere, concern for honour and shame was significant. This was because honour determined social standing and was essential for social cooperation. Honour was the outward approval given to a group or an individual by others whose honour was not in question. The honour of an individual normally was dependent upon the outward approval given to one’s group. People became shamed when they transgressed group standards or sought a social status to which public approval was not given. Honour was ascribed, for example, by birth into an honourable family, or by bestowal from honourable persons of power. It was acquired by outdoing others in social interchange. A person’s sense of self-worth was therefore established by public reputation, related to that person’s associations, rather than by a judgment of conscience.

Over against these four factors, Paul’s community stipulations summon Christians to new social roles. They are based on mercy, peaceable conduct, and reconciliation in a culture where expressions of violence seem to have been common. The call for transformation means new expressions about group identity. No longer based on kinship or ethnicity, group identity nevertheless is to retain the intense cohesion of former groups. Paul’s community members bind themselves together and reinforce their identity as one body in Christ. This metaphor is poignantly apt in a society where self-awareness arises from group associations rather than from individual worth. There are altered valuations about honourable and shameless conduct. It is not primarily

derived from society outside. Rather, enhanced honour for the community derives from its incorporation into its risen Lord inspires. There are also modified patterns of social cooperation.

If we look at the dynamics of what is happening here, we can see that the social groupings see their identity as coming from beyond. Their self-understanding and their life together is defined by the kindness or mercy of God and the truthful harmony (peace) which God gives. The other factors in the transformation, as we have seen, include cohesiveness within the group based on God's action from outside. For that reason attitudes of peaceful harmony are central. Moreover, no other identity marker (ethnicity, gender, class or status) may be accepted as absolute. Honour derives from the faith-life of the community, originating from beyond. The original groupings are transformed with a central awareness from without.

So groups were based on kinship, clans, political alliances and power. Religious groupings were meshed into these social entities. Violence and corruption were acceptable means of protecting the honour of these groupings. By becoming "one body in Christ" nothing less than a new society is to be formed. They are to "outdo one another in showing honour" (12:10). "Shalom" (peace) within the community is as far as possible to be sought with those outside. This metaphor is significant in a society where identity is publicly derived from group associations.

**JAMES HAIRE**

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# PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS

## Appendix III



# PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS

Archbishop Keith Rayner and I were guest speakers at the March meeting of the South Australia Council of Churches. The topic: Is Ecumenism still an Issue: Where to in the Future?

Is Ecumenism still an issue? I said it has waned as an issue for interest and excitement, and as a priority in people's thinking and activity. If the question were, *should* ecumenism still be an issue, my answer would be a strong and definite YES.

Archbishop Keith said: 'young people are not particularly concerned about Christian unity'. 'The question for most young people', he said, 'is no longer, Which religious tradition is best? Or does church unity matter? The question among most young people is, Does religion matter at all? Does Christianity matter at all? Does God matter?'

We've come a long way. But that journey hasn't always been easy and straightforward.

Joseph A. Burgess in *In Search of Christian Unity* (P. 11) says, '*Ecumenism in recent years has been an anomaly of progress and frustration*'.

It's very interesting to report evidences of that same progress and frustration very close to home. Both the Lutheran-Anglican and Lutheran-Uniting dialogue are currently in a state of progress with considerable excitement. Some light seems to be shining at the end of the tunnel. But only a few years ago both dialogues were in frustration. The Lutheran-Anglican went into recess because it was felt nothing more could be done. The Lutheran-Uniting floundered and threatened to totter altogether.

It's difficult to understand this anomaly of progress and frustration. Is it due to institutional inertia and/or the self-interest of church leaders? I daren't try to answer the question. I simply let it hang.

I would not have predicted 50, 40, 30, even 20 years ago that we would be where we are today. The development has exceeded all expectations.

What is my vision for the future?

1. **Restoring the Centre.** Already something of that is happening - a concern for the centre, the essence, the heart and core of what we're on about as church. If you think about it, it's this that has divided us to a fairly great extent. Most, if not all, movements within the church and sectarian groups, arose because of a deficiency within orthodox or established Christendom. But with the emergence of these movements, denominations and sects, the emphasis was often off-centre. How easy it is for us, and how tempting, to devote our time and effort to what is peripheral and off-centre. My vision for the future is one whereby the churches will give themselves more fully to core issues, to the centre. And, of course, that centre, those core issues,

focus on the common confession of Jesus Christ on the basis of the Holy Scriptures and the interpretation of the early Christian Creeds.

2. **Rediscovery of the gospel.** This, of course, is not unrelated to the previous point. In fact, it's very closely allied to it. I probably betray my Lutheran roots in this. The essence of the Lutheran Reformation was the rediscovery of the gospel. This is seen clearly in the emphasis on grace alone, faith alone, Christ alone. We are saved alone by the grace of God solely through faith in the atoning work of Jesus Christ. This, the gospel, was important to Martin Luther. It's important to me. I believe it should be important to all of us. Every generation is in danger of losing the gospel. How can we help each other rediscover it, preserve it, stand on it, proclaim it? Does the NCCA have a role in this regard? And, if so, what is it?
  
3. **Serving each other in a mission context.** Jesus said to the church, *'Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you'*. And then he breathed on his disciples. And he continues to breath on us and on the church to this day. The breath of Jesus. The Spirit of God. The sound of a rushing mighty wind, a breath. On Pentecost Sunday I told the congregation that I was serving at the time that I had thought of getting into the pulpit, going BREATH, and then sitting down and letting them ponder on that. There's life in breath. Mouth-to-mouth resuscitation is evidence of that as one person breathes life into someone no longer breathing. Jesus breathed the breath of the Spirit into his disciples. The early church, filled with that breath of Jesus, that Spirit, went out and they turned the world upside down. They witnessed to Jesus, as he had told them to do. Witness, mission, evangelism is crucial. Bring two or three or more Christians together and what should they immediately want to do? Worship and evangelize. We are probably not ready to do a great amount of mission work together as churches, but what about:
  - a) common approaches and strategies
  - b) research into Australian culture, the context for mission. Friday's Seminar is a good example of this.
  - c) Working together as at Seaford
  - d) Planning together: You go here, we'll go there. Rather than set up side by side

4. **Helping the churches be the church.** How can the NCCA better serve its member churches and the cause of church cooperation, covenanting and collaboration in Australia?

Karl Barth (Thielicke I BELIEVE P. 235) says, *'The church lives from her function as **herald**, she is God's company. Where the church is alive, she must face the question of whether she serves this function or whether she is an end in herself. If the latter is the case, the church usually begins to taste "sacral", to act pious, to become priestly, and to taste sour. Anyone with a sensitive nose will smell and find it dreadful.'*

Is the NCCA serving member churches and helping them in their function as *'herald'*? Because of particular and different confessions the task of being *'herald'* is no doubt denominational, but resourcing for the task,

sharing homework, providing challenges, motivation, mutual encouragement, prayer – this can come from a common pool.

How can the NCCA better serve its member churches?

This is a key question. And a key issue. The Constitution asks it of us.

The first two of the four Objectives of the Constitution say that the NCCA is to encourage and enable the member churches to do this and that. That's where the emphasis lies – the NCCA serving the member churches - *'through prayer, dialogue and shared engagement in mission'*. It is to include *'the areas of spirituality, liturgy, theology, history, sociology and culture.'*

How can the NCCA better serve its member churches?

Dare I suggest that we need to work a lot more and a lot harder at such things as:

1. The affirmation of each other. We have been good at condemning each other, not so good at affirming.
2. Allied to this is the removal of condemnations. Lutherans and Roman Catholics took a giant step forward when they did this in the Joint Declaration on Justification. But we have a long way to go.
3. Are member churches open to admonition about the limitations of their own traditions? I know I'm very sensitive in this area. And I suspect we all are, some more so than others. Now we must defend our own traditions and our convictions, our confessional position. But what about that which is not an essential part of our confession?
4. How can there be interchange of clergy (and acceptance of each other's ministry) given our different standards for the ordination and calling of clergy and our different stands on ministry. Lutheran-Anglican dialogue has been working hard on this.
5. Are we working on the right agenda? Or are there are other issues and agenda items before us which we should be tackling?

5. **A greater sense of belonging.**

Konrad Raiser in *To Be the Church* says, (P.5) *'An initial general – and sobering – observation is that for many member churches, particularly in the southern hemisphere, the World Council of Churches is a distant organization about which they know very little'*.

This applies within denominations. Congregations often know very little about the work of the wider denomination. Denominations know little about the NCCA. It is a *'distant organization'*.

My visit to WA last year made it clear to me that those in the West see the NCCA as something in the east, far removed from them, not interested in them. How can the West own the NCCA? ***What can we do to create a sense of belonging, of ownership, of commitment?***

How do we deal with the communication gap? Getting the message to the churches and from the churches into its various parts.

Konrad Raiser, (P. 12) *'None of the churches can face these challenges alone'*. He had been talking about such things as evangelism, education, church-state relationships, church-to-church relationships on the national level, denominational defensiveness, training capable ecumenical leadership, involvement of youth in the ecumenical movement, etc. What evidences are there of the churches in Australia facing the challenges before us together? How can we do so? What is the role of the NCCA in this? What can the NCCA do to help churches face the challenges of the day together?

6. **An evaluation of structure.** I realize that the NCCA is only seven years old. But that does not preclude us from considering an evaluation of our structures. You will gather from the above that I have focused on essence, identity, purpose, vision. But structure cannot be omitted or by-passed entirely.

The Executive recently debated our premises. Do they serve us adequately? Would we be better off outside of down-town Sydney? What are the implications of a change – to the churches, to the staff, to the work?

The Executive has also discussed earnestly from time to time finances and resourcing. It should be no secret that income is not what it ought to be from the member churches and that income is hardly keeping pace with requirements and expenditure.

What are the options?

- Increase income. Efforts have been made, but reality is different.
- Decrease expenditure.
- Streamline for greater efficiency and more effective ministry.
- Take up the even greater (and, of course, harder) question, are we over-ecumenicalized ( ! ) in Australia? Do we need the two tiers we have now – full and complete State organizations and administrations, dependent to varying degrees on assistance from the national body especially so far as CWS is concerned, and a full-blown national structure with all that goes with it?

7. **The scope of the ecumenical movement.**

I have basically spoken only of the wider ecumenical scene. I have not touched the local or grassroots level. Is there any co-relation between what happens at the local level and on the state or national level? Can we be quite out of kilter with each other's thinking? Can the leaders of the church be way out there with their thinking while the grassroots is still wondering whether a Catholic boy and a Lutheran girl can hold hands with each other without committing ecumenical sin?

Or is it the other way round? The grassroots is way out ahead with their thinking and practice leaving the leadership lagging behind.

The disparity between local and other levels varies from time to time, place to place, and issue to issue. Let me really stick my neck out and say that I'm not too convinced that the NCCA or its predecessor ACC has done too much to alter or influence the thinking of grassroots Australian Christians to

any great extent. Nor am I convinced that grassroots Australian Christians have contributed anything vital to the NCCA. I am not pronouncing judgment. I am not saying whether this is good or bad. I believe it's a fact.

Lack of resources may force all of us, national, state and local to look at greater streamlining and more efficiency of administration for the future.

## 8. **The need to rekindle the ecumenical vision.**

Konrad Raiser talks about *'the need to rekindle the ecumenical vision'*. TO BE THE CHURCH, P. X. The last millennium, he says, was *'the millennium of Christian division'* with 1054 and 1517 being the outstanding dates.

I might add that the first millennium wasn't all that crash hot either.

Is it a utopian dream to think this new millennium will be any different?

The twentieth century could be classified as the century of the quest for Christian unity. At varying stages in the century the ecumenical vision was very much to the fore.

But what is the ecumenical vision?

- Is it rooted in WCC, NCCA, denominations, local churches, dialogue?
- Is it a leadership or a laity issue? Bishops or grass roots?
- Is it to do away with differences? I would never want to deprive the world of Orthodox worship, but I don't want a world where Orthodox worship is the only option either.
- Is it visible unity, as most Catholics would want and expect and many others would aspire to as well?
- Is it full fellowship, altar and pulpit fellowship, even though structures and denominations might remain?

I don't believe we would have consensus for one moment on what the *'ecumenical vision'* is that we would want to rekindle.

And perhaps that is a good place to conclude this address. Not only because I'm probably over time, but also because I leave up in the air the very issue that brings us together, the question, why? Why have we come together? Why have we formed an NCCA? What for us is the ecumenical vision? What are the issues we should work on? What is central?

May God bless us richly as we tackle the agenda and the issues we do do together in the name of and on behalf of our respective churches.

**LANCE G. STEICKE**

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**GENERAL**

# SECRETARY'S REPORT

IV

Appendix

# REPORT OF THE GENERAL SECRETARY

1. The American theologian Reinhold Niebuhr observed that the only time the Church is really sufferable is when it is at prayer, for when it talks the Church invariably claims too much for itself. The same no doubt holds true for councils of churches and, especially, for reports perpetrated by their general secretaries. I must preface what follows, then, with an acknowledgement – using the well known line from the Anglican Book of Common Prayer - that “we have left undone those things which we ought to have done; and we have done those things which we ought not to have done”. But I am not prepared to utter the next phrase: “And there is no health in us”. Our frailties and shortcomings notwithstanding, there is I believe quite a bit of health in the National Council of Churches in Australia and what it represents.
2. Seven important convictions undergirded the transition from the old Australian Council of Churches to the NCCA. They remain fundamental to how this council understands itself and tries to do its job. Recall them for a moment.
  - 2.1 Humanly speaking, the primary actors in the ecumenical movement are the churches.
  - 2.2 Ecumenical structures must be seen as interim, provisional, flexible and responsive to the churches that comprise them.
  - 2.3 A council of churches has to respect the differing convictions of member churches, not least in the way it spells out the ecclesiological implications of membership.
  - 2.4 Membership implies sustained commitment by the member churches -- to the council, yes, but more importantly to one another through the council.
  - 2.5 Decision-makers in ecumenical bodies should be genuinely and authoritatively representative of the churches that comprise them.
  - 2.6 Councils are to focus on fostering trust and deepening mutual understanding, and the reconciled koinonia for which we yearn must find expression in how we deal with each other in ecumenical decision-making even now.

- 2.7 Ecumenism does not start and stop at the national frontier, so other councils of churches -- world, regional and national -- are essential partners in what we are attempting to be and to do.
3. The first of these convictions inspires the rest and requires unpacking further. The Basis of the NCCA says it well. The council, it states, “gathers together in pilgrimage (note the language of movement) those churches and Christian communities (note who is doing the moving) which confess the Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour according to the scriptures (note who gives the movers their distinctive identity) and commit themselves
- i) to deepen their relationship with each other in order to express more visibly the unity willed by Christ for his Church, and
  - ii) to work together towards the fulfilment of their mission of common witness, proclamation and service,  
  
to the glory of the one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.”
4. “Churches ... which confess ... and commit themselves...”. The NCCA’s Basis is, in effect, the undertaking entered into by each member church on joining the council; a solemn vow made to other member churches, and to God. A National Forum is the right setting to reflect on how Australia’s churches are going at keeping these solemn undertakings, and on how this council is going as the instrument they have created to help them.
5. But first let us underline yet again the identity of the pilgrims. We are not talking about the officers, staff, committees and assorted activities of the NCCA, not principally anyway. In an important sense the NCCA as such is of no significance. An interim report from the Special Commission on Orthodox Participation in the World Council of Churches, presented to last February’s meeting of the World Council’s Central Committee, makes the point eloquently:
- The *member churches* are the subject of the quest for visible unity, not the council.
  - The *member churches* teach and make doctrinal and ethical decisions, not the council.
  - The *member churches* proclaim doctrinal consensus, not the council.
  - The *member churches* commit themselves to pray for unity, and
  - the *member churches* are responsible for developing the sensitivities to sustain their dialogue.
6. Seven years and four days after the NCCA’s inauguration, we must acknowledge gratefully the early steps the churches have taken through and around the council. The ecclesial communities that came together in that new mix in July 1994 were right to give priority to building relationships rather than running programmes, deepening their companionship rather than organising activities. As the late Jean Tillard remarked some years

ago, trying to broaden the celebrated Lund principle of maximum inter-church cooperation: "It is not enough to *do everything together* that we can do together. We must also *be everything* together that we can be together."

Without always being fully aware of it, your representatives have been developing ways of praying together, thinking together, arguing together, making decisions together, laughing together, *being together*, that enshrine gratitude for each other's gifts and respect for each other's sensitivities as well as a healthy appreciation of each other's human frailties.

7. But more. The working papers before this meeting, reflecting the work of the member churches' representatives on our assortment of commissions and networks, offer some exciting possibilities for helping our churches move forward together towards the fulfillment of the vows they have made. For example:
  - the covenanting process, developed through our Faith and Unity Commission, which invites churches to use some sanctified imagination and find ways of giving more visible expression to the real albeit incomplete communion they already share;
  - the efforts we are making through Christian World Service to encourage greater inter-church cooperation in the area of international relief and development;
  - the Social Justice Network's initiatives to help us understand why our churches severally speak as they do on social issues and how they might with more integrity speak ecumenically;
  - the solid homework done by our Aboriginal and Islander Commission to help churches find their place alongside all who yearn for the nation's healing;
  - and more.
8. Such reports and proposals, it must be remembered, represent only a series of institutional tips on the ecumenical iceberg. The ecumenical movement, thank God, is much vaster than the structures we set up to serve it and the programmes we adopt to advance it. During these days we will be reminded, not least in the joint report of our working partners the state ecumenical bodies, of how much is happening in the wider scene. Some people, sadly, fail to recognise the strength and creativity of the continuing drive towards Christian unity. Some persist in referring to our time as "an ecumenical winter" -- a depiction which is doubly misleading, because it implies a sunny past, which never was, as well as a bleak present, which certainly is not. On the evidence, it would be more accurate to speak of a continuing ecumenical spring, with of course occasional showers and every so often a storm to make things interesting.
9. In any case, we are on this pilgrimage together not because of the climate of the moment but because unity is the will of God, because a gospel of reconciliation demands a manifestly reconciled and reconciling community, and because -- to use the memorable image of Lesslie Newbigin -- a divided Christianity has about as much credibility as a temperance society the members of which are perpetually drunk.

10. Note, however, the danger that is lurking for would-be pilgrims: the temptation to stop, put their feet up and relax. Too many councils of churches have begun with a clear ecumenical vision, only to become bureaucracies behind which the churches have sunk back into the torpor of denominational business-as-usual. It can happen so easily, and when it does the council in question has ceased to be an "ecumenical instrument" and become an "ecumenical alibi" – a device that gives all concerned the comfortable illusion of journeying towards unity while permitting the status quo of denominational immobility to continue unchallenged.
11. With this in mind, and noting that 2004 will mark a decade from the NCCA's inauguration, I wonder if this National Forum might do well to ask your new Executive, assisted by the fresh eyes and as yet uncorrupted mind of your new General Secretary, to undertake a review of how the council is measuring up to the objectives set for it. Let me push my luck a bit further and suggest several concerns such a review would need to include within its field of vision.
12. First, a deficiency of the NCCA is that some members of the family still feel unable to gather under its roof. Yes, it is more inclusive than the old Australian Council of Churches, but the Serbian Orthodox Church, several Protestant churches like the Baptists and the Presbyterians and the whole Pentecostal stream, remain outside. When any church is absent from the growing fellowship of Christ's people, that fellowship must be considered sadly incomplete.
13. A second challenge is that our council finds itself operating in working relationships that are seriously unbalanced. Most of our key ecumenical partners -- the WCC, the Christian Conference of Asia and most NCCs in the Asia region -- comprise only Protestant, Anglican and in some cases Orthodox churches. While trying to foster a comprehensive ecumenism at home, we find ourselves having to draw insights from and work together with a largely Protestant ecumenism elsewhere. One consequence is that we need to remain ready to share the experience we have gleaned from our privileged ecumenical mix in this country with less inclusive partners elsewhere. Another is that we must continue to take special care to ensure that the ecumenical imbalance abroad does not lead, by default, to a similar imbalance of substance and style developing in the NCCA.
14. Third, through these years your efforts through the NCCA have been hamstrung by a lack of resources. As the Finance Committee recalls in its report, the task group responsible for planning the new body had alerted prospective member churches to the anticipated requirements, in staff and program costs, of the objectives they were setting for the council: \$400,000 a year, in 1993 dollars. Member church contributions to the council have never reached even half that figure. My hope had been that the churches' greater sense of ownership of the council would translate into a matching financial responsibility for it. In that, clearly, I was naive.

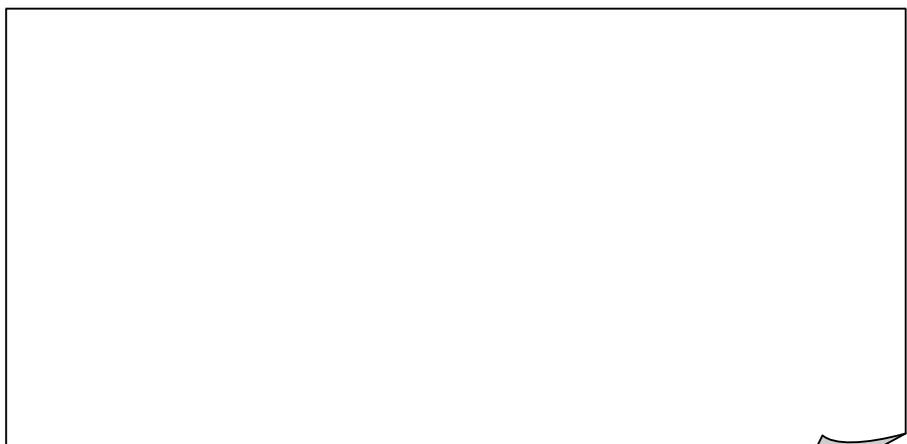
15. The result is that some of the council's key objectives remain pious hopes, with little prospect of much being done about them in the foreseeable future. Our Commission on Mission, Social Justice Network and Network on Women and Gender Relations struggle to operate with no staff support at all. The Faith and Unity Commission and Youth Network have minimal, very part-time staff support. Budgets of most commissions and networks have no provision for travel, which makes the "national" in our title at least questionable. A further consequence is that committees and staff are, by default, having to seek funding from sources other than member churches. To the extent that they succeed, their very success must start to call in question the emphasis on the organisation being a council of *churches* and introduce the risk -- which our Christian World Service commission is already grappling with -- of funding sources subtly influencing the NCCA's policies and priorities. More than churches perhaps have realised, a council's self-understanding and its sources of income go hand in hand.
16. Fourth, the NCCA has not yet discovered an effective way of bringing the churches' views into the public forum, when matters of national or international importance are up for debate. This is partly because the council has no staff capacity for media work, so what is done happens in someone's spare time using whatever amateur skills he or she can muster. But it is partly too because constitutional constraints on the making of public statements, devised to ensure that what the council says truly echoes the convictions of its member churches, require consultation and therefore time. The media does not work that way, however, with the result that -- as the report of the Aboriginal and Islander Commission observes -- the churches' voice at times may have been muted. Our intention -- that the NCCA should express what the churches think, not what a commission or a general secretary thinks the churches ought to think -- is absolutely correct. But a viable way of achieving this laudable goal has yet to be found.
17. Fifth, the challenge in Australia today is to discover an ecumenism for a time of stress. Our churches are in trouble, like those in Europe and North America. Numbers are down or at best static, in many denominations. Budgets are tightening. We feel less significant, more peripheral to the nation's life. There are conflicts in a number of churches, not least over questions of authority. Morale is suffering. At such times, introversion is an all-too-natural response, with ecumenical commitments put on hold until what seem to be more urgent issues can be sorted out. But of course ecumenism is not an item that can be moved up or down an agenda. It is a way, it is the New Testament way, of being Church. It is the gospel-inspired set of relationships and commitments within which, severally and together, we wrestle with the question of what obedience to Jesus Christ requires of us, in good times and in bad.
18. Finally, let no one underestimate the wonderful opportunity that stands before us. Tim Winton, in his novel *The Riders*, has his lead character, an expatriate Australian, pondering the countryside in Ireland. "It was a small, toiled, and crosshatched country," he muses. "Every field had a name,

every path a style. Everything imaginable had been done or tried out there.” But his homeland, he remembers, felt different. “In Australia you looked out and saw the possible, the spaces, the maybes”. Other countries may have long histories behind them. Modern Australia’s history has barely begun. The national identities of others may be set in concrete. Ours continues to evolve. Those dramatic possibilities, those spaces, those maybes, combine to make Australia an extraordinarily exciting nation to be part of right now.

- 19 They also make this, as Hugh Mackay told us yesterday, an extraordinarily exciting context in which to try to serve Jesus Christ. A society in flux, a national identity under construction, a nation whose history lies before us not behind, offers our churches untold possibilities for redefining their imported relationships, reconciling their separated memories and reworking ecclesial identities that were shaped for times and places far from here. My hope for this council, in these days and in the years ahead, is that it may become an increasingly significant sacred space from which Australia’s churches together are inspired to look out and glimpse what are for us “the possible, the spaces, the maybes”.

**DAVID GILL**

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REFUGEE  
POLICY -  
A GLOBAL  
DILEMMA,  
A  
CHALLENGE FOR  
CHRISTIANS

Appendix V



# REFUGEE POLICY: A GLOBAL DILEMMA, A CHALLENGE FOR CHRISTIANS

No government in the world wants refugees who turn up unannounced on their border, in search of protection and assistance. Even countries such as Australia and the United States, which have long traditions of refugee resettlement, devise ways to prevent the arrival of asylum-seekers and to make life uncomfortable for those who do manage to get in. Why is this? Why would a government which devotes considerable energy and expense to resettling refugees in a country with a rich multi-cultural heritage be developing draconian policies to keep other refugees out? Some politicians would argue that the people arriving now aren't really refugees or if they are fleeing persecution, they are somehow "jumping the queue." Others would argue that they have used criminal means or falsified documents to gain entry to Australia and therefore can't be "genuine." There is a confusion in public opinion, sometimes exacerbated by politicians, between refugees, migrants, victims of trafficking and asylum-seekers.

The issues are complex and messy. Sometimes we get so caught up in our procedures and processes that we forget the human side of the dilemma of people forced to flee for their lives. Desperate people do desperate things. The conflicts that uproot people are not neat, orderly processes. Sometimes people seize the chance they have to escape and can't wait in the resettlement queue (although the term 'queue' itself is misleading.) Sometimes the only way to reach safety is to lie or to buy a false passport. Does that mean that individuals who do so are less worthy than those who come through "established channels?" We need to remember that when Jesus Christ urged his followers to "welcome the stranger," he didn't limit this to people whose documents are in order and who follow the procedures followed by our governments.

Today, on every continent, Christians are being challenged in unprecedented ways by the politics of international migration. While much of the public debate focuses on policies, procedures and numbers, the questions raised by migration are ultimately ethical, moral and theological issues. How do we define the "other?" Where do we draw the line to exclude others? What are we afraid of? What is our responsibility for suffering in other parts of the world? What is our responsibility as Christians and as human beings to those who arrive on our doorsteps after having been forced to abandon their homes and flee their communities?

You can't understand what's happening in the area of refugees without considering the broader question of migration. And migration is too important an

issue to leave to the politicians. It is also not a new issue. Since the time of the Old Testament, people have fled their homes because of persecution, war, famine and poverty. The Bible has been called the “ultimate immigration handbook” and is filled with admonitions to do justice to the stranger and “to show hospitality because in doing so you may have welcomed angels unawares.” But the stories of the Old Testament also reflect their historical context in the tales of backlash and scapegoating of foreigners. Those of us working with immigrants and refugees don’t often quote the texts from Ezra and Nehemiah, but those stories remind us of the ageless tendency to exclude those who are different. It is Christ’s message of inclusion that transcends these Old Testament stories. “From his parables and his actions, it is clear that Jesus not only challenged those individuals (e.g. the Pharisees) who maintained the barriers that marginalized whole groups within his society, but was prepared to confront any system of thought or practice that created those barriers...It is this challenge to the dominant, and dominating religious system which provides the basis for the church’s obligation to call into question any system which leads to or justifies discrimination, regardless of the form that discrimination might take: economic (hunger, thirst nakedness), national loyalty (foreigners), physical (sick), or social (in prison.)”<sup>1</sup> Christ himself identifies with the migrant when he tells us that in welcoming the stranger we are welcoming him (Matthew 25).

Migration issues are complicated and (given limitations of time this afternoon), I will risk over-simplifying complex issues and confine myself to making 4 short points, raising questions about Christian responsibility “for such a time is this.” This phrase comes, of course, from the story of Esther, but for me, it evokes memories of the last time I was in Australia where this was the theme of the Pre-assembly Women’s meeting in Canberra in 1991.

## **1. INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION IS A FACT OF LIFE AND WILL INCREASE IN THE FUTURE.**

We live in a world where people cross national borders for many reasons. Some are forced to flee their communities because of persecution and violence. Others are forced to leave because they can no longer survive at home because of economic or environmental disasters. Still others migrate because they hope for better economic prospects or to reunite with family members. While the cornerstone of globalization has been the increased international flow of trade, capital, information and services, the right to freedom of movement for many people – especially refugees, asylum-seekers and non-wealthy migrants – has been severely curtailed. Governments in both North and south have become more active in trying to limit the movement of people into their territories. Control of borders is perhaps the last bastion of sovereignty at a time when governments are no longer able to control the movement of money, information or jobs from their countries. But in spite of governmental efforts to control migration, international migration – particularly irregular migration – continues to rise. Indications are that in our globalizing world, the pressures for migration will further increase in the years to come. The causes of migration are rooted in the dozens of conflicts around the world as well as the underside of globalization – the growing disparity between rich and poor resulting from the inequitable distribution

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<sup>1</sup> J. Charles Hay, “The Bible and the Outsider,” Inter-church Committee on Refugees, Canada, 1996.

of resources. Until the international community is prepared to tackle the fundamental causes of violence and inequality, migration will continue.

One of the characteristics of today's globalization is that the world's conflicts and suffering enter most of our homes every day by television, newspapers and the web. As one of the CCIA youth commissioners said at our Commission meeting last month, "we can choose not to act, but we cannot choose not to know."<sup>2</sup> The presence of refugees and migrants among us, invited or not, serves as a bridge across borders, enabling us to interact with other parts of the world in unique ways. For example, you can read a dozen newspaper articles about Afghanistan, but your view of the Afghan situation and perhaps of that region of the world will be inalterably shaped by coming to know an Afghan refugee. Refugees and migrants offer us a different way of knowing the world.

I invite you to think about Christian responsibility in a world of people on the move. In such a time as this, what is the appropriate response? What is our responsibility towards refugees, asylum-seekers and migrants? Do people fleeing persecution have a greater claim on the churches' compassion than those trying to escape poverty? Does this imply that violations of civil and political rights are worse than violations of economic, social or cultural rights? Should everyone fleeing violence or poverty be allowed to enter any country of the world? How should governments set limits and what role should Christians play in the policy debate?

## **2. REFUGEE PROTECTION IS BEING ERODED IN EVERY REGION OF THE WORLD.**

Fifty years ago, the international community developed a particular regime to respond to one group of forced migrants: refugees. This international refugee regime includes a common definition of the people of concern, proscribes certain standards for their treatment through an international convention, and recognizes an international agency, UNHCR, to protect and assist refugees. Undergirding this international refugee regime was a consensus that individuals fleeing persecution (as defined by the Convention) required protection.

This system has been far from perfect and the present UNHCR Global Consultations on Refugee Protection are intended to identify gaps in the 1951 Convention and to move towards common interpretation of the convention as well as to reaffirm the convention. This international system of refugee protection, and particularly the institution of asylum, need to be upheld and strengthened to ensure that all those in need of international protection are able to find it. The reality is that there are still many people in the world in need of protection from persecution and war who are not able to find safety.

In the past decade, the right to seek and enjoy asylum has been eroded in many countries. Governments have made it more difficult for people fleeing persecution to even reach their borders and access asylum procedures through interdiction,

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<sup>2</sup> Rasmus Hylleberg, CCIA Commission meeting, Crans-Montana, Switzerland, 15 May 2001.

visa requirements, carrier sanctions, immigration controls in airports of departure and other measures. In many cases, it is impossible for people fearing persecution from their governments to obtain a passport from that government or to approach embassies in search of a visa. Once asylum-seekers enter a country, they often find the procedures confusing and intimidating. If they arrive without documentation, they are often treated with suspicion. Moreover, they may be detained and lack legal counsel to present their cases in the best possible way.

The acceptance rates of asylum applications have plummeted in most Western countries over the past 15 years. While governments argue that this is due to the fact that many “bogus asylum-seekers” are abusing the system, many refugee advocates assert that people with genuine asylum claims are being denied. And many people with reasons to fear persecution in their home country choose not to enter the asylum process because they perceive that the personal costs are greater than their chance of success.

What is the particular responsibility of Christians to those forced to flee violence? Most fundamentally, Christians are called to struggle for justice and to overcome violence in order to make ours a world where people aren't forced to abandon their homes and flee their communities. Churches and their organizations have been in the forefront of the struggle to protect the basic human right of every person “to seek and enjoy asylum.”<sup>3</sup> On the national level, this means urging that the benefit of the doubt must always be given to those who say they fear persecution back home.

### **3. DEVELOPMENTS IN AUSTRALIA ARE SHAPED BY AND CONTRIBUTE TO THE WEAKENING OF THE INTERNATIONAL SYSTEM OF REFUGEE PROTECTION.**

Australia has a wonderful history and tradition of welcoming immigrants and refugees. The treatment of aboriginal people is a dark side of the story in your country (as in mine) which must be acknowledged and redressed. But your immigrant tradition is a tradition to protect, to be proud of, to uphold. There is something very special about being a country of immigrants – something that sets Australia apart from most countries of the world. Your country has meant freedom, safety, and opportunity for hundreds of thousands of people who could not stay in their country of origin. And your country has been transformed by the presence of immigrants. While it's not perfect, your model of a multi-cultural society has been a shining example to the world. When it comes to refugees and immigrants, Australia has a wonderful international reputation.

It is this reputation which makes current policy developments so troubling. For example, there is something profoundly disturbing about Australia putting asylum-seekers in isolated detention centers. This isn't a new or unique trend; many governments followed these kinds of policies, reflecting a global trend of isolating asylum-seekers from the general public. It's easier to deport people when no one in the country knows them, when they have no friends or advocates. But it is new to see Australia doing it. It is new to see Australia leading the critics of UN human rights instruments. It's shocking to see the government react to a few boatloads of asylum-seekers with draconian measures which undercut decades of generous

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<sup>3</sup> Universal Charter of Human Rights, art. 14.

policies. A few months ago, UNHCR's Executive Committee considered how the international community should respond to situations of mass influx. What's the appropriate response when a million Rwandans flee the genocide in their country? How should the international community respond to the exodus of ethnic Albanians from Kosovo where hundreds of thousands of people flooded into neighboring countries in a few days? Most of the interventions came from governments of countries that had experienced large-scale mass influxes – governments like Tanzania, Ethiopia, Pakistan, Iran. And then the Australian representative said something like “well, small numbers of people arriving over time can have the same impact as a sudden mass influx.” The reaction in the room was one of amazement – surely Australia isn't claiming that the boats arriving on its shores are comparable to mass influxes of hundreds of thousands of refugees arriving in poor countries. Unfortunately, the impact of these Australian policy changes and the tenor of the public debate goes far beyond your country's borders.

Negative public opinion towards asylum-seekers is obviously growing in Australia. There is a backlash. But backlashes are like pendulums – they come and they go. It is sad to see Australia apparently willing to abandon basic standards in its treatment of asylum-seekers because of what is probably a transient phenomenon. In my country, the United States, there was a horrible backlash against immigrants in the mid-1990s. Politicians railed against the “illegal aliens” taking Americans' jobs and many restrictive laws were passed. But now the pendulum has swung in the other direction and politicians are trying to undo some of the most egregious laws passed five years ago.

How are Australian churches and individual Christians responding at such a time as this? I know that many churches are involved with these issues -- churches are speaking out against politically unpopular policies, advocating for changes in policies, organizing hearings and writing letters, visiting detention centres and assisting individual asylum-seekers and migrants in many ways. Like Christians in many parts of the world, speaking out on behalf of uprooted people can be very difficult and very lonely. You may sometimes think that no one is listening when you speak out and policies can be frustratingly difficult to change. But you are not alone. At church gatherings – like this one – in South Africa and Argentina, in Norway and Thailand, Christians are coming together to pray, to share experiences, to educate each other and to develop means of translating the Gospel imperative to welcome the stranger into concrete actions.

#### **4. THERE ARE NO EASY ANSWERS.**

As long as we live in a world plagued by war and poverty, people will try to escape their conditions by migration. They will bypass governmental efforts at border control and their journeys will become more dangerous and more costly. The causes and inter-relationships of migratory flows are complex. Governmental efforts to stop smugglers and traffickers can make it more difficult, more expensive, and sometimes impossible for people fleeing persecution to find safety. We know that refugees frequently use routes used by traditional migrants when war forces them to leave their homes. In a world where there are limits to the number of refugees and migrants who will be admitted into rich countries, the questions of whom to admit are difficult. What should be the balance between

admitting immigrants who meet Australia's labour needs and accepting refugees for humanitarian reasons?

Similarly there are no easy answers to questions about Christian responsibility in such a time as this. Like the Good Samaritan, we have a responsibility to the victims on the road -- to patch them up, to care for them, to help them. This is noble work. Even as we in the churches complain about the inadequacy of the international system of refugee protection, we recognize that millions of people every year are safe because of this system. While we urge governments of resettlement countries to accept more refugees because the numbers are never enough, we know that hundreds of thousands of individual human beings are being given a chance to start new lives because of these policies. We need to affirm the positive aspects of our present system – even as we advocate for changes which would make the systems more responsive to the needs of uprooted people.

For churches in Australia, reaching out to the strangers in our midst or advocating with the government in an increasingly difficult climate is not easy. Sometimes the people in our churches are confused or even hostile to refugees. The backlash isn't something that is happening "out there." It is also happening in our own communities. It can be very tiring to always be explaining why refugees sometimes can't enter through established channels. Nevertheless, if we are to be faithful to the Gospel -- to welcome the stranger and work for justice – we have no choice. It must be our task and responsibility to open our eyes to the uprooted among us. Let us take to heart the words in the book of Hebrews that it is our privilege and duty as Christians to welcome strangers, for by doing so we may unknowingly have entertained angels in our midst.

**ELIZABETH G. FERRIS**  
**WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES**





# THE NEW EXECUTIVE

VI

Appendix





NATIONAL  
COUNCIL OF  
CHURCHES IN  
AUSTRALIA

# TIVE

2001

# EXECU

AS AT 9 JULY

## 3 OFFICERS

President  
General Secretary  
Treasurer

The Revd Dr Lance Steicke  
The Revd David Gill  
Mr David Cohen

## 3 HEADS OF CHURCHES

## & ALTERNATES

### **ANGLICAN CHURCH OF AUSTRALIA**

Archbishop Peter Carnley

Archbishop Ian George

### **ANTIOCHIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH**

Archbishop Paul Saliba

Revd Nicholas Mansour

### **ARMENIAN APOSTOLIC CHURCH**

Archbishop Aghan Baliozian

Miss Sonia Berberian

### **ASSYRIAN CHURCH OF THE EAST**

Bishop Mar Meelis Zaia

Deacon Emmanuel Yousif

### **CHURCHES OF CHRIST IN AUSTRALIA**

The Revd Peter Overton

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### **CONGREGATIONAL FEDERATION OF AUSTRALIA**

The Revd Alan Filipaina (acting)

-----

### **COPTIC ORTHODOX CHURCH**

Bishop Suriel

The Revd Marcos Tawfik

### **GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH**

Archbishop Stylianos

Bishop Seraphim

### **LUTHERAN CHURCH OF AUSTRALIA**

The Revd Mike Semmler

The Revd Wayne Zweck

### **RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS**

Colin Wendell-Smith

Jean Hart

### **ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH**

Archbishop Francis Carroll

Bishop Peter Ingham

### **ROMANIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH**

The Rev Dr Gabriel Popescu

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### **THE SALVATION ARMY**

Eastern Territory \*

Commissioner K. Brian Morgan

Lt. Col. Peter Callander

Southern Territory \*  
Commissioner Douglas Davis  
**SYRIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH**  
The Very Revd Zeki Zitoun  
**UNITING CHURCH IN AUSTRALIA**  
The Revd Professor James Haire

Lt. Col. Peter Callander

The Revd Terence Corkin

### 3 DESIGNATED MEMBERS [APPOINTED BY CHURCHES]

Anglican Church of Australia	Deaconess Margaret Rodgers
Antiochian Orthodox Church	The Revd John Vesic
Armenian Apostolic Church	Miss Sonia Berberian
Assyrian Church of the East	Mr Albert George
Churches of Christ in Australia	The Revd Robert Smith
Congregational Federation of Australia	.....
Coptic Orthodox Church	The Revd Daniel Al-Antouny
Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of Australia	The Revd Anastasios Bozikis
Lutheran Church of Australia	The Revd Lionel Otto
Religious Society of Friends	Mary Pollard
Roman Catholic Church	Ms Elizabeth Harrington
Romanian Orthodox Church	.....
Salvation Army - Eastern Territory	Major Graham Harris
- Southern Territory	Major Graham Harris
Syrian Orthodox Church	The Revd Malke Yousef
Uniting Church in Australia	The Revd Rob Gallacher

### 3 ELECTED MEMBERS [APPOINTED BY THE NATIONAL FORU

Ms Loretta Faranda	Roman Catholic Church
The Revd Dr Morag Logan	Uniting Church
The Revd Erica Mathieson	Anglican Church
Ms Julia Pitman	Uniting Church
The Revd Gloria Shipp	Anglican Church
The Revd Denis Stanley	Roman Catholic Church





CONSTITUTI  
ON  
OF THE  
NCCA

Appendix VII



# NATIONAL COUNCIL OF CHURCHES IN AUSTRALIA

## CONSTITUTION

[as amended 15 July 1996]

### 1. NAME

- 1.01 The name of this organisation shall be the "National Council of Churches in Australia" [hereinafter referred to as "NCCA"].

### 2. BASIS

- 2.01 The NCCA gathers together in pilgrimage those churches and Christian communities which confess the Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour according to the Scriptures and commit themselves

- [i] to deepen their relationship with each other in order to express more visibly the unity willed by Christ for his Church, and
- [ii] to work together towards the fulfilment of their mission of common witness, proclamation and service,

to the glory of the One God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

### 3. THE CHURCH, THE CHURCHES AND THE NCCA

- 3.01 The NCCA is not a church. Rather, by bringing its member churches into a living contact with each other it desires to give expression to the significant bonds which already exist between them: what they share with each other as Christians because of their union with God in Christ Jesus through the Holy Spirit [often called communion or koinonia]. It recognises that each member church brings to the NCCA its own understanding of the nature of the Church.
- 3.02 No member church is being asked to forsake or compromise its own ecclesiology. However, the NCCA provides a framework within which member churches are encouraged to enter into dialogue, at all levels, about the understanding of "Church" which each church holds.

3.03 While some member churches may not be able to recognise each other as churches in the full and true sense, they nevertheless acknowledge in each other important elements of both doctrine and practice that belong to the Church which Christ founded. It is hoped that through further dialogue the member churches will broaden their knowledge of each other, extend their recognition of each other, find ways of giving greater expression to what they hold in common, and move towards a more visible expression of the unity Christ has given to his Church.

#### 4. OBJECTIVES

4.01 The objectives of the NCCA are:

- [a] to encourage and enable the member churches to develop their existing relationships by
  - i] raising awareness among their people of Christ's gift of unity and of his call to express that unity through prayer, dialogue and shared engagement in mission; and
  - ii] coming to know each other better in all respects, including the areas of spirituality, liturgy, theology, history, sociology and culture;
  
- [b] to encourage and enable the member churches in the light of the Gospel to give prophetic leadership to each other and the community by
  - i] developing a deeper understanding of evangelism/ evangelisation in Australia's cultural context;
  - ii] addressing moral issues;
  - iii] speaking out on behalf of oppressed people;
  - iv] acting in solidarity with Aboriginal and Islander people; and
  - v] responding to human need and acting on issues of justice, peace and creation;

- [c] to promote relationships
  - i] with non-member churches, state ecumenical bodies within Australia, regional and national ecumenical bodies in Asia and the Pacific, and the World Council of Churches; and
  - ii] with people of other living faiths; and
- [d] to undertake joint initiatives as determined from time to time by the National Forum at the request of member churches.

## 5. **MEMBERSHIP**

- 5.01 Membership is open to those churches and Christian communities which accept the Basis, have a spread of groups in at least two Australian States/Territories, and have their own national organisation and ecclesial identity. Election to membership shall be by resolution passed by a majority of not less than three quarters of the members present and voting at a meeting of the National Forum following consultation with all member churches.
- 5.02 A church or Christian community which does not have credal statements within its tradition and therefore finds it difficult to subscribe formally to what appears to it to be a written credal statement in the Basis may apply for and be elected to membership provided that the church or Christian community demonstrates by its life and conduct that it upholds the spirit of the Basis.
- 5.03 A member church may resign from membership by giving not less than three [3] calendar months written notice of resignation to the General Secretary. The notice will take effect at the expiry of the period of notice unless it is withdrawn in the meantime.

## 6. **STRUCTURE**

- 6.01 The NCCA is part of a nationwide ecumenical movement of prayer, reflection and growth in association with local efforts, regional collaboration, state ecumenical bodies, meetings of heads of churches and inter-church dialogues. Its structure is designed to reflect this nationwide partnership.

6.02 The components of this structure are:

- \* General Church Consultations
- \* the National Forum
- \* the Executive of the NCCA
- \* Specific Consultations
- \* Commissions, Working Groups and Networks
- \* staff of the NCCA

## 7. GENERAL CHURCH CONSULTATIONS

7.01 From time to time the NCCA will convene General Church Consultations which bring together a broad range of ecumenically involved people, on either a national or regional basis, to enable the member churches to celebrate and to share their life and witness, and when appropriate, to make comment and recommendations to the NCCA, and to listen to and act on the insights offered by the NCCA.

## 8. THE NATIONAL FORUM

8.01 The National Forum is the general meeting of representatives of member churches of the NCCA together with representatives of state ecumenical bodies and representatives of a national Aboriginal and Islander ecumenical body. The National Forum's responsibility is to enable member churches to establish and review the overall policies and programmes of the NCCA.

8.02 The membership of the National Forum will comprise:

- [a] national heads of member churches
- [b] representatives appointed by member churches
- [c] one representative appointed by each state ecumenical body
- [d] four representatives appointed by a national Aboriginal and Islander ecumenical body.
- [e] the President and General Secretary and Treasurer in any case where the office holder is not otherwise a member.

Each member shall have the right to attend and vote at a meeting of the National Forum.

- 8.03 The Executive shall from time to time determine for the purpose of Clause 8.02 [b] the number of representatives which each member church may appoint to attend a meeting of the National Forum, provided that each member church shall be entitled to appoint not less than two representatives. In making its determination, the Executive shall have regard to numerical strength and parish units of the member church and such other criteria as the Executive may consider relevant.
- 8.04 If the national head of a member church is unable to attend a meeting or part of a meeting of the National Forum, the national head may appoint an alternate to attend and vote on behalf of the national head at the meeting of the National Forum or that part of the meeting as the case may be.
- 8.05 The membership of the National Forum will not exceed one hundred unless the Executive shall determine otherwise.

9. **MEETINGS OF THE NATIONAL FORUM**

- 9.01 [a] The National Forum shall hold an ordinary meeting at least once every two years for the first four [4] years after the first meeting of the National Forum and thereafter at least once every three [3] years on such date[s] and at such place as the National Forum [or the Executive] may determine.
- [b] The National Forum may hold special meetings at such other times and for such purposes as the National Forum determines.
- [c] The Executive may whenever it thinks fit convene a special meeting of the National Forum.
- [d] The Executive shall on the requisition in writing of not less than one third of the member churches convene a special meeting of the National Forum.
- [e] Not less than 3 months notice of a meeting of the National Forum shall be given to the member churches.

- 9.02 In addition to any other business which may be transacted at a meeting of the National Forum the business of the ordinary meeting shall be:
- [a] to receive from the Executive reports upon the activities of the NCCA since the last ordinary meeting;
  - [b] to receive and consider financial statements;
  - [c] to elect not more than six [6] members of the Executive whose nominations for election have been endorsed by their member churches; and
  - [d] to determine policy.
- 9.03 At a meeting of the National Forum:
- [a] the President shall preside; or
  - [b] if the President is absent, unable or unwilling to act, the members present at a meeting of the National Forum may choose another member of the Executive to preside at the meeting.
- 9.04 The General Secretary of the NCCA will be the executive officer of the National Forum.
- 9.05 [a] No business shall be transacted at any meeting of the National Forum unless a quorum of members is present at the time when the meeting proceeds to business nor shall a meeting proceed if the chairperson determines by a count that a quorum is not present.
- [b] A quorum shall consist of not less than one-half of the membership of the National Forum, present in person or by alternate appointed pursuant to Clause 8.04.
- 9.06 Subject to this Constitution, questions arising at a meeting of the National Forum shall be decided by a majority of votes of those present and voting.

9.07 The Executive may invite appropriate people who are not members of the National Forum to attend a meeting of the National Forum. Such persons may be given the right to speak but not to vote. Categories of persons who will be invited include:

observers from non-member churches, and  
one executive staff person from each state ecumenical body.

## 10. THE EXECUTIVE

10.01 [a] The Executive will be responsible for implementing the policies of the NCCA, monitoring its work, and making policy recommendations to the National Forum.

[b] The Executive will act on behalf of the NCCA between meetings of the National Forum in respect of any of the responsibilities of the NCCA and may determine policy which is not inconsistent with policy determined or directions given by the National Forum and act on any matter which does not require a resolution to be passed by more than a simple majority of those present and voting at a meeting of the National Forum.

10.02 The Executive will consist of:

[a] the national heads of the member churches;

[b] one other person appointed by each member church;

[c] not more than six [6] members elected by the National Forum pursuant to Clause 9.02 [c];

[d] two members appointed by a national Aboriginal and Islander ecumenical body

[e] the General Secretary and the Treasurer of the NCCA [ex officio]; and

[f] the President in any case where the person elected as President is not otherwise a member of the Executive.

10.03 A national head of a member church who is unable to attend a meeting of the Executive may appoint an alternate to attend and vote on his/her behalf at the meeting.

- 10.04 In the event of a casual vacancy occurring in the elected membership of the Executive, the Executive may fill the vacancy.
- 10.05 At a meeting of the Executive
- [a]the President shall preside, or
  - [b]if the President is absent, unable or unwilling to act, such one of the remaining members of the Executive as may be chosen by the members present, shall preside.
- 10.06 Subject to this Constitution the Executive may meet and adjourn or otherwise regulate its meetings as it thinks fit.
- 10.07 The Executive shall meet not less frequently than three [3] times in each calendar year.
- 10.08 The President may at any time, and the General Secretary shall on the requisition of not less than ten [10] members of the Executive, convene a meeting of the Executive.
- 10.09 Questions arising at a meeting of the Executive shall be decided by a majority of votes of members present and voting.
- 10.10 A quorum shall consist of not less than one-half of the members.
- 10.11 [a] The Executive may decide to meet by telephone conference or in such other manner as it shall think fit.
- [b] The Executive may make decisions in other manner than by attendance of members at a meeting.
- 10.12 The Executive may appoint committees and delegate to Commissions and committees such matters as will facilitate the business of the NCCA.

## 11. OFFICE BEARERS

11.01 The office bearers of the NCCA shall be :

- [a]the President
- [b]the General Secretary
- [c]the Treasurer

11.02 The President of the NCCA will be elected by the Executive for a term not exceeding three [3] years and will be eligible for re-election.

11.03 The Treasurer shall be appointed by the Executive and will hold office until the conclusion of the first meeting of the Executive following the next ordinary meeting of the National Forum after the Treasurer's appointment.

## 12. SPECIFIC CONSULTATIONS

12.01 Specific Consultations may be convened to enable the member churches to listen to one another and plan action, separately or jointly, on specific issues or on general areas of responsibility of the NCCA.

12.02 Specific Consultations will be convened on a regional or national basis by the National Forum or the Executive as and when required.

12.03 Specific Consultations will report to the Executive unless the convening body otherwise determines.

## 13. COMMISSIONS

13.01 The National Forum may establish Commissions to conduct ongoing programmes of the NCCA.

13.02 The National Forum may constitute whatever Commissions it deems necessary to assist it to carry out the objectives of the NCCA.

- 13.03 The mandate, size and membership of Commissions will be determined by the National Forum.
- 13.04 Members of Commissions will be appointed by the National Forum on the nomination of member churches. The Executive may fill casual vacancies.
- 13.05 Commissions will be responsible to the National Forum through the Executive of the NCCA.

#### 14. **WORKING GROUPS**

- 14.01 The Executive may establish Working Groups to undertake specific short-term tasks.
- 14.02 The Executive may constitute whatever Working Groups it deems necessary to assist it in carrying out the objectives of the NCCA.
- 14.03 Working Groups will be responsible to the Executive through the General Secretary.

#### 15. **NETWORKS**

- 15.01 The National Forum or the Executive may develop Networks of people with common responsibilities within member churches to foster particular concerns.
- 15.02 The National Forum or the Executive may establish whatever Networks are deemed desirable to further the objectives of the NCCA.

## 16. **STAFF**

- 16.01 The staff of NCCA will be headed by a General Secretary who will have ex officio membership of the National Forum, the Executive, Commissions, Working Groups, Networks and Committees.
- 16.02 The General Secretary will normally be appointed by the National Forum on the recommendation of the Executive, which will bring one name to the National Forum. In the event that an unexpected vacancy in the position of General Secretary occurs between meetings of the National Forum, the Executive may act to appoint the General Secretary. The General Secretary is accountable through the Executive to the National Forum.
- 16.03 Other executive staff will be appointed by the Executive in consultation with the General Secretary and will be accountable to the Executive through the General Secretary.

## 17. **PUBLIC STATEMENTS**

- 17.01 In furthering its objectives, the NCCA will seek to resource member churches to help them, together or separately, speak publicly on significant issues facing the community.
- 17.02 In order that the voice of the churches may have a greater impact on issues of public importance, member churches may authorise the NCCA to make public statements on their behalf. Where a majority of member churches agree but unanimity is not reached, the names of member churches supporting the statement should be attached and the NCCA may offer its facilities to issue the statement on their behalf.
- 17.03 Publishing such statements may not be held to imply that the NCCA has, or can have, any authority over the member churches.
- 17.04 The NCCA will be advised by such Commissions, Committees and Working Groups as it may establish, and at times that advice may take the form of recommendations regarding public statements. While Commissions, Committees and Working Groups may not themselves make public statements without the authority of the Executive, they may in the course of their work publish research, educational and promotional material.

**18. RELATIONSHIPS WITH NATIONAL HEADS OF CHURCHES**

18.01 The NCCA will maintain a close liaison with the national heads of churches group through periodic consultations, and through the General Secretary.

**19. RELATIONSHIPS WITH STATE ECUMENICAL BODIES**

19.01 In this constitution the expression "state ecumenical body" refers to those bodies, whether corporate or unincorporated, which the NCCA, through the National Forum or its Executive, recognises from time to time as state ecumenical bodies. Recognition may be withdrawn at any time.

19.02 While recognising that state ecumenical bodies are autonomous, the NCCA invites their participation in the NCCA through the appointment of voting representatives to the National Forum.

**20. RELATIONSHIPS WITH A NATIONAL ABORIGINAL AND ISLANDER ECUMENICAL BODY**

20.01 In this constitution the expression A national Aboriginal and Islander ecumenical body $\equiv$  refers to that body, whether corporate or unincorporated, which the NCCA, through the National Forum or the Executive, recognises from time to time as a national Aboriginal and Islander ecumenical body. Recognition may be withdrawn at any time.

20.02 While recognising that a national Aboriginal and Islander ecumenical body is autonomous, the NCCA invites its participation in the NCCA through the appointment of voting representatives to the National Forum and voting members of the Executive.

**21. THE NATURE OF REPRESENTATION**

21.01 Representatives of member churches on NCCA bodies will have a dual responsibility - to the church and to the NCCA. Within the NCCA they are responsible for representing the views of their church and for contributing to the life and work of the NCCA, and within their church they have a responsibility to represent the life and work of the NCCA.

## 22. **FINANCE**

- 22.01 The member churches will have responsibility for ensuring that normal running costs of the NCCA are adequately funded.
- 22.02 Each member church shall make financial contributions to the NCCA according to guidelines approved by the Executive.
- 22.03 The NCCA may obtain and raise funds by donations, bequests and sale of publications and in such other manner as the Executive may from time to time determine.
- 22.04 The Executive may authorise the borrowing of funds for the purposes of the NCCA.
- 22.05 All money received by the NCCA shall be deposited as soon as practicable to the credit of the NCCA in a bank or building society or with such other financial institutions as may from time to time be approved by the Executive.
- 22.06 All cheques, drafts, bills of exchange, promissory notes and other negotiable instruments shall be signed by any two members of the Executive or employees of the NCCA being members or employees authorised to do so by the Executive.
- 22.07 The NCCA shall have power to establish trust funds.
- 22.08 The General Secretary shall have power to authorise accounts to be established and operated with any bank, building society or other financial institution approved by the Executive for the purposes of any Commission or any activity of or associated with the NCCA.
- 22.09 A financial report shall be prepared for presentation to each meeting of the Executive and the annual financial statements duly audited shall be presented annually either to the Executive or to an ordinary meeting of the National Forum.

22.10 The Executive shall supervise the investment of the funds of the NCCA and may make grants, donations, loans, arrange conferences and consultations, employ or engage persons for specific projects or activities and do all other things within or outside Australia which it may consider in accordance with the objectives of the NCCA and the policies from time to time determined by the National Forum.

22.11 The Executive shall appoint the auditor[s] of the NCCA. The auditor shall not be a member of the Executive nor of any Commission, Committee, Working Group or other body whose accounts are to be audited. An auditor may be appointed to audit the accounts of a particular body or bodies within or related to the NCCA.

### 23. **CORPORATE ENTITY**

23.01 The Executive shall have power from time to time to incorporate, secure and maintain a corporate entity or, where it thinks fit, more than one such entity, for the purposes of the NCCA.

23.02 Whenever the Executive considers it desirable

- [a] property funds and investments shall be held in the name of the corporate entity;
- [b] activities shall be conducted on behalf of the NCCA by the corporate entity;
- [c] the corporate entity shall employ persons or enter into contracts on behalf of the NCCA; and
- [d] the corporate entity shall undertake any trusts which the NCCA desires it to undertake.

23.03 For this purpose the Executive shall have power to adopt or approve the memorandum and articles of association or the objectives, constitution and rules of the association and to appoint members and if appropriate, the governing body of the corporate entity from time to time and to give such directions to the corporate entity or its governing body as the Executive may consider appropriate from time to time.

24. **AMENDMENTS**

- 24.01 This Constitution may be amended at a meeting of the National Forum by a resolution passed by a majority of not less than two-thirds [2/3] of the members present and voting.
- 24.02 Notice of a proposed amendment shall be given to the General Secretary not less than three [3] weeks before the date of the meeting and shall be proposed by not less than three [3] member churches.
- 24.03 An amendment to the Basis or Objectives shall not take effect unless and until it is approved or ratified by all member churches.

25. **DISSOLUTION**

- 25.01 The NCCA shall be dissolved in the event that the number of member churches is less than four [4] or upon a resolution of a meeting of the National Forum passed by a majority of not less than two-thirds [2/3] of the members present and voting at a special meeting convened to consider the question provided that the resolution is approved or ratified by not less than two-thirds [2/3] of the member churches.
- 25.02 Upon dissolution, all surplus property remaining after payment of all expenses and satisfaction of all liabilities shall be transferred, paid or distributed in such manner as may be determined by a resolution passed at a special meeting of the National Forum or at a meeting of the members of the last preceding meeting of the National Forum which in either case is convened to consider the dissolution and/or the manner of distribution.

26. **COMPLIANCE WITH APPLICABLE LAWS**

- 26.01 The NCCA shall comply with the requirements of taxation law and laws relating to charities insofar as they are applicable.

