

Session Information

6th National Forum

The Sixth Forum of the National Council of Churches in Australia was held from July 13-17, 2007, at the Alexandra Park Conference Centre at Alexandra Headlands on the beautiful Sunshine Coast, Queensland.

The Theme - Life Together

"Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!..."

Dietrich Bonhoeffer

Dietrich Bonhoeffer, a brilliant German theologian, wrote his book *Life Together: The Classic Exploration of Faith in Community* just before World War II. It became an inspiration to many pastors to witness against Hitler. It has continued to be an important work revealing a simple and clear understanding of life in the Body of Christ.

The NCCA is a community living ecumenically in the Body of Christ. Forums of the NCCA are critical to the fulfilment of the NCCA's constitutional calling to "deepen [our] relationship with each other in order to express more visibly the unity willed by Christ for his Church, and to work together towards the fulfilment of [our] mission of common witness, proclamation and service ..."* At the 6th National Forum delegates from the 15 member Churches of the NCCA will continue to explore and make commitment to Christian life together in our Australian context.

* from the NCCA Constitution

Bible Studies

The team of Merryll Blair (Churches of Christ) and Vic Pfitzner (Lutheran) have created Bible Studies developing sub-themes under the overall theme of *Life Together*.

Saturday, July 14 - *Life Together: The Prodigal God*

Monday, July 16 - *Life Together: The Gift*

Tuesday, July 17 - *Life Together: The Common Life for the World*

Worship



Everyday the Forum community shared in worship together. The Worship Committee organised representatives of several denominations to begin and end each day in prayers, enabling the Forum community to experience different styles of worshipping God.

On Sunday, July 15, an inspiring public service was held at Immanuel Lutheran Church. The service began at 11am. The general public was invited to come and join the Forum delegates, NCCA staff, representatives of state ecumenical councils and observer Churches.

New Member Churches Proposed

Two Churches had applied for membership of the NCCA since the last Forum (2004). They were the Chinese Methodist Church, who have congregations in Melbourne, Adelaide, Sydney, Brisbane, Perth, Wollongong, Canberra and Launceston, and the Mar Thoma Church, who have congregations in New South Wales and Victoria. These recommendations were put to the Forum and subsequently accepted.

Guest Speakers

Two very special speakers addressed the Forum in July.



Sylvia Haddad, a Palestinian woman, touring Australia as a representative of the Middle East Council of Churches will also address the Forum.



Monsignor Don Bolen from the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, based at the Vatican, will address the Forum. He will share his experience of being involved in a wide variety of ecumenical dialogues.

Presentations



The NCCA's many commissions, committees, networks and working groups will be reporting on their work, and presenting visions for the future.

There will also be focus sessions on themes from the World Council of Churches Assembly in 2006, Covenanting and Make Indigenous Poverty History.