

# The Christmas Bowl at Work in the World in 2004

## Throwing a lifeline to refugees?

In mid July, the Federal Government announced it would allow refugees on temporary visas to apply for migration visas. It was heralded as "throwing a lifeline" to the 9,000 plus refugees with these three-year visas. But it begged the question: why are recognised refugees, who by definition were forced to flee and cannot return home, not granted permanent residence as in other countries? Had they done something wrong? For the Government the answer is 'yes'. Our laws have been designed to punish refugees arriving without visas to deter others even though under international law they are allowed to cross borders without visas when fleeing. First, every man, woman and child is placed in detention and then they are denied permanent visas and given only temporary ones.

While the 'lifeline' will help some – namely, Afghans providing labour in vital rural industries – it is not a lifeline for all. Meanwhile, the harsh laws are still in place. Recognised refugees released from detention are still denied permanent visas, family reunion and settlement services. After their three-year visas expire, they must still re-prove that they are refugees, and if they fail they can be deported back to the countries they fled.

The result is not a solution. It simply prolongs the misery of being forcibly uprooted. Refugees continue to fear being deported and they find it almost impossible to settle and integrate or even recover from trauma and torture and the effects of long-term detention. Refugees should be allowed to get on with their lives and that starts when they are certain of the future.

For more information, see the Refugee and Migrant Sunday Education Kit on our website: [www.ncca.org.au/cws/refugees](http://www.ncca.org.au/cws/refugees)

## The Christmas Bowl is 55 years old this year. Celebrate with us.

Our theme for 2004 is Give courage, give hope, give peace, give to the Christmas Bowl

### Christmas Bowl resources

- Order your Christmas Bowl resources via the website [http://www.ncca.org.au/christian\\_world\\_service?p=125](http://www.ncca.org.au/christian_world_service?p=125),
- email [christianworldservice@ncca.org.au](mailto:christianworldservice@ncca.org.au), or phone 02 9299 2215 or 1800 025 101

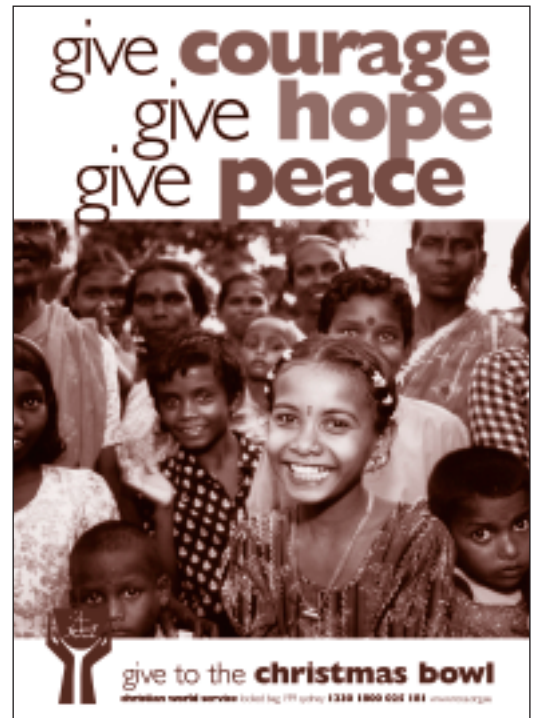
Resources include kits with Worship Resources with Dedication of the Christmas Bowl, music ideas, prayers, sermon thoughts, stories of Christmas Bowl projects for the eight weeks from 21 November (Christ the King) to 9 January (Epiphany)

- Bookmarks and Stickers
- Posters
- Corflute (outdoor) signs
- Group Resources for children, young people and adults, including skits and fundraising ideas
- Graphics for Christmas Bowl events and newsletters
- Envelopes and Treasurer's Kit
- Find out about

Christmas Bowl visitors :

- Sooriya Kumari from the Organisation for Eelam Refugee Rehabilitation in India and Sri Lanka in September-October who will visit in New South Wales and Victoria, and
- Ramzi Zananiri from the Department of Service to Palestinian Refugees in Jerusalem and the West Bank in November who will visit in Queensland, South Australia, Tasmania and Western Australia

- Get into the REAL spirit of Christmas this year. Instead of the usual Kris Kringle for friends who have everything, put a Bowl on your party table and share with people for whom Christmas never really comes. Please let us know if you would like to be part of this action and we'll be very happy to despatch a kit.



John Hardaker

*Thank you to everyone who responded to our request for updated information for our database - we appreciate being able to keep our database as accurate as possible - please keep letting us know of changes.*