

Inaugural Forum - Highlights

SUNDAY, JULY 3 - Service of Inauguration at St Christopher's Cathedral - Canberra

Archbishop Keith Rayner, Primate of the Anglican Church of Australia preached the sermon (see [Appendix I](#))

Delegates of the following churches affirmed their willingness to become members of the NCCA -

The Anglican Church of Australia
The Antiochian Orthodox Church
The Armenian Apostolic Church
The Assyrian Church of the East
The Churches of Christ in Australia
The Coptic Orthodox Church
The Greek Orthodox Church
The Religious Society of Friends
The Roman Catholic Church
The Romanian Orthodox Church
The Salvation Army
The Syrian Orthodox Church
The Uniting Church in Australia

The opening prayer of the meeting was offered by the Revd Graham Paulson and a painting was presented to the NCCA by Aboriginal and Islander participants, and Ms Anne-Pattel Gray on their behalf spoke of the hopes of indigenous Christians for the Council. [See "A Vision of God's Promise" - [Appendix II](#)]

The interim President, the Revd Ian Allsop, welcomed participants and the interim General Secretary, the Revd David Gill, drew attention to the list of participants [[Appendix III](#)].

NCCA'S VISION, OBJECTIVES, MACHINERY

In deliberative sessions, small groups and denominational meetings, participants discussed "Owning the Vision - the NCCA's Inauguration," "Implementing the Vision - the NCCA's Objectives," and "Structuring for the Vision - the NCCA's Priorities and Machinery". A detailed collation of written comments from the small groups is appended [[Appendix IV](#)].

Feedback from the denominational groups revealed the following priorities, which with several associated issues were referred to the Steering Committee to consider and to bring back the following day in the form of recommendations.

- * Faith and Unity
- * Christian World Service
- * Aboriginal and Islander people
- * NCCA's advocacy role on behalf of oppressed people
- * Evangelism/evangelisation
- * Relationships with people of other 'living faiths'
- * Deeper understanding of social and cultural makeup of our society
- * Spiritual activities
- * Promoting the NCCA
- * Young people as a priority
- * Relationship between State Councils of Churches and the NCCA
- * Upgrading of staff.

APPOINTMENTS

The interim President reported that the Executive ([Appendix V](#)), meeting the previous evening, had appointed Archbishop Aghan Baliozian as President of the National Council of Churches in Australia.

The Revd David Gill was appointed General Secretary of the National Council of Churches in Australia, to 31 December 1998.

It was also noted that the Executive had appointed Mr Ron Brown as Treasurer of the National Council of Churches in Australia.

RELATIONSHIPS

IT WAS RESOLVED that the NCCA seek membership of the Christian Conference of Asia and "associate council" relationship with the World Council of Churches.

GREETINGS

At different points in the agenda, greetings were received from guests representing related ecumenical bodies: the Christian Conference of Asia, the World Council of Churches, the Pacific Conference of Churches, the Papua New Guinea Council of Churches, the Communion of Churches in Indonesia and the Conference of Churches in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Written messages of support were received from the Prime Minister, Senator John Woodley, Senator Christabel Chamarette, the Anglican Diocese of Bunbury, the Ecumenical Network of Youth and Student Movements in Australia, the Australian Conference of Leaders of Religious Institutes, the Dominican Sisters of Eastern Australia, the Victorian Council of Christian Education, the Melbourne College of Divinity, The Corporation of the Diocesan Synod of North Queensland, the World Day of Prayer - Australia, the Young Women's Christian Association of Australia, the National Council of Churches in India, the Bishops' Committee for Justice, Development and Peace and the Australian Church Women.

It was noted that the following resolution had been passed by the Senate -

That the Senate -

- a] notes that the leaders of twelve Australian churches representing Anglican, Orthodox, Protestant and Roman Catholic Christians will be present at the inauguration of the National Council of Churches in Australia in St Christopher's Cathedral, Manuka at 7.30 pm on 3 July 1994;
- b] acknowledges the contribution made by Bishops Bede Heather and Richard Appleby, co-convenors of the working group, and the Reverend David Gill, General Secretary of the Australian Council of Churches, towards the formation of the National Council of Churches in Australia;
- c] congratulates the ABC for televising of the event for broadcast on Sunday 3 July 1994 at 10.30 pm and Sunday 10 July 1994 at 11 am;
- d] urges all Australians to enter into the spirit of reconciliation and hope which this new body symbolises.

The following commissions, committees were established:

FAITH AND UNITY

IT WAS RESOLVED that the National Forum establish a commission, to be known as Faith and Unity, to assist the churches as they reflect theologically on the issues which hinder the goal of visible unity in one faith and one fellowship expressed in worship and common life in Christ.

CHRISTIAN WORLD SERVICE

IT WAS RESOLVED that the National Forum establish a commission, to be known as Christian World Service [CWS], to operate under the following mandate until the next ordinary meeting of the National Forum:

1. The Commission's principal responsibility will be to consult with member churches, related denominational agencies, state ecumenical bodies and other appropriate entities, with a view to bringing recommendations to the next meeting of the National Forum regarding a mandate, programme and structure for CHRISTIAN WORLD SERVICE that will enable the churches to act together in partnership with churches elsewhere in response to human need.
2. CWS will appoint a working group, for this interim period, to carry forward the programmes of the former Commission for World Christian Action. Specifically, the working group will foster partnerships with overseas churches and communities, be informed by and stand with indigenous people in Australia, develop church support for refugees and migrants, encourage member churches and the Australian community generally to become more aware of issues of justice and human development, and promote such initiatives as the Christmas Bowl appeal and Force 10.
3. Pending appointment of this working group by CWS, the responsibilities in 2 [above] will be exercised by the Standing Committee of the former ACC/CWCA advised by the former ACC/CWCA sub-committees, with such additional membership as the General Secretary may determine.

ABORIGINAL AND ISLANDER COMMISSION

- a] express its warm appreciation and gratitude to the Aboriginal and Islander people at the Forum for their gift to the NCCA of the painting "Invasion";
- b] affirm a high priority for the NCCA objective "acting in solidarity with Aboriginal and Islander people" [NCCA Constitution - Objectives 4.01 (b) iv];
- c] refer the statement from Aboriginal and Islander people "A Vision of God's Promise" to member churches with the request that, following consultation where applicable with Aboriginal and Islander members of the church, comment on the statement be made to the Executive and the Executive then respond on behalf of the NCCA to the Aboriginal and Islander Commission Steering Committee.

MISSION

IT WAS RESOLVED that the former Commission on Mission of the ACC be asked to continue ad interim as an agency of the NCCA.

IT WAS RESOLVED that member churches plus those non-member churches that were represented on the ACC's Commission on Mission be invited to appoint representatives under the provisions of the Commission's constitution, with the Commission to recommend a chairperson for appointment by the Executive.

IT WAS RESOLVED that the Executive be asked to review the constitution of the Commission on Mission in the light of the NCCA's objectives and membership, and to bring recommendations for constitutional change to the next ordinary meeting of the National Forum.

FINANCE

IT WAS RESOLVED that the National Forum establish a Sydney-based Finance Committee to oversee financial and administrative matters pertaining to the NCCA and associated bodies, particularly the processes of budget development and control.

SOME OF THE MATTERS RAISED BY MEMBER CHURCHES

YOUTH

In response to a concern raised by the Anglican Church, with the support of the Antiochian Orthodox Church, IT WAS RESOLVED that the National Forum :

- a] make youth participation and development a matter of high priority during the next four year period [ie. 1994-98];
- b] establish the Ecumenical Internship Programme, as developed by member churches of the NCCA;
- c] affirm and provide for the continuation of the vital work of liaison and networking already begun in the following areas -
 - i] networking of member church youth agencies;
 - ii] liaison with non-member church youth networks;
 - iii] support of recently formed inter-Orthodox youth networks;
 - iv] cooperation with other Australian and international ecumenical youth bodies;
- d] request the General Secretary, in consultation with member churches, to explore the possibilities of staff support to resource the Internship Programme and the continuing task of networking.

NATIONAL ANGLICAN SITE

In response to a concern raised by the Anglican Church, with the support of the Uniting Church, IT WAS RESOLVED that the National Forum -

- a] note the initial proposals to develop what is presently the National Anglican Church site at Barton in the ACT as an ecumenical centre for Australian Christian life, witness and pilgrimage;
- b] encourage member churches to give consideration to the proposal as it is further developed.

Other matters raised by member churches:

IT WAS RESOLVED to request the Executive to give consideration to the following matters raised by member churches:

1. objective 4.01 [a] ii] in the NCCA Constitution - especially in the light of the hopes and concerns raised by the Orthodox churches;
2. the NCCA's role in evangelism/evangelisation;
3. the proposals for the way in which the NCCA responds to the concerns of women and of gender relationship concerns;
4. a staffed function within the NCCA on media relations and promotion;
5. the nature of the relationships the NCCA seeks with people of other living faiths (NCCA Constitution 4.01 [c] ii]),

and report to the next meeting of the National Forum.

THANKS

The National Forum recorded its gratitude to all who had contributed to its success, and specifically: Ms Gillian Hunt - for the local arrangements, the Revd Dr D'Arcy Wood, the Revd Ken Heffernan, Mr Ken Hutchings and other helpers from Canberra for the service and other local arrangements; Sister Elizabeth and Ms Therese May and staff and students of Ursula College for the excellent facilities; the medical staff of Ursula College; Mr Cliff Hicks for the electronic equipment; Mr Brian Norris for arranging the photocopier from Canon; the Retreat leaders - the Revds Helen Mills and Austin Cooper; Sabine Erika for the Friday evening programme and Ms Janet Wood for the Saturday evening programme; the facilitators - Mr David Shinnick and Ms

Moira Deslandes; Ms Elizabeth Harrington and the Revd Robert Gribben for the closing worship; the Steering and Nominations Committees, including the Revds Peter Cross and Gregor Henderson; the Press Officer, Mr David Busch; Bishops Bede Heather and Richard Appleby and the NCCA Working Group; ACC/NCCA staff and particularly Ms Wilma Viswanathan; the General Secretary and the President.

CONCLUSION:

The gathering closed with worship, including prayers for NCCA officers and members of the Executive and an act of mutual commissioning to ecumenical witness and service.

Appendix I

Service of Inauguration - Sermon by Archbishop Keith Rayner, Primate - Anglican Church in Australia - at St Christopher's Cathedral, Canberra on 3 July 1994

Let me paint for you in words two pictures. The first is taken from the New Testament, in the Epistle to the Ephesians. It is a picture of the church as God intends it to be:

"There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all and in all". (Ephesians 4: 4-6).

Whether that picture was ever realised may be a matter of question; but the ideal is clear.

The second picture is from the 1950's. As a young clergyman I was serving in a small country town in southern Queensland. There were two or three clergy of other churches, but we barely made contact with one another. Our people constantly met and interacted in all kinds of community activities - sport, social clubs, civic affairs. The one area in which they separated was religion. Their Christian allegiance actually divided them. I remember to my shame an occasion when one of the other clergy was in hospital. I was visiting my people and - somewhat hesitantly - decided I should call on him. I paused at the door of his room, he saw me coming, and deliberately raised his newspaper as a symbolic barrier. Without a word I turned and left the room. I still shudder when I think of it.

If today we fall far short of the first picture, we may thank God that we have journeyed a long way from the second. Christians are on a pilgrimage, a journey of faith; and the inauguration of the National Council of Churches in Australia is a sign that we have travelled a good distance. It is also a sign that we still have quite a way to go. Constitutions are not usually exciting or evocative documents, but it is good to find that the constitution of this new National Council uses the language of pilgrimage:

"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..."

We are then on a journey together, a journey from God and to God, a journey undertaken to the glory of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Let us be quite clear. This is a Council of Churches, not a church. The formation of this council does not mean that there are no differences among us. But it does mean that we recognise that the things that bind us together are much more significant than the things that divide us. There is "one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all"; there is one kingdom of God which we are called to serve; there is one gospel and a common mission to proclaim it and live it; we do live in one world whose people we seek to serve for Christ's sake.

But you might well ask, "what is new?" It was as long ago as 1946 that the body which was eventually named the Australian Council of Churches, was formed. And as the mantle of Elijah was taken up by Elisha, so this new body assumes the mantle of the old. But there are two major differences.

One is a significantly enlarged membership. The Roman Catholic Church, numerically the largest church in Australia and throughout the world, is welcomed as a member for the first time. This means that the new Council is far more representative of the spectrum of Christianity in Australia than was its predecessor. Indeed of all the national councils of churches in the world this one, with its blend of Catholic, Orthodox, Anglican and Protestant, has an almost unequalled representation of world Christianity. Such is the reality of multicultural Australia. Yet, sadly, our representation is still not complete. There are some significant Christian bodies that are not members of this council, and our prayer and our hope is that they too may join us.

The other difference is that the constitution of the new council ties it much more to the constituent churches than the old. It is to serve the common purposes of the member churches, not to be a separate body over and against them. When it speaks it will speak more authoritatively in the name of the member churches.

That is good; but there is a tension and a danger here that we need to recognise. There is need for the prophetic word which by its very nature will sometimes stand over against the church as it will against the powers that be in the nation. That prophetic word speaks of God's truth and of God's justice in the face of the deceits and the injustice which can so readily corrupt the life of church and nation. Will there be space for the prophetic word in a Council so tied to the formal structures of the churches? That is a question with which we shall have to wrestle in the days and years ahead.

There will be times when this prophetic word will criticise, even condemn. That was certainly true of the great prophets of the Old Testament, for evil in whatever form it exists is to be opposed and condemned. But we Christians must not be negative. There is much good that needs affirming and encouraging in the life of the nation. Our national leaders need encouragement, for leadership is no easy task in the midst of a public life that is riddled with ambiguities.

So when this council speaks on some matter of social concern or justice, as it is bound to do from time to time, it must not be as a lobby group supporting some fashionable concern. Our task is to be so immersed in the faith of the gospel and the values of the kingdom of God that we may be able to bring the mind of Christ to bear upon the concerns of the world. That calls for earnest prayer, for deep study and reflection, for patient wrestling with the questions that confront the individual and the nation alike.

Behind our proper concern, then, for the issues of justice, and peace, and the integrity of God's creation, there must be the readiness to grapple with the fundamental questions of faith and order in the church. Here we shall find differences, and we must not evade them. As someone has recently remarked, we must avoid the ecumenical politeness which prevents theologians from speaking their minds, for by this reserve they actually hinder the ecumenical process. If we are to show to the world the unity which Christ wills for us, we cannot evade the issues of faith and order.

Not that this is a matter for church leaders and academic theologians alone. The promise of our Lord that the Holy Spirit would guide his disciples into all the truth was a promise to the whole church. It is as Christians of various traditions come to know one another at the grass-roots level, to share so far as possible in one another's worship and to co-operate in common witness and service in the community that the reality of our unity in Christ becomes plain. This National Council of Churches will fail if it is simply a discussion group for church leaders. It will be as we inspire and enable the members of our churches to do together all that they can in conscience do

together that we shall grow in Christian unity. As Cardinal Basil Hume has said, our task is "to move quite deliberately from a situation of cooperation to one of commitment to each other".

Apart from our aboriginal and islander people we Australians are a nation of immigrants, and our churches are immigrant churches. Some have been here from the early days of European settlement, others from more recent waves of immigration. All of us have to face the challenge of identification with the life of Australia, not simply of one ethnic group. For we all began as ethnic churches - the Anglicans and Methodists as ethnic churches of the English, the Roman Catholics of the Irish, the Presbyterians of the Scots, the Greek Orthodox of the Greeks, and so on. Some of us have had longer to identify with this country than others; some have done it better than others. But there is much we can all learn from one another.

One thing we must recognise as we seek to grow together: the differences between us are as much cultural as theological. We shall not successfully grapple with the theological issues which divide us if we cannot disentangle them from the cultural patterns in which they find expression. The cultural differences in our churches can enrich our Australian Christianity as they have enriched our national life. But if we are to fulfil the ultimate goal of the ecumenical movement, which is the unity not simply of the church but of all God's creation, we must be clear about the unity we have in Christ which transcends our cultural diversity.

Our second reading tonight, from that great seventeenth chapter of St. John's Gospel, began in this way:

"After Jesus had spoken these words, he looked up to heaven and said, 'Father, the hour has come: glorify your Son so that the Son may glorify you'". (John 17:1)

He had just foreshadowed the scattering of his disciples. He would soon be alone, staring crucifixion in the face, for it was the eve of Good Friday. He looked up to heaven and prayed, for this was a moment of deep communion of the Son with the Father. "The hour has come". What hour? Earlier in his ministry John records him as saying more than once that his hour had not yet come. But now it has come: for the obedience to the Father that had marked his life was now at its climax with the final obedience of the cross ... the crowning act of obedience that would turn around the disobedience of our human race and inaugurate a new humanity.

"Glorify your Son so that the Son may glorify you". In that selfless act of love on the cross, the Son was glorified and he glorified the Father.

"The hour has come". In another age and in another way the hour has come for the church in Australia. We are being invited to glorify God, not by some display of earthly pomp and power, but in the spirit of Christ himself...

- * by the reality of our communion with God and with one another
- * by the simplicity of our way of life
- * by the genuineness of our concern for truth and justice
- * by the readiness to die to self that others may have life.

May this hour not pass us by. Amen.

Appendix II

GOD'S PROMISE

A VISION OF JUSTICE AND RECONCILIATION IN AUSTRALIA - Anne Pattel-Gray

On behalf of the Aboriginal and Islander People
1st National Forum
Canberra - July 1994

A Vision Of God's Promise

We have a vision, of God calling the church to lead this country towards justice and reconciliation. As God did with the people who were enslaved in Egypt, so let the church today reflect the image of God's justice and liberation to the oppressed peoples in Australia.

We have a vision of black and white Christians locking hands and raising them to the world as a symbol of commitment, of justice, of freedom. Where we no longer will be bound by racism, denied our human rights, or suffer injustice. Where we will bear fruit on the vine of life, towards establishing God's Kingdom here in Australia.

We have a vision where our People no longer thirst because they have no running water; no longer die because they have no houses; no longer are broken because their land was taken from them. We have a vision where non-Aboriginal people no longer feel the need to call us names, no longer feel the need to hide the truth of this country. Where black and white can walk tall and proud together, sharing all that God has given us, in abundance, to have prosperity for all.

God is calling all of us. Are we prepared to rise up to meet that call, to lead this country towards justice and reconciliation? Where the church is the cradle of truth? Where the spirit of truth flows free? Where the rivers of justice are cut throughout this country by the church? Where our babies don't die of malnutrition? Where our sisters are not raped any longer by those who are to enforce the laws? Where our People, our brothers and sisters, aren't incarcerated every day because their skin is black? Where education is seen as an opportunity, not as denial of our identity?

Where the walls of racial hatred divide us, let the church rise up and march to break the walls down.

As the prophets dared to dream dreams and see visions, is the church ready to do the same?

Let the church be the voice of truth. Let the church be the light of truth. Let the church be the embodiment of truth. To the secrets of this country, of invasion, of massacres, of denial of humanity - let the church bring the truth.

The church needs to be the prophetic witness to all of Australia; to have the courage given by God to lead this country; to have the faith that God is with us in the struggle; to have strength in knowing that God sends the Holy Spirit to travel with us.

If we believe in a God who is the Giver of life, of justice, of reconciliation, the God who is always with us and whose promises never change - how can we ourselves truly be reconciled? How can we the church witness to such a God, in a country that denies the Indigenous People their rights - the simple rights of running water, of housing, of education?

Why is justice so hard to deliver? One would consider it so easy. What gets in the way? Is it humanity's greed? Its desire for power? The lust to want to have it all? That's what denies our brothers and sisters in Christ their rights. It's not God.

Where the government and its reconciliation process can only deal with the legal ramifications or instruments, or documents - the church is called to change hearts, to renew creation, to be prophetic, to be the conscience, to lead the nation. True justice and reconciliation can happen only if the church rises up to meet the call of God and lead this country.

How do we reach out to people? We are tired of seeing the shattered lives and brokenness of our People. If their eyes are the windows to their souls, they show the depth of pain and sadness that runs so deep. A race of People have suffered horrible crimes against them.

Does anyone shed a tear for them? Does anyone cry for the broken-hearted Indigenous People? Does anyone feel pain for what this country has done to them? Does anyone shed a tear for the mothers who have many children and live in the bush, with no running water, no houses, no schools, no rights? Or for that child, who goes to school - does anyone cry for her when they call her names? When they tell her that her People are animals? When they tell her that she is nothing but a burden to society - that she has no worth? Does anyone cry for her?

How is the suffering Christ made relevant to the suffering of the Indigenous People? And, how is His death on the cross made real amongst them? How is the promise of life and renewal brought to reality amongst the Indigenous People? How is the church witnessing and fulfilling this promise in their midst? We all have to kneel before God in confession, in repentance, in commitment to our God-given vision for a new Australia.

That vision is the one, true and full 'humanity of all peoples in our land - whether black, white, yellow, brown; men or women; young or old - all peoples, who stand as a symbol of unity, justice, liberation and reconciliation for all people everywhere.

Do we dare to dream of a new beginning? Do we dare dream of a country where there is no denial of humanity, no racism, no hunger, no poverty, no sickness? Do we dare dream of the rights of all peoples to have a just economic base? Do we dare dream that all people can prosper in this 'Lucky Country'? Do we dare dream of a place where the Indigenous People have a belonging - of a place where there no longer needs to be confrontation? Where we don't have to struggle to survive? Where to be black doesn't mean we are less than a non-Aboriginal person? Where we will be encouraged to achieve like anyone else, regardless of race? Where our identity is no longer a threat, no longer an issue? Where to be Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander is to be respected as the Indigenous People? Where we are judged by our character, not by our race?

We dream of a world where, because we are the Indigenous, we are no longer marginalised because of who we are, and what our identity is. A world where we can have a feeling of belonging, not a struggle to belong. A world where life is no longer a fight for survival, but a life of fulfilment, options, achievements, goals, endless possibilities - a future for our children, and their children, and all the generations that are yet to come.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People welcome the birth of the National Council of Churches in Australia. We take our place within it with dignity and hope. We look forward to the new beginning of a just partnership, where the fruits of justice will bear witness to our yearning for a true unity within the body of Christ.

Appendix III

Participants at the 1st National Forum

OFFICERS

President: [interim] The Revd Ian Allsop

General Secretary: [interim] The Revd David Gill

Treasurer: [interim] Mr Ron Brown

HEADS OF CHURCHES

Archbishop Keith Rayner - Anglican Church of Australia

Archbishop Gibran - Antiochian Orthodox church

Archbishop Baliozian - Armenian Apostolic Church

Bishop Mar Meelis Zaia - Assyrian Church of the East

Mr Robert Leane - Churches of Christ in Australia

The Revd Daniel El-Antouny - Coptic Orthodox Church

Archbishop Stylianos (Represented by Bishop Seraphim) - Greek Orthodox Church

David Purnell - Religious Society of Friends

Cardinal Edward Clancy - Roman Catholic Church

The Revd Dr Gabriel Popescu - Romanian Orthodox Church

Commissioner John Gowans - The Salvation Army - Eastern Territory

Commissioner John Clinch - The Salvation Army - Southern Territory

Archbishop Mar T Aphrem Aboodi - Syrian Orthodox Church

The Revd Dr D'Arcy Wood - Uniting Church in Australia

DELEGATES OF MEMBER CHURCHES

Anglican Church of Australia

Bishop Richard Appleby

Archdeacon Philip Newman

Miss Elizabeth Britten

Mr Brian Norris

The Revd Dr Bruce Kaye

Deaconess Margaret Rodgers

Miss Emma Leslie

The Revd Dr Rowan Strong

Bishop Arthur Malcolm

Miss Judy Williamson

Ms Jan Malpas

Bishop Bruce Wilson

Antiochian Orthodox Church

Ms Victoria Jabbour

Mr Andrew Jabbour

Ms Danielle Saadi

Armenian Apostolic Church

Ms Isabella Semsarian

Mr Avo Vardanian

Mrs Suzy Vardanian

Assyrian Church of the East

Deacon Genard Lazar

Deacon Emmanuel Yousif

Churches of Christ in Australia

Ms Thelma Leach
Ms Linda Gordon
Ms Flo Grant [Apology]
The Revd Jonathan Moore

Coptic Orthodox Church

The Revd Marcos Tawfik
The Revd Shenouda Mansour
Mr Maged Attia

Greek Orthodox Church

Mr Philip Kariatlis

Religious Society of Friends

Sabine Erika
Patricia Firkin
Jenny Stock

Roman Catholic Church

Sister Beryl Amedee
The Revd Terry Southerwood
The Revd Peter Cross
Bishop Peter Stasiuk
Mr Scott Fenwick
Sister Beverley Stott
Mrs Elizabeth Harrington
Miss Denise Sullivan
Bishop Bede Heather
The Revd Dr David Walker
Mrs Anne Paul
Miss Vicki Walker

Romanian Orthodox Church

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The Salvation Army

Major Gerben Stelstra
Major Richard Guy
Major Donald Woodland
Lieut-Colonel Beth Webb

Syrian Orthodox Church

Deacon Abdulmasih Bessi
Mr Zacharia Gabriel

Uniting Church in Australia

Ms Rowena Allen
The Revd Prof. James Haire
The Revd Anne Amos
The Revd Gregor Henderson
Mr Richard Chapman
The Revd David Ingleton
Mrs Hilary Christie-Johnston
The Revd Chris Mostert
Ms Pauline Clague [Apology]
Ms Wendie Wilkie

The Revd Wali Fejo
Ms Seongya Yoo

DELEGATES OF STATE ECUMENICAL BODIES

Conference of Churches of WA - The Revd. Kevin Long
NSW Ecumenical Council - Sister Lynne Green
Queensland Churches Together - The Revd Prof. Han Spykerboer
South Australian Council of Churches - The Revd. Peter Whittington
Tasmanian Council of Churches - Mr Greg Foot
Victorian Council of Churches - Mrs Joan Pye

GUESTS

Bishop John Victor Samuel - Christian Conference of Asia
Bishop David Coles - Conference of Churches in Aotearoa New Zealand
The Revd Dr. Sularso Sopater - Communion of Churches in Indonesia
The Revd Puafitu Faaalo - Pacific Conference of Churches
Mr Demas Tongogo - Papua New Guinea Council of Churches
The Revd Dr. Wesley Ariarajah - World Council of Churches

OBSERVERS FROM NON-MEMBER CHURCHES

Baptist Union of Australia - The Revd Ken Jarvis
Lutheran Church of Australia - The Revd Dr. Lance Steicke and the Revd Dr Erich Renner
Presbyterian Church of Australia - Mr Hector MacFarlane
Seventh-Day Adventist Church - Pastor Ray Coombe

OBSERVERS FROM ECUMENICAL ORGANISATIONS

Australian Churches Media Association - Mr Paul Potter
Australian Church Women - Mrs Eunice Reidy
Australian Religious Press Association - The Revd Robert Weibusch
Australian Student Christian Movement - Ms Edwina Hunter
Inter-Church Trade and Industry Mission - The Revd Dr Peter Marshall
Urban Rural Mission - The Revd John M Rickard
World Day of Prayer, Australia - Ms Barbara Grealy

OBSERVER/EXECUTIVE OFFICERS OF STATE ECUMENICAL BODIES

Conference of Churches of WA - The Revd Wes Hartley
NSW Ecumenical Council - The Revd Dr Ray Williamson
Queensland Churches Together - The Revd Helen Mills
South Australian Council of Churches - Ms Moira Deslandes [acting]
Tasmanian Council of Churches - The Revd Robert Faser
Victorian Council of Churches - The Revd Robert Gribben

OTHER OBSERVERS

Ms Eira Clapp - ACC's Commission on the Status of Women
The Revd Austin Cooper - Retreat leader
The Revd Peter Kenny - NCCA Working Group
The Revd Michael McKenna - General Secretary, Australian Catholic Bishops Conference
The Revd Graham Paulson - ACC's Aboriginal and Islander Commission
Sister Lenore Sharry - NCCA Working Group
Mr David Shinnick - NCCA Working Group
Mrs Jill Tabart - President-elect, Uniting Church in Australia

STAFF

Ms Christine Ledger - assisting with programme, plenary sessions, nominations
Mr Malcolm Dodd - finance; assisting with registration

Mr Caesar D'Mello - liaison with overseas guests
Ms Anne Pattel-Gray - liaison with Aboriginal and Islander participants
Ms Wilma Viswanathan - registration, administration and secretarial
The Revd Peter Rees - video filming, displays, promotion
Ms Nancy Bloxsom - literature sales
Ms Kirsty Davis - assistance with press and displays
Mr Simon Moglia - liaison with young participants, assistance with administration
Ms Maureen Postma - Force 10 display and literature; assistance with literature sales

COOPTED STAFF

Mr David Busch - Press Officer
Ms Gillian Hunt - Local arrangements

Appendix IV

PRIORITIES AND ISSUES RAISED WITHIN SMALL GROUP DISCUSSIONS ON THE NCCA'S VISION AND OBJECTIVES

[NOTE: Specific strategies suggested by the small groups are inserted in italics.]

1. Specific on-going priorities from the ACC

- * Faith and Unity
- * Christian World Service
- * Aboriginal and Islander people

a] Objective [b] iv) was highlighted: "acting in solidarity with Aboriginal and Islander people". Specific issues raised were:

- * What do we do with the Aboriginal and Islander vision statement?
- * That two positions on the Executive be reserved for representatives of the Aboriginal and Islander people.

It was recognised that fresh approaches ought to be adopted in respect of these three priorities.

2. Evangelism/evangelisation

* A total commitment in proclaiming the gospel is called for. This should involve supporting one another personally, in family life, in our society and world. This involves Christ being at the centre of all we do, as well as approaching them in an holistic way.

* Objective [a] ii) is central to the NCCA's role in taking up an evangelising role: "coming to know each other better in all respects, including the areas of spirituality, liturgy, theology, history, sociology and culture". This includes the NCCA sponsoring spiritual activities.

3. NCCA's advocacy role

* This was raised as an important one for the NCCA particularly on behalf of oppressed people, and especially women.

4. Relationships with people of other living faiths

* There is a lack of clarity of what this means. NCCA should enter into discussions within itself to clarify what is meant before entering into dialogue.

5. Deeper understanding

* The NCCA needs to be clearer about what objective [a] means: "to encourage and enable member churches to develop their existing relationship by..." It requires clarification about matters like faith, our relationship with the oppressed in Australia, and world-wide issues like the Middle East situation.

Courses in ecumenical theology, liturgy, ecumenism and spirituality should be mandatory in houses of formation and theological education.

The Society of Friends sponsors the Backhouse lecture on ecumenism.

Hold joint retreats and days of spiritual reflection.

6. Promoting the NCCA

* This involves three aspects: public relations, the media and fund-raising.

* Promotion of NCCA is critical at this stage among the decision-makers in each denomination, among the denominations themselves in terms of their vision, story, culture, ethos, etc., and with the public.

Through church radio broadcasts and newsletters.

Public liturgical expressions of (the Australian Church for screening on television.

NCCA to advocate as a single voice with parliamentarians, for example, the Native Title experience.

7. Young people

* Several referred to the importance of the place of young people in the NCCA and in their role within the wider ecumenical movement.

Help young people come closer to the Lord, and to prepare themselves to be future Australians. Encourage the Inter-Orthodox Youth Network to have greater fellowship with young people across denominations.

Promote youth forums through the NCCA.

8. Relationships between State Councils of Churches and the NCCA

* State councils have been in existence for up to 25 years, and have a lot of experience, expertise and wisdom to offer the NCCA.

* How can state councils work cooperatively with the NCCA in terms of resourcing, networking, sharing wisdom, etc.

* Disappointment was expressed concerning the position state council staff are in at NCCA meetings, that is, in a non-speaking role [see constitution 9.07].

* State councils should be able to raise issues with and offer motions to the NCCA.

9. Upgrading of staff

* Raised in respect of Faith and Unity and Youth affairs.

10. NCCA meetings

* Official guests and observers be given the opportunity to speak.

* Time for greater reflection be allowed for in NCCA meetings.

11. Grassroots

Encourage our own people to experience and engage in ecumenical encounters.

Learn from parish-based rural ecumenical collaboration.

NCCA sponsor grassroots people involved in social and moral issues, sharing with each other, and feeding into the NCCA.

Personal contributions through meeting people amid getting to know each other.

Opportunities for church leaders amid people to attend each other's services and social functions, to preach and share fellowship.

NCCA foster and resource local grassroots activity through state ecumenical bodies.

Encourage people in mixed marriages to come together to talk.

12. NCCA and Commissions

That the NCCA be a model of church unity.

Use specific commissions of the NCCA to take up specific aspects of NCCA work.

Faith and Unity questions to be raised openly amid honestly and with integrity at all levels of church life.

Christian World Service and Australian Catholic Relief to work closely together to form a single entity with two appeals PROJECT COMPASSION in Lent and CHRISTMAS BOWL in Advent.

13. Specific concerns

Allow time for reflection in decision-making.

NCCA tint to lose its freedom to maintain a prophetic voice amid wisdom.

Encourage governing bodies of our churches to maintain financial commitment to NCCA.

Appendix V

NCCA EXECUTIVE

OFFICERS

President Archbishop: Aghan Baliozian

General Secretary: The Revd David Gill

Treasurer: Mr Ron Brown

HEADS OF CHURCHES AND ALTERNATES

Anglican Church of Australia: Archbishop Keith Rayner and Bishop Bruce Wilson

Antiochian Orthodox Church: Archbishop Gabriel Gibran and Ms Victoria Jabbour

Armenian Apostolic Church: Archbishop Baliozian and the Revd Norayr Patanian

Assyrian Church of the East Bishop: Mar Meelis Zaia and Deacon Emmanuel Yousif

Churches of Christ in Australia: Mr Robert Leane and the Revd Ian Allsop

Coptic Orthodox Church: The Revd Marcos Tawfik and the Revd Shenouda Mansour

Greek Orthodox Church: Archbishop Stylianos and Bishop Seraphim

Religious Society of Friends: David Purnell and David Thomas

Roman Catholic Church: Cardinal Edward Clancy and Bishop Bede Heather

Romanian Orthodox Church: The Rev Dr Gabriel Popescu

The Salvation Army - Eastern Territory: Commissioner John Gowans and Major Gerben Stelstra

The Salvation Army - Southern Territory: Commissioner John Clinch and Major Richard Guy

Syrian Orthodox Church: Archbishop Mar T Aboodi and Fr Zeki Zitoun

Uniting Church in Australia: The Revd Dr D'Arcy Wood [to 9 July 94] Mrs Jill Tabart [from 9 July 94] and the Revd Gregor Henderson

DESIGNATED MEMBERS [appointed by churches]

Anglican Church of Australia: Deaconess Margaret Rodgers
Antiochian Orthodox Church: Ms Danielle Saadi
Armenian Apostolic Church: Mr Avo Vardanian
Assyrian Church of the East: ----
Churches of Christ in Australia: Ms Thelma Leach
Coptic Orthodox Church: The Revd Daniel El-Antouny
Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of Australia: The Revd Peter Photakis
Religious Society of Friends: Sabine Erika
Roman Catholic Church: Miss Denise Sullivan
Romanian Orthodox Church: ----
Salvation Army - Eastern Territory: ----
Salvation Army - Southern Territory: ----
Syrian Orthodox Church: Mr Zacharia Gabriel
Uniting Church in Australia: Mrs Hilary Christie-Johnston

ELECTED MEMBERS [appointed by the National Forum]

Ms Emma Leslie: Anglican Church
Mr Jonathan Moore: Churches of Christ
Ms Kay Mundine: Roman Catholic Church
Ms Elizabeth Harrington: Roman Catholic Church
The Revd Wali Fejo: Uniting Church
Ms Wendie Wilkie: Uniting Church