



Together Online

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CCWA AGM

The Annual General Meeting of the Council of Churches of WA will be held on March 28th from 9 am to 12 noon, at the Anglican Parish of Whitfords, which meets in the grounds of St Mark's Anglican Community School, St Mark's Drive, Whitfords. All welcome -for catering purposes, please RSVP on 9274 3888 or email administrator@churcheswa.com.au.

We will have reports from our prison and hospital chaplains and our office bearers. There are a number of proposed notices of motion to be considered, and papers have been sent now to all delegates, Executive members and Associates and Friends of the Council.

We have also posted our Annual Reports.

If you need to have these papers and have not received them, please let the CCWA staff know by emailing administrator@churcheswa.com.au or call 9274 3888.

For catering purposes please let us know if you are attending, by this Friday March 13th.



Action over water justice urged on Christians for Lent

As the season of Lent draws near, the Ecumenical Water Network (EWN) is inviting Christians to mark the occasion with reflection and action on some urgent water justice concerns. During the Seven Weeks for Water initiative, theologians and church activists from Africa, Europe, North and South America will share short biblical meditations for each week along with some campaigning ideas and resources.

The first set of materials will be available on the EWN website water.oikoumene.org from 25 February - Ash Wednesday according to Western Christian tradition. EWN also provides an RSS stream for the seven weeks, which allows groups and congregations to give visibility to their participation on their own websites.

"Traditionally Lent is a time for concentrating on what is essential in life and opening our hearts to our neighbours, for example by fasting and giving to the needy," says Maïke Gorsboth, the EWN coordinator. "The Seven Weeks for Water initiative encourages Christian groups and individuals to deepen this experience, reflecting on the concrete issue of water justice."

Another opportunity to highlight the importance of water comes on World Water Day, on 22 March 2009.

EWN has already put together a collection of resources and links that can help congregations address the issue, inspired by prayer, biblical texts on justice and on water, and the experiences of church agencies with the challenges posed by unequal access to freshwater and sanitation.

The Seven Weeks for Water initiative was first celebrated during Lent 2008. This year, the resources will for the first time be available in four languages - English, Spanish, German and French.

More information on the Seven Weeks for Water:

<http://www.oikoumene.org/7-weeks-for-water>

Ideas for World Water Day 2009M:

<http://www.oikoumene.org/en/activities/ewn-home/resources-and-links/ewn-resources.html>

UN website for World Water Day:

<http://www.unwater.org/worldwaterday/flashindex.html>



The Imperative of Peace: A window on a Troubled World

Dr. Bernard Sabella. Jerusalem, Saturday February 21, 2009.

For a conference organized by Saint Egidio Society in Rome on Monday, February 23rd, 2009 under the title "The Value of Christian Churches in the Middle East: A Christian Muslim Discussion", I was asked to make a 10-minute presentation on the topic 'A Window on the World.' I got to my pc and printed out the last four or five articles that I have written over a number of years on Christians in Palestine and in the Arab World. I was debating myself on whether to base my presentation on personal experiences and recollections or to be more academic, and usually boring, by citing statistics, institutions, schools, printing presses, community societies, clinics and other varied contributions of the Churches in Palestine and elsewhere in the region since the Middle of the 19th Century and even earlier. Local Christians, indigenous to the Palestinian and Arab settings, usually root themselves, their families, communities and churches in the early Church and like to insist that Jerusalem was and remains, as they wish it to be, the "Mother Church." In a recent talk I have given to a group of priests from the Philippines visiting the Holy Land, I referred to the physical limitations of the city of Jerusalem and thanked the divine wisdom for Rome's hospitality to the Church otherwise, I asked my group of priests, how would we have dealt with the traffic if Jerusalem would have become the seat of St. Peter's successors and Jewish, Christian and Muslim holidays and feasts would have coincided with each other with millions of visitors to the Holy City? The Almighty has thankfully taken care of the anticipated traffic and population congestion in Jerusalem but much more work needs to be done on the human dimension in the city as elsewhere in the Middle East.

So what kind of a Window on the World would I present to the distinguished group of Christians and Muslims that will gather to exchange notes and reflections? Would I tell them the stories of growing up in Jerusalem with the images of a child of a Palestinian Christian refugee family of ten being hosted in two rooms by the Franciscans or better would I tell them of the experiences of school at the Ecole des Freres at New Gate with Christian and Muslim students, mostly refugees, sitting next to each other and getting a quality education in languages and other subjects. Or much better yet to share with them the experiences of the young boy who walked the streets of Jerusalem and heard prayers and saw pilgrims of a variety of countries and of both Muslim and Christian faith? Or would I impress them with the view from the two-room home looking unto the Al Haram Al Sharif, the Noble Sanctuary, and the Mount of Olives and the voices and sounds of bells, muezzins and other religious intonations mixing with each other and providing a semblance of harmony and peace?

But the personal, regardless of how significant it is for the



individual, remains rooted in the context or environment. With the impression that Jerusalem placed on me as a young boy, there was also an impression that Jerusalem is a troubled place; a place that is yet to evolve into something else. As I grew up, the academic courses, the thousands of articles, books, lectures and conferences on the city; its past, future and the unspeakable prospects presented by so many sides of interested and noninterested groups made me realize even more that Jerusalem indeed is a troubled place and not the place of hope and salvation that Christians, Jews and Muslims see and seek.

Palestinian Christians or Christians of the Holy Land, comprising Jordan, Israel and Palestine, are grouped in more than 15 churches and in their kaleidoscopic representation of Christianity; they reflect the challenges and hopes. But, as the Heads of Churches have indicated in their November 1994 declaration on Jerusalem, the city is the place of roots and the aspiration for a future of peace, harmony, free access and respect for religious freedom and practice. History of Christianity is recognized by the declaration of the Heads of Churches side by side with the history of Judaism and Islam. What is asked for Christians, pilgrims and citizens alike, is also asked for Jews and Muslims. The vision motivating the declaration is clearly a religious vision but it is also aware of the religious, historical, national and political complexities that impact the present realities of the city and its inhabitants. But these complexities are not simply peculiar to Jerusalem as they are impacting the whole of the Middle East and making the prospects for the future quite bleak, to say the least.

While at every juncture of the long history of conflict in the Middle East, blame is put on this side or that for the absence of peace, it is clear that the exercise of basic rights whether religious, civil, political or just human is dependent on an environment of peace. With no peace in the city and the region, there is no clear vision of a different future for Jerusalem or the region. Crystallizing the clear vision is the responsibility of everyone and in particular the spiritual and religious leaders on all sides. The tragedies that befell our Palestinian people in Gaza recently and the fear, injury and stress caused to Israeli citizens because of the shelling of rockets are a reflection of the tragedy in which all of us live at present. It appears that at present so many people in the Middle East but especially in Palestine and Israel have turned their backs to each other and find it normal to opt for confrontation rather than compromise. The Churches and the faithful cannot be comfortable with such a situation, irrespective of the partisan feelings and emotions that are continuously generated with new rounds of conflict and war. At the moment, political developments do not bode well for the future of peace in the region. On the contrary we may be in a new cycle of vicious violence and counter violence that will lead all of us into the abyss of despair and hopelessness.

The Churches with their Window on the World must work and act to touch the pain of all people in Jerusalem and the region and to actively engage in peace efforts, either through influencing politicians or through mobilizing their own faithful to work for a different future. This cannot be done without the involvement of all in the region: I and other Palestinian and Arab Christians are often perceived as too controversial, or too marginal and hence unimportant, to be involved in peace work and intellectual exchange as we like to bring out the sensitive issues, the injustices committed against our people, the historic tragedy of the disintegration of Palestinian society as a cost to the establishment of the State of Israel and the ingathering of the Jewish exiles. Often people who want to work for peace, particularly in the West, seek unconditional forgiveness on all sides but especially on the Christian and Arab sides. For whatever reason, these well intentioned Western people believe that if the Arabs show willingness to forgive and to make peace then the Israelis will be forthcoming. But there are also many counter arguments and examples that prove when Arabs are more forthcoming the Israelis become less willing to compromise. But this is not the issue and for fear that I would lose the intended conclusion in this short presentation, I would go back to the major argument that PEACE is the essential task of Middle East Churches and their faithful as well as of Judaism and Islam and their faithful. Accordingly, for all of us who seek the Peace of Jerusalem and the region, we have to work together to formulate a comprehensive framework of Peace:

First, each religious community is entitled to continue to live in the dignity and pride of its own religious tradition and history and to attend to its own holy places, without interference from any outside source. This applies to all countries of the region.

Second, each national community feels that it is secure in its territory in terms of the sovereignty that guarantees the fulfillment of basic needs of political community life and continuity with acknowledgement of mutual rights and obligations. This is specifically applicable to Palestine and Israel.

Third, the wounds inflicted on the parties to the conflict must be recognized and addressed. This could be most difficult but we cannot recognize the pain of one party to the exclusion of the other. Pain is pain, regardless of who is feeling it.

Fourth, while recognizing the pain of the conflicting parties, we should work to steer away from the "victim" mentality. So many of us in the region have grown accustomed to presenting ourselves as victims. Unfortunately, some feel comfortable with this victim mentality and keep perpetuating it for various reasons. We need to do all to get away from this mentality and to overcome it through work of healing and eventual reconciliation.

Fifth, we must be very careful not to abuse our religious traditions and teachings. It is disheartening and saddening when transgressions against neighbors are justified by religious leaders of different faith communities in the name of religion. What makes these "religiously" based justifications even more

reprehensible is the fact that some of those religious leaders participating in inter group and inter faith encounters are the ones who are making these statements. It is the obligation of all to remind all of expected standards and obligations: we cannot be for dialogue here and for justification of war and conflict there!

Sixth, the Churches of the Middle East with all their heritage of caritative, social, educational and religious work done in harmony with their neighbors and for the purpose of community and society building should be courageous to speak up and work for the sake of peace and be uncompromising on this. Without peace and harmony among the different religious and national groups, there will be no future in the Middle East irrespective of victor or loser in intermittent wars and battles.

Our Window on the World as Churches of the Middle East is a window that has so many contrasting tales; sad and happy experiences; marginal tendencies and openness to others; letdowns and hopeful expectations. While we feel our limitations we also can value our potential. But without action and without engagement, this potential can never be accomplished. It is at this particular juncture that much is demanded from Christians and Churches in the Middle East so as their Window on the World would influence as well the Window of the World of their Muslim and other neighbors.

PM UNDER PRESSURE FROM RELIGIOUS LEADERS ON CLIMATE CHANGE

Over 60 religious leaders and prominent religious individuals have written to the Prime Minister, ahead of the release of the Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme exposure draft legislation, to express their deep concerns with the Government's inadequate response to climate change. The letter urges the Government to address its weak greenhouse gas emission reduction targets, and to help shape a strong international agreement on climate change at Copenhagen. The 5-15% emission reduction target range by the year 2020 represents a failure to protect lives and livelihoods, and emissions must fall by at least 25% in industrialised countries if the world is to have a chance of avoiding catastrophic climate change.



It is not only 'environmental' groups who are concerned about the Government's inadequate response", said Dr Miriam Pepper, Secretary of multi-faith network the Australian Religious Response to Climate Change (ARRCC), which facilitated the letter. "Australia's religious groups are educating our communities about climate change and are taking actions to reduce our own carbon footprints, and we call for stronger action from the Government."

The signatories to the letter are from a wide range of Christian

denominations, and from Muslim, Jewish, Buddhist and Hindu traditions. They include national and regional leaders of churches and religious associations, such as Archbishop Phillip Aspinall, Primate of the Anglican Church, Craig Brown, Federal Coordinator of the Churches of Christ in Australia, and Ikebal Patel, President of the Australian Federation of Islamic Councils. Also among the signatories are representatives from ecumenical and interfaith bodies and faith-based aid and development organisations, such as the Rev. Tim Costello, CEO of World Vision. Prominent religious individuals from universities are also included.

Australians are already being affected by climate change, as are people all across the world, especially in the Pacific, South East Asia and Africa. For example, Bishop Peter Ingham, President of the Federation of Catholic Bishops Conferences of Oceania, and a signatory to the letter, drew attention to the “low-lying atolls in the Pacific, which are already affected by rising seas, and whose people could be ‘climate refugees’”. The letter states that communities in places such as these are disproportionately impacted by climate change, yet bear little responsibility for its causes.

“Australia’s per capita greenhouse gas emissions are among the highest in the world. A 25% reduction in our emissions by 2020 is the minimum that the Government should commit to, for all our sakes, and especially for the sakes of the most vulnerable,” said the Ven. David Lungtok, Chair of the Australian Sangha Association, and another signatory to the letter. “In failing to make this commitment, the Government has also failed in its moral responsibility. We urge the Government to do better.”

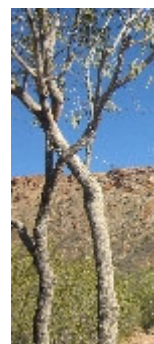
Extra resources for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

Loving God,
we thank you for the unity we have in you.
We celebrate the diversity of gifts of the churches.
We pray that you open our hearts to receive the treasures
you have given to each part of your body.
We pray that like a tree with many branches
we may grow and flourish,
nurtured by the healing waters of your Spirit. Amen

Prayer written by the Revd. Penny Jones Anglican rector, Woy Woy

Resources, including extra prayers and Pew bulletin notes are available on our website.

[Read More...](#)



Events for the Heart and Soul

In this issue: Earth Hour 2009; Black Politics; Workshop - The Art and Heart of Creative Conflict; Pace e Bene - Non-violence in the Mainstream; Centre for Christian Belief, Spirituality and Australian Culture - Exploring Men's Spirituality; St George's Cathedral invites you to waste time with God; Easter Music - Voices in Praise. calendar-150px1EARTH HOUR 2009



At 8.30pm on 28 March 2009, cities across the world will turn off their lights for one hour, sending a powerful global message that it's possible to take united action on global warming. WWF and Earth Hour supporters around the world aim to reach 1 billion people in 1,000 cities and we hope your church can be part of this historic achievement.

There are many ways churches can support Earth Hour in 2009, from turning out the lights in their buildings/facilities on the night through to encouraging church members/supporters to join the Earth Hour initiative.

The following information can be found at: www.EarthHour.org

BLACK POLITICS: Inside the complexity of Australian political culture

A gathering to celebrate the publication of Sarah Maddison's book – Hosted by: Senator Rachel Siewert, Australian Greens Senator for WA

Speakers include: Dr Sarah Maddison, Senior Associate Dean, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences at UNSW and Indigenous leader: Pat Dodson.

WHERE: UCIC Centre, 1st Floor, Queens Building, Cnr Murray & William Sts Perth (enter via William St next to Wittner's Shoe Store)

WHEN: Tuesday, 31 March 2009

TIME: 6.00PM – 7.30PM

Refreshments will be provided. Please RSVP to: bridget.halbert@aph.gov.au

WORKSHOP — THE ART AND HEART OF CREATIVE CONFLICT

The Winding Staircase is hosting a workshop for personal and community capacity-building in creative and constructive conflict transformation. Participants will be provided with opportunities to:

- * Recognise how their own experience influences the way they see the world of conflict
- * Understand the influence of destructive conflict in the systems within which they live and work
- * Reflect on dominant styles of communication during conflict
- * Identify and practice the skills of staying connected with others during conflict, through personal presence that evokes empathy and compassion
- * Remain faithful to their own truth while choosing not to

violate the truth of others

* Cultivate and sustain personal energy for inspirational conflict

WHEN: Thursday, March 12

WHERE: A Place To Just Be, 4a Preston Rd, East Fremantle (behind Catholic Church – fronts onto Canning Highway – near Stirling Highway end)

COST: \$220 plus GST

All enquiries to: Brendan@windingstaircase.com.au

PACÉ e BENE — NON-VIOLENCE IN THE MAINSTREAM

Every day we are equipped with the vision of skills of nonviolence, the more capacity we have to sustain a commitment to the daily practice of peace in our lives. Every day people face the challenge and consequences of violence and injustice. Some people confront violence with violence. Others remain passive. Neither approach is sustainable. Each often fails to address the root causes of violence or stop the cycle of destruction, resentment, and retaliation that violence and injustice create.

Pacé e Bene will be holding a residential retreat in 2009 at St Joseph's Retreat, Penola By the Sea, 27 Penguin Rd Safety Bay. This retreat will commence on Friday 19 April until 24 April.

For registration/information please contact any of the following people: Brendan McKeague at: mckeague@iprimus.com.au, George E Trippe: georgetrippe@gmail.com or Stacie Chappel at: Stacie.chappell@uwa.edu.au.

Centre for Christian Belief, Spirituality and Australian Culture-
Exploring Men's Spirituality

Who challenges, encourages and inspires you as a man? How are you that for other men?

This is an invitation for men to join together in exploring and discovering an authentic spiritual way for men with Steve Runciman, John Dunnill and Michael Pennington.
Saturday 28th March 2009 9.15am for 9.30am start and finishing at 3.30pm

Wollaston College

Cost \$40 (Concession \$35) including lunch.

Contact Maria Hann at Wollaston College for information.

Michael Pennington

Phone: 9332 7221

E-mail: mpenn@q-net.net.au

SAINT GEORGE'S CATHEDRAL INVITES YOU TO WASTE
TIME WITH GOD:

Wednesday 11 March:

9.30am until 2.45pm - A Day in the Spiritual Life of the Cathedral will include a range of spiritual experiences including "A Journey into Wilderness (Lent)" with the Precentor, Canon Tony Murray-

Feist and Poetry of Wilderness with Professor Christopher Wortham. Includes morning tea on arrival, lunch and arvo tea. [\$12]

Wednesday 25th March;
9.30am until 11.30am - Coffee, Prayers and Spirituality offers "Spirituality and The Economy" with Jim Freemantle of Perth Diocesan Trustees, Anglican Community Fund management committee and Swan River Trust. Jim was CEO of Home Building Society and is a member of the Cathedral congregation. [\$5]

NEW ANGLICAN CATHEDRAL INITIATIVE IN APRIL/MAY
5.15pm until 6.15pm - Worker's Coffee and Spirituality [\$5]
15 April - Christian Spirituality — Bishop David Murray
22 April - Spirituality and Religion — The Revd Dr Nigel Leaves
29 April - Spirituality & Henri Nouwen — The Revd Canon Frank Sheehan
6 May - Spirituality and Silence — Archdeacon Paul Cannon

EASTER MUSIC - VOICES IN PRAISE at Mount Pleasant Uniting

Voices in Praise will present the 8 part 'Crucifixus' written by Antonio Lotti along with Hallelujah from Judas Maccabaeus and other lovely selections of Easter music.

WHEN: Wednesday, 7 April

TIME: 8.00PM

WHERE: Mt Pleasant Uniting Church, Cnr Reynolds & Coomoora Rds.

Please come and join us on this reflective Easter journey – All welcome

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