



## Together Online

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November 12, 2008

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### The Gift that Keeps on Giving

This year marks the 60th year of Australians giving and sharing through the Christmas Bowl. Over the past 60 years, it has delivered critical assistance to people around the world affected by poverty and ongoing conflict. The Christmas Bowl has become an important symbol of people helping people. After the end of World War 2, the Christmas Bowl began as a unique way for churches to work together, uniting and inspiring others to bring hope in a volatile and unstable world. On the 50th anniversary of the Christmas Bowl, vital humanitarian relief work was carried out in Papua New Guinea, Kosovo and East Timor. In the Christmas Bowl's 60th year, the priority remains assisting people who suffer from extreme poverty and ongoing conflict, such as in Burma, Sudan, Zimbabwe and more than a dozen other countries.

The photograph on this year's Christmas Bowl materials depicts six South-Sudanese girls who live in the Dereig camp for Internally Displaced People. They are hurrying to attend a school established by the church-based Darfur Emergency Response Operation, which the Christmas Bowl supports. This Operation assists children and families like these girls by providing essential services such as food, shelter, education, health, psychological counselling, and community empowerment to overcome one of the most horrific civil wars of all time.

Khayida, a member of the Dereig camp community centre who fled her home village and now lives in Dereig camp, expresses a sense of joy about the new community centres and opportunities that are becoming a reality. She said, "I'm very happy with the opening of the new centre, which has been built for us... We, the old women, are like the trunk of a tree, the others are like the branches. Here we as old people are allowed to provide the youngsters with knowledge."

Sudan is just one of the places in which the Christmas Bowl provides assistance. With partnerships around the world, it seeks to encourage a spirit of giving and togetherness so that we as Australian's can realise that even sharing a small gift can make a significant difference.

As Amina from the Dereig camp considers the last several years of hard



times, she says "much has changed and I now thank God that I have learnt all these things." We thank you for allowing the Christmas Bowl to continue this work overseas and in Australia and celebrate the lives it has improved over the last 60 years.

This Sunday the 23rd November is the Western Church's last Sunday of the year. Soon we will be in Advent and a new Church year will begin. Resources for the season of Advent are available from the National Council of Churches in Australia's website at <http://www.ncca.org.au>. If you need a speaker to highlight Christmas Bowl please contact the Council of Churches of WA on 9274 3888 or email [cwsprojects@churcheswa.com.au](mailto:cwsprojects@churcheswa.com.au). Many Christians want to celebrate Advent and Christmas in a way that honours our faith, and does not subscribe to gross commercialism. We acknowledge that many people in the world struggle just to survive, within conflicted nations and without the means to provide clean water, safe housing or medical care for their loved ones.

Religious leaders have called on the nations of the world to remember the poor during the financial crisis. They urge action on the Millenium Development Goals. In a statement issued by the New York based "Religions for Peace" organisation, some 40 religious leaders said: 'the massive scale of poverty and related suffering can be changed. Because we have the capacity to make this change, we have the moral obligation to do so.'

## Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 2009

Australian Worship resources for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity and throughout 2009 will be available in the next few weeks (for more information contact Revd Dr Jonathan Inkpin on (02) 9299 2215 or email [jinkpin@ncca.org.au](mailto:jinkpin@ncca.org.au))

The theme is "That they may become one in your hand" (Ezek 37: 17)

The Annual global brochure jointly prepared and published by the Pontifical Council for Christian Unity and the Commission on Faith and Order of the World Council of Churches is available now on the WCC website.:(<http://www.wcc-coe.org>)

The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 2009 is rooted in the experience of the churches in Korea. In their context of national division the churches have turned for inspiration to the prophet Ezekiel, who also lived in a tragically divided nation and longed for the unity of his people.



## Crisis Escalates for Christians in Iraq

A statement from the National Council of Churches in Australia

The following statement was adopted by the Executive of the National Council of Churches in Australia at its meeting on 6 November 2008.

### CRISIS ESCALATES FOR CHRISTIANS IN IRAQ

Violence and persecution against minority groups in Iraq continues, including communities of Christians which have been in existence for over 1500 years. The Assyrian Church of the East, as one of the Churches most affected, has mobilised itself worldwide to call attention to the crisis, and seek help where help can be found. Other Churches under extreme duress are the Syrian Orthodox, Coptic Orthodox, Armenian Apostolic, and Chaldean.

Prior to 2003, 4% of Iraq's population was Christian. Yet 40% of Iraq's 2.2 million refugees are Christian, which indicates the seriousness and disproportionate degree of violence and persecution to which Iraqi Christians are being exposed. "No one has been untouched by grief either by personal loss or to see their country torn apart by violence," said Bishop Mar Meelis Zaia, Australian head of the Assyrian Church of the East. According to Church sources this exodus is the result of a campaign of violence, murder, terrorism, threats, and intimidation targeted at the Christian minority.

Attacks have escalated since September, when the electoral law was changed to remove the system of quotas that ensured minority groups representation on provincial councils. The result of government investigations and the arrest of about 12 people in relation to the latest wave of attacks are being awaited.

The international Assyrian Christian community is raising money to help. Local parishes are collecting money to help the Assyrian Church of the East Relief Organisation (ACERO) provide aid for people in the city of Mosul, where the recent escalation of attacks has been most severe. In the long run the hope of those fleeing the country is for a self-governing administrative region within Iraq.

The National Council of Churches in Australia (NCCA) stands in solidarity with Iraqi Christians, and the Assyrian Church of the East which has been a member Church of the Council for many years. "We are distressed to hear of the suffering of Christians in Iraq, and the deliberate and targeted attacks which they are experiencing," said the Revd John Henderson, the General Secretary of the NCCA. "We continue to ask the Australian government to take this situation into account in its consideration of support for Iraqi refugees in Syria and Jordan, resettlement plans for Iraqi refugees once the country finds peace, and support for repatriation when it is safe to return."

We urge the Australian Government to:

- Increase the level of aid to Iraq's internally displaced people and Iraqi refugees in Jordan and Syria, and;
- Increase Australian refugee intake levels for the affected population.

For further information contact: The Revd John Henderson 0419 224 935



## Violence continues against Christians in India

Despite international protests and the assurances of the Indian government violence against Christians in the state of Orissa continues. The National United Christian Forum, meeting in Delhi on 7th October Terms, condemned what participants believe is a case of "deliberate and systematic ethnic cleansing."



Click here to view a letter from the NCCA to the National Council of Churches in India (on this site)-see Ncca website <http://www.ncca.org.au>

Click here to view press releases from the National Council of Churches in India (on <http://www.nccindia.in>)

'Christianity is part of our National Heritage' - Indian PM (on <http://www.oikumene.org>)

## UN advisor says churches can help reduce climate change impact

UN advisor says churches can help reduce climate change impact

The chairperson of a UN Climate Change panel has said that churches can contribute to reducing the impact of global warming by proposing new lifestyles.

Professor Jean-Pascal van Ypersele of the UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change said "There are ways to reduce emissions, and churches can contribute to solutions by proposing changes in lifestyle and behaviour patterns.

At a gathering of 100 delegates from 27 countries recently, the European Christian Environmental Network called on all churches to make a special "creation time" in September each year, as a time of prayer and action for the "integrity of creation".

For more information about how your church can help <http://greenchurch.wa.uca.org.au> This is a Uniting Church Synod of WA resource for churches with plenty of good practical local advice and help.



## Events for the Heart and Soul

In This edition: Walk against Warming; Restorative Justice Seminar; Shadows and Sounds Book Launch; Into Great Silence at Wollaston; Public Forum on Global Crisis; Australian Citizenship Test Training Course; Non-Violent Direct action Intensive; Coffee, Prayers and Spirituality at St George's Cathedral; Wardarnji Aboriginal Cultural Festival; 16 Days of Activism against Gender Violence; Just Music 2008

Saturday 15th November Walk against Warming

Venue: Cottesloe Beach

(Meeting just south of theTeahouse)

Time: 10am - 1pm

Speakers include the Honourable Colin Barnett and Senator Scott Ludlam.

The Walk Against Warming in 2008 comes at a critical point when governments around the world are deciding how they will respond to the climate change crisis.

In Australia, the walk falls right when the Federal Cabinet are deciding on Australia's emissions target for 2020 and just before the crucial international climate talks in Poland. The community's voice has never been more important to demand strong, urgent action from our government and justice for developing nations affected by global warming.

In WA we need to show the new state Government that the community is SERIOUS about climate change and want to see immediate ACTION taken. Help us to make this years walk HUGE!

- Download the Walk Against Warming flyer and poster to distribute and help spread the word!

- Volunteer in the lead up and on the day to help make the walk run super smooth. Contact Owen or Carolyn on 9420 7266 or email [waw08perth@gmail.com](mailto:waw08perth@gmail.com)

- Tell all your friends about Walk Against Warming

Walk to Cottesloe Beach. We are strongly encouraging all participants to either walk or catch public transport to Cottesloe Beach.



You are invited to attend a Restorative Justice Seminar

This one day seminar will be an exposure of restorative practices that can be applied from the point of arrest, the court process, the prison and after release from custody.

The seminar presenters will discuss policing, sentencing and healing circles and the uniqueness and effectiveness of restorative prisons. The impact of RJ on victims of crime will be presented by people who have experienced victimisation.

The whole experience will be set in the quiet and peaceful surrounds of the chapel area on Murdoch's South Street campus. Parking will be free.

For further information and to register, please contact Dr. Peter Stuart [P.Stuart@murdoch.edu.au](mailto:P.Stuart@murdoch.edu.au) Research Manager, Centre for Social & Community Research - Murdoch University Ph. 08 9360 2385

Date: December 10th. 9.00 register for 9.30 start. Closes 4.00pm. (book launch at 4.30-5.00pm)

Cost \$20 (includes light snack)

Restorative Justice: creating opportunities for effective transformations.

9.30 Welcome and Introduction. Address. Prof. Craig McGarty. 10.00

#### Discussion Panel

RJ in Prisons: What are its benefits and what safeguards are needed to ensure that it is and remains effective.

11.00 - 11.15 break

11.15 Discussion on engaging victims and offenders.

Help me, don't bureaucratise me: Ways to effectively engage with victims and offenders through NGO's

12.30 – 1.30 lunch.

1.30 Panel Discussion on reducing Indigenous incarceration.

The use of Patrols, Peacemakers, Healing and Sentencing Circles, Healing in Prisons and reconciliatory justice among young leaders.

2.30 - 2.45 quick cuppa

2.45 Panel Discussion. Community policing with a restorative eye: Providing Positive signals for effective social control.

3.45 Summarising.

4.00 Close, drinks.

You are invited to attend the book launch of the

Shadows and Sounds

A landscape of Life

By

Loreen Samson, celebrated Ngarluma artist and social commentator, and Brian Steels, social researcher, social justice activist and convict criminologist  
The project has seen a Ngarluma woman and a non-Indigenous man working together to create what is best described as a unique collaboration of artists using a blend of contemporary and tradition design within a social justice commentary.

The whole experience will be set in the quiet and peaceful surrounds of the chapel area on Murdoch's South Street campus. Parking will be free.

For further information and to attend please contact Dr. Peter Stuart  
P.Stuart@murdoch.edu.au Research Manager, Centre for Social & Community Research - Murdoch University Ph. 08 9360 2385

Date: December 10th. 4.00pm.

Produced with the support of the Centre for Social and Community Research at Murdoch University and the Roebourne Art Group

Proudly sponsored by Mawarnkarra Health Service Aboriginal Corporation

#### Into Great Silence

Led by Father John Herbert OSB

The last in our Saturdays at Wollaston series for the year

Saturday 15th November 9.30am to 3.30pm in the Wollaston College Chapel

A day to explore together the value of silence, drawing on the monastic tradition.

The day will be led by Fr John Herbert from New Norcia, who will share his experience of both Benedictine and Carthusian spirituality, including reflection on extracts from the recent film 'Into Great Silence'.

Cost: \$40 (Concession \$35) includes lunch

Please register as soon as possible to Maria Hann at Wollaston.Maria Hann

Board of Theological Studies

Wollaston College

Wollaston Road

Mt Claremont WA 6010

#### PUBLIC FORUM ON THE GLOBAL CRISIS

Chair: JO VALLENTINE

Speakers: Lynn MacLaren (Green MLC); Dave Robinson (Secretary Unions WA); Tony Cooke (Adjunct Prof. Curtin Uni); Vic Williams (Secretary CPA WA)

Place: Function Room Teachers Union, Perth

Time: 2-5pm Saturday November 22, 2008

Organised by Global Crisis Committee

Contact Dave 0410410592; Viv 92454794 ; Vic 93371074

#### Australian Citizenship Test training course

Would you like to sit the Australian Citizenship Test? Communicare Family and Employment Services are offering a free training course to assist you.

The training course is made up of four modules.

- Module One – the privileges, responsibilities and values associated with Australian citizenship.
- Module Two –the history, traditions and national symbols of our country.
- Module Three – government in Australia and an overview of the Citizenship Test.
- Module Four – test tutorial and practice test. Information on how to apply to sit the citizenship test.

All modules include discussion of the topics, multiple choice tests, debates and telephone conference and email. Picture an Australian tradition: ANZAC Day Dawn Service in Canberra from [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/ANZAC\\_Day](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/ANZAC_Day)  
In metropolitan areas 20 hours of training will be provided (three days a week), at Communicare offices. In regional areas 20 hours of training will also be provided, this will include telephone calls and telephone conferencing. Training times and venues are subject to participation numbers.

For enrolment details contact Communicare: tel. (08) 9251 5777, address 28 Cecil Ave Cannington WA 6107 or visit [www.communicare.org.au](http://www.communicare.org.au) (click on Family Services – New Projects and Pilot Programmes).

This course has been funded by the Department of Immigration and Citizenship,

One day Intensive that is running this Saturday 8th November. the direct website link is here: [http://erisj.org.au/new/081108\\_module](http://erisj.org.au/new/081108_module)

“This workshop will start by examining what Non-Violent Direct Action (NVDA) is, and exploring several examples. We will touch on Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther King and the civil rights movement, and then turn to grass-roots activism and community campaigning closer to home. We then discuss key ideas and philosophies around non-violence, variously focussed upon NVDA as strategic tool, as raised human consciousness/spirituality, and as life philosophy. Building on this context, the afternoon will focus on non-violence in action. NVDA can be applied to almost any situation or issue, but requires preparation and application. The day will greatly enrich participants’ ability to effectively put NVDA into practice.

Discussion will focus upon:

- exploring what non-violence is;

- a brief look at NVDA historically;
- local/grass-roots activism and community campaigning;
- the philosophy of non-violence and its importance; and
- Non-Violent Direct Action in practice.”

Building community commitment, skills and action for social justice

<http://www.erisj.org.au/>

24 High Street, Fremantle, Western Australia 6160

Phone: +61 (8) 9432 2400 Fax: +61 (8) 9336 2146

Click here

<<http://erisj.org.au/new/sites/default/files/ERISJSummer08HighlightsFlyer.pdf>>  
for our 2008 Summer Highlights.

We are an incorporated, not-for-profit Institute that survives through:

- registration fees for our certificated public events, educational programs and Immersions;
- donations, grants and bequests from individuals and organisations; and
- four ERISJ Client Packages that provide client organisations with superb value and the Institute with predictable income.

Your support makes the Institute possible – thank you.

#### COFFEE, PRAYERS, AND SPIRITUALITY

Wednesday 26 November

9.30am Introductions, Coffee and Muffins in Burt Hall

10.00 am “Out of the Silence ... Into the Silence” Prayers in the Cathedral

10.15am “Spirituality and ... Religion” presented by The Revd Dr Nigel

Leaves, Warden of Wollaston Retreat and Conference Centre.

11.30am Conclusion

Cost \$5 per person. Please let Bishop David Murray know that you are coming by Monday 26 November – phone 9325 5766 or email [david.murray@perthcathedral.org](mailto:david.murray@perthcathedral.org)

#### WARDARNJI ABORIGINAL CULTURAL FESTIVAL 2008

The City of Fremantle presents a celebration of ancient and living cultural heritage. Wardarnji 2008 will give you a glimpse of Aboriginal culture as you watch the traditional Middar (dance) of Australia’s first people, taste bush tucker and hear the stories of Aboriginal people passed down, generation to generation, through story telling and music. On display will be arts and crafts, stalls and displays with some thing for everyone. In the spirit of coming together, come join us and help celebrate our ancient and living cultural heritage.

WHEN: Saturday, 15 November

WHERE: Fremantle Esplanade Reserve

TIME: 3.00pm – 8.30pm

For ACROD permit holders and Elders regarding parking information plans call: 9432 9822

Or phone David Chesson – Indigenous Development Officer City of Fremantle on: 9432 5822

16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM AGAINST GENDER VIOLENCE — 25 November to 10 December

The Women's Council for Domestic and Family Violence Services (WA) and Amnesty International Western Australia (WA) invite you to address the human rights challenges women experience around the globe in the 60th Anniversary of the UN Declaration of Human Rights. Human rights cannot be universal without human rights for women. You can do this by participating in the 16 days of Activism against Gender Violence. For further enquiries as to how you can be involved/host an event, contact the Women's Council for Domestic & Family Violence Services on 9420 7264 or email: [training@womenscouncil.com.au](mailto:training@womenscouncil.com.au).

JUST MUSIC 2008 — Perth's Annual Concert for Social Justice presented by Edmund Rice Institute

Celebrating the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights

Listen to Archie Roach and Ruby Hunter, Kavish Mazella, Bernard Carnley, The Working Voices, YABU Band

WHEN: Friday, 12 December

WHERE: Samson Courtyard, Fremantle Arts centre

TIME: 6.00pm – 10.00pm

COST: Adults \$30 – Students/Concession \$20 – Children under 6

FREE – Family Pass (2 + 2) \$70

For tickets: go to [www.heatseeker.com.au](http://www.heatseeker.com.au)

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