



OIKOUMENE

TASMANIAN COUNCIL OF CHURCHES

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The 'Lund' Principle

Should not the churches act together in all matters except those in which deep differences of conviction compel them to act separately?

From the President



Tasmania: After elections comes the reality of building for the future.

The hope of the future that election campaigns encourage, regardless of outcomes, can dry up when people have to go back to attending to the hum-drum of life, of apparently limited economic prospects, of coping with inner and community strife and strain.

“The Church is dying out,” he said to me two days ago.

This was the studied reflection of a very bright Year 12 student who is studying history here in Tasmania. He saw this as a given, as inevitable, as the natural unfolding of events in his lifetime. He, to my way of thinking, knows not of the Holy Spirit of the living God, nor of the intimate

loving concern of Jesus Christ for his own heart and soul. To him, the Church is dying out – naturally, emphatically, and this will be merely a historical curiosity.

It struck me, afresh, that this is what young (and not so young) unchurched people see whenever their minds think of “the Church” – a dying institution in a thoroughly secular Tasmania where values are not public, but only private, and where “truth” and religion are simply other examples of those private musings – nothing more. “My faith is in myself” is a common, ultimately self-defeating creed.

I write as one with a passion for seeing Tasmania reclaimed for our Lord. For all the energy a great many Church members across all churches throughout this State are exerting, this up and coming generation regard us only remotely. We reach the churched (or once-churched) more readily than we are reaching the unchurched. We need to go further than we have ever before.

Our challenge is not one of relevance – the relevance of the gospel is eternal. Rather, the challenge is one of making that relevance plain to all. It is one of quietly, insistently, persistently witnessing to the saving grace of a holy, loving heavenly Father. It is one of refusing to be silent when it is clear we must speak out for the truth of the gospel.

The tragedy is that, in eternal terms, the unsaved are dying, and not the Church. The Deceiver of this world makes black look like white, makes death look like life, and a saviour look like nothing more than a sacrifice. May the message and reality of the bodily resurrection from the dead of our Lord Jesus Christ inspire us this Eastertide to go further than we have ever before, to witness to the only one who offers the living water of eternal life, and to never, ever turn back.

As President of the TCC, I was asked recently what the two main challenges were facing the Church in Tasmania. I immediately replied: (1) acknowledging and living out the sovereignty of Jesus Christ; and (2) our total and unswerving loyalty to Jesus Christ, in our corporate and individual lives. All else flows from these two: how we must respond to the great and painful issues of the day, the injustices of the world, the cry of those who are being lost, who are without hope. The gauntlet is at our feet; the challenge is before us, not only to show the love of God, but also the life of Christ to all.

David Morris, President, Tasmanian Council of Churches

Tributes flow as Bishop Michael Putney's Ecumenical Journey Ends

The National Council of Churches in Australia (NCCA) pays tribute to Bishop Michael E Putney D.D AM, an outstanding ecumenist, who ended his journey with cancer in the early hours of 28 March 2014. Diagnosed with cancer in December 2012 Bishop Putney was the sixth President of the NCCA.



Last week Michael Putney acknowledged that his ecumenical journey began as a 16 year old when he entered Pius XII Seminary, Banyo. As a student he participated in an oratory competition where he spoke on the life and message of Paul Couturier who is the father of the modern form of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. Michael won the competition but he says more significantly he found ecumenism as a deep spiritual commitment for his life.

“Bishop Michael Putney has been an ecumenical giant who has championed the importance of dialogue between churches both in Australia and internationally. His contribution as the Co-chair of the International Roman Catholic – World Methodist dialogue has been greatly valued for many years. Equally significant is his four years as President of the NCCA where he upheld the importance that the ecumenical space is the place where the real agenda of the churches was able to be discussed together” said the Reverend Tara Curlewis, NCCA general secretary.

Bishop Putney was highly respected for his wise contributions to the work of Christian unity, as the news of his death is realised tributes flow from his ecumenical colleagues around the globe..

Curlewis concluded “This week marked the thirteenth anniversary for him as the Bishop of Townsville and last week on 20th March Bishop Michael launched his book “My Ecumenical Journey”. The timing is extraordinary that the last week of his life is marked with these two significant events as if to neatly close his journey.”

Bishop Michael E Putney will long be remembered for his contribution to his own church, the people of Townsville, the Australian churches and the wider ecumenical movement. His witness has inspired many to imagine in new ways what a healthy reconciled Church could look like.

TCC Annual Meeting Hobart, 7th June

The 2014 Annual Meeting of the Tasmanian Council of Churches will be held on Saturday, 7th June, at the Hobart Salvation Army Citadel, Elizabeth Street, Hobart, from 9:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

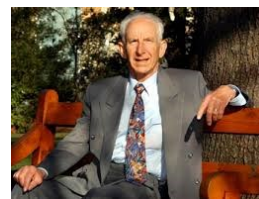


While details of the keynote speaker are still to be finalised, we hope that the speaker will focus on the churches' ecumenical response to emergencies such as bushfires and floods.

Voting members of the Annual Meeting will be chosen by the statewide bodies of the TCC's member churches. Nevertheless, all sessions of the Annual Meeting are open to the public. Please contact 0418-307-449 for more information.

Tributes for the late Senator Brian Harradine

The Archbishop of Hobart, the Most Reverend Julian Porteous, has paid tribute to the life and



work of former Tasmanian independent senator, Mr Brian Harradine who passed away Monday at the age of 79.

Archbishop Porteous said Mr Harradine was strongly loyal to his Catholic Faith which was integral to his life and values.

“Brian Harradine will be remembered as a man with a sense of great principle and integrity. As Australia's longest serving member of the Australian Senate, Mr Harradine worked tirelessly for the good of Tasmania, and Australian society.

Archbishop Porteous said Mr Harradine was an active member of the local parish church at St Monica's in Chigwell, and would be greatly missed by the Tasmanian Catholic Community.

“On behalf of the Archdiocese of Hobart and the entire Tasmanian Catholic community, we offer our prayers and sincere condolences to Mr Harradine's family.”

Archbishop Porteous has been asked by family members to offer the Requiem Mass for Mr Harradine.

The Liaison Officer of the Tasmanian Council of Churches, the Rev. Dr. Bob Faser, said, “As an ecumenical staffer, I had a lot of contact with Senator Harradine and his office. He was a genuinely nice bloke. His integrity and sincerity were always beyond question. Of any elected official we contacted on any issue, he was always one of those who were the most likely to take our concerns seriously. With the rise of politicised bigotry (Pauline Hanson, etc.) in the mid-to-late '90s, he was one of the first Tasmanian politicians of any persuasion to see the seriousness of the threat to the well-being of our Australian community in this movement.”

Emergencies Ministry Training

A further session of Emergencies Ministry training was held on the 25th and 26th of March at the Howrah Church of Christ. Eight more Tasmanians were trained for Emergencies Ministry (responding to pastoral needs following bushfires, floods, and similar emergencies). Margaret Savage from the staff of Anglicare Tasmania led the training sessions. The eight participants came from the Anglican, Catholic, and Uniting Churches, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and the Buddhist community.

We are looking forward to offering further Emergencies Ministry training in northern Tasmania later in the year.

The TCC will soon advertise for a (part-time and short-term) Project Officer to enable the development of our Emergencies Ministry in its early stages. Information will be made available to churches when the arrangements are finalised.

Praying, Worshipping, and Learning Together

Pints of Faith

Pints of Faith continues as a gathering for young adults offered by Catholic Youth Ministry Tasmania.

In Hobart, **Pints of Faith** will continue at the Hotel SoHo on the first Thursday evening of the month, from 6:30 until 9:00.

In Launceston, **Pints of Faith** will happen, as announced, at the Cock and Bull British Pub.

Please ring Catholic Youth Ministry on 62086274 for more information about **Pints of Faith**, and other CYM programmes.



For all those who are involved in leading worship during the Holy Week—Easter period:



The next **Oikoumene** will be published in July, 2013.
All material for publication should be received at tcctas@bigpond.net.au or at PO Box 166, New Town 7008 by the end of May

act for peace

reduce poverty | protect refugees
prevent conflicts | empower communities

5,000 CHILD SOLDIERS
IN MYANMAR

THE AVERAGE AGE: 14

LURED, ABDUCTED OR EVEN SOLD FOR:



BAG OF RICE



PETROL CAN



**FEW US
DOLLARS**

TYPES OF CHILD TRAFFICKING:



**FORCED
LABOR**



**ARMED
FORCES**



**SEXUAL
EXPLOITATION**



**PLEASE GIVE NOW TO HELP CHILD SOLDIERS IN
MYANMAR [ACTFORPEACE.ORG.AU/CHILDSOLDIERS](https://actforpeace.org.au/childsoldiers)**

ACT FOR PEACE
CONFRONTING INJUSTICE TOGETHER
THROUGH THE actalliance



Being a child soldier

Khin was 14 years old when he went to visit his aunty. That day, his uncle sold him into the army. In a single moment Khin lost his innocence and the rest of his childhood.

“I was only there [in the army] for two days before I ran away. But the army caught me”, Khin told us. “And they beat me.”

After that Khin didn't dare try to escape again. Khin realised he didn't have a choice if he wanted to survive. He did what he was told.

He was a child soldier. Trying to survive in a hostile environment.

In the meantime, Khin's father was looking for him. When his son did not return Khin's father searched for him everywhere he could think of. He went to where his sister and husband lived, but could find out nothing. Every day he searched, but no-one knew where to find his boy or how to get him back. For a whole year, he searched for his son with no result.

On the verge of giving up hope, Khin's father heard of the work done by May Lyan, a Community Organiser working nearby.

Trained by our local partner, the [Myanmar Council of Churches](#), Community Organisers like May Lyan fight against injustice by solving cases of child trafficking, rapes, or land grabbing. They also educate people about their rights in training sessions. When you know your rights, you can stand up against abuse.

May Lyan was able to trace Khin and find that he was serving in the army. May Lyan knew two things for certain from Khin's story: first, that there was hope. Second, that freeing Khin would not be easy.

The fight for freedom

Khin and his father didn't know that it was forbidden by law for a child to be used in the army or in any armed groups. May Lyan, thanks to her training, did understand the rights that were guaranteed to Khin and his father under law and because of this she had hope. Unfortunately, it is extremely difficult to prove a child's age in Myanmar. Most children do not possess a birth certificate. As a result, the army tends to deny any recruitment of child-soldiers and to claim that children like Khin are of age.

May Lyan spent eight months working on Khin's case, striving to prove that he was under-age and that he did not belong in the army. She used all her resources, knowledge and network to build her case. It was a long and difficult task.

Finally, she succeeded. Khin was allowed to leave the army. He received his official letter of release a few weeks before he would have been sent to the front lines

After more than two years, Khin was free, to be reunited with his father. He will never forget the years spent in the army, but he is resilient. Now he works with his father as a farmer and is able to rebuild a new life at home.

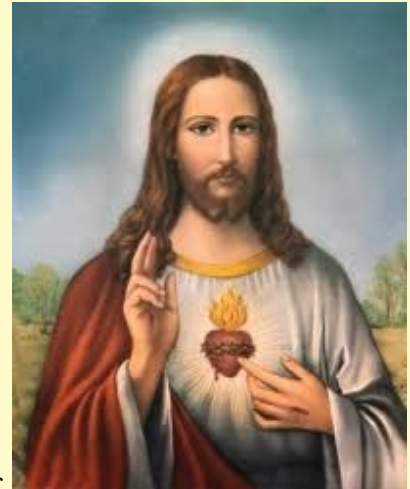
- See more at: <http://www.actforpeace.org.au/Get-Involved/Our-latest-appeals/child-soldiers-in-myanmar-appeal/Myanmar/Infographic-Child-Soldiers-in-Myanmar#sthash.LJ4VvEG2.dpuf>

From the Liaison Officer

It's an honour to be called a "bleeding heart".

About a month or so ago, I read a recent article in "Eureka Street" by Andrew Hamilton. He wrote about the term "bleeding heart". (Andrew Hamilton, "Encouragement for bleeding hearts", *Eureka Street*, 4 March 2014, www.eurekastreet.com.au.)

He drew a connection between this phrase and the pictures of the Sacred Heart used in some popular Roman Catholic religious art. In this picture, we see an image of Jesus pointing to his heart, which is visible outside his clothing. The heart is surrounded by a crown of thorns, causing a drop of blood to drip from the heart. Flames rise from the top of the heart.



The picture is a popular image in Catholic devotional life. Growing up in a community (Bayonne, New Jersey, in the USA) where the majority of people were Catholics, I've seen this picture in many Catholic homes, both in homes where the people were conventionally devout and in homes where the level of practice was more minimal.

Hamilton compared the use of the phrase "bleeding heart" to this picture of the Sacred Heart. I must say that whenever I've heard the phrase "bleeding heart", I've also instinctively thought of this picture, and I'm not even Catholic.

Hamilton says that the term "bleeding heart" is normally used by people who "dismiss ethical arguments" when considering social and political issues, such as our response to the plight of asylum seekers. (In my own observation, those who use the phrase "bleeding heart" frequently tend to be people who combine a populist political conservatism with a non-religious - and sometimes a stridently anti-religious - world view. Conservative religious people - whether Christian or otherwise - are less likely to use the phrase "bleeding heart" as an insult.) People who use the phrase "bleeding heart" use it to describe those whom they believe are "guided by emotion, not by reason" (Hamilton's phrase) in expressing compassion to those they feel are "undeserving" of the compassion.

In all of this, the comparison with Jesus, particularly during Lent and Holy Week, is striking. Showing compassion to the "undeserving" is exactly the sort of thing Jesus did, both throughout his life and in his Passion. For a Christian, to be called a "bleeding heart" means that (if you use the language of some of my evangelical friends) you've successfully asked yourself the **WWJD** question ("What would Jesus do?") in terms of the issue at hand. In the language of classical ecumenical Christian spirituality, you're participating (at least partially) in what Thomas a' Kempis called "The Imitation of Christ"

Two final points:

1. I believe that that any society in which such phrases as "bleeding-heart" or "do-gooder" are used as insults is a society in grave ethical and moral trouble. When people are mocked for being "too compassionate" as if high levels of compassion can be seen as a character flaw, a crime, or even a sin, the community is on its way to becoming one in which the only law is the law of the jungle.
2. If someone calls you a "bleeding heart", thank them. (Particularly if you're a Christian, they've paid you the great honour of comparing you to Jesus.) Thanking them may help them think about the spiritual implications of what they've said. At the very least, it may raise the odd question in their mind.

Bob Faser, TCC Liaison Officer

(You may also want to read Bob's blog "*A funny thing happened on the way ...*", which can be found at <http://revdocbob.blogspot.com.au>.)