



## God is Love: *Ecumenism of the Heart*

**Invitation** to congregations, parishes, church councils/committees, agencies, state/diocesan leadership, schools and ecumenical organisations, home groups – and individuals

SA Council of Churches General Council and Committees have been reading, reflecting and sharing insights on *God is Love: Ecumenism of the Heart*, a paper by Dr Antonia Pizzey.

SACC invites you and your companions, during any of your scheduled gatherings, to join in an exploration of this paper and to share insights with one another, as we take further steps towards living more fully our unity in Christ in, with and for our world.

*God is Love: Ecumenism of the Heart* describes 'the spirituality behind the ecumenical endeavour', and ecumenism as an exchange of gifts. It has generated further hope and possibility on our journey together in Christ. The author is Dr Antonia Pizzey, a young Australian woman whose doctoral dissertation at the Australian Catholic University focused on the potential of receptive ecumenism as a form of spiritual ecumenism. *God is Love* is included in 'Prospects and Challenges for the Ecumenical Movement in the 21st Century *Insights from the Global Ecumenical Theological Institute* (GETI)' and can be found at page 233.

Download from [http://www.sacc.asn.au/en/index.php?rubric=en\\_receptive+ecumenism](http://www.sacc.asn.au/en/index.php?rubric=en_receptive+ecumenism) or [http://www.globethics.net/documents/4289936/13403236/GE\\_Global\\_12\\_web.pdf/351b2e1c-8926-4710-ae1a-c159b9a88cf7](http://www.globethics.net/documents/4289936/13403236/GE_Global_12_web.pdf/351b2e1c-8926-4710-ae1a-c159b9a88cf7)

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### **Process**

The following suggested process may take place at any gathering of parish, study group, ministers circle, inter church council, committee, home group, family...or, in part, by an individual.

There are four main sections in the paper - ***Introduction, Spiritual Ecumenism, Ecumenism as an Exchange of Gifts*** and ***Receptive Ecumenism***.

SACC suggests that the paper may be considered over four or five gatherings. One person may lead one gathering, and another the next, and so on.

#### **a. Reading, Listening and Pondering**

- Arrange for someone to read aloud, quietly and prayerfully, *God is Love: Ecumenism of the Heart*.
- As you listen, be aware of any word or phrase that touches your heart, your spirit.

- No need to analyse, just let it rest with you, and note the word/phrase in your heart, or on the document, or on a notepad.

#### b. **Sharing**

- Take time for each person, as they wish, to speak aloud any word or phrase that has touched them. No explanation is required about what the word/phrase means.
- The gathering listens and receives all words/phrases that are offered without comment or judgment.
- When all have had the opportunity to name as many words/phrases as they wish, spend quiet time in reflection and prayer, asking for a spirit of openness and wisdom.
- Invite someone to select a Gospel text and to read it aloud, quietly and prayerfully.
- Following this reading, each person to describe as they wish how what they have heard influences their understanding of *God is Love*.
- From there, share insights in conversation with one another about what has been shared so far might mean for your journey together in Christ:
  - What did you hear, what did you notice?
  - What image is evoked?
  - What feeling or thought is stirring within you, what insight, wonder, delight or possibility is emerging [whether **process** or **content**] that may have the potential to draw your part of the Church more fully into the Way of Christ?
  - Is there some aspect which has been obscured, dimmed, or even invisible within **your experience or understanding** of church and which, from what you have heard, is becoming **more clearly illuminated by the light of Christ**, with the potential for growth in faith, life and witness?
- You may wish to consider any next steps, individually or collectively, before concluding with closing prayer.

#### c. **Sharing Widely with Others**

You may each wish to consider with whom you can share insights in your own denomination eg church council, finance committee, social justice group etc.

SA Council of Churches also invites you to gather up feedback or insights and send them to [sacc1@picknowl.com.au](mailto:sacc1@picknowl.com.au) or post them as below. All feedback is welcomed.

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SA Council of Churches: nurturing and nourishing the understanding, spiritual growth and practice of ecumenism across the Churches of South Australia