

## World Council of Churches and SA Council of Churches

Friday 14 October 2016

St Mary and Anba Bishoy Coptic Orthodox Church, 18 Goldfinch Ave, Cowandilla

### Reflections and Insights

SA Council of Churches, together with more than 80 local and national church/ecumenical leaders, welcomed Rev Dr Olav Fykse Tveit, General Secretary, World Council of Churches, to SA on Friday 14 October 2016, for a day of prayer, friendship, conversation and learning.

We were hosted by St Mary and Anba Bishoy Coptic Orthodox Church who extended generous and gracious hospitality in many ways.

**In the morning presentation**, Dr Tveit referred to his most recent book 'The Truth We Owe Each Other: *Mutual Accountability in the Ecumenical Movement*', and described the importance of the commitment of member churches to their ecumenical council as a place of gathering for conversation, action and growing more fully into their unity in Christ.

He also referred to reception of **Baptism Eucharist and Ministry** (Faith and Order Paper no. 111, the "Lima Text"): 15 January 1982. This famous text, adopted by Faith and Order at its plenary commission meeting in Lima, Peru in 1982, explores the growing agreement - and remaining differences - in fundamental areas of the churches' faith and life. The most widely-distributed and studied ecumenical document, BEM has been a basis for many "mutual recognition" agreements among churches and remains a reference today.

For 'The Truth We Owe Each Other: *Mutual Accountability in the Ecumenical Movement*' contents, prologue and introduction, see <https://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/publications/the-truth-we-owe-each-other>

**Question: [from SA Council of Churches]** In what ways do you and your Church demonstrate mutual accountability to your ecumenical others?

**Question: [from SA Council of Churches]** What areas of life and mission have your Church affirmed, recognised or committed to with another? What more can your church do by way of affirmation, recognition or commitment?

*Note:* some steps were taken through the National Council of Churches in Australia, resulting in several churches signing *Australian Churches Covenanting Together* in Adelaide in 2004. See <http://www.ncca.org.au/faith-and-unity/30-australian-churches-covenanting-a5-pamphlet/file>

People gathered in the courtyard for lunch, and the WCC team met at a long table over lunch with church/ecumenical council leaders from SA, other States and nationally. [*List of participants, see 'A' p3*]. All catering was prepared, provided and served by the Coptic Orthodox community – thank you!

**In the afternoon**, we gathered for a Panel Conversation, entitled 'Healing our Broken Life: *Living More Fully our Love and Unity in Christ - in, with, and for our world*', with Dr Tveit and SA Church Leaders - Bishop Suriel [Coptic Orthodox], Bishop Tim Harris [Anglican], Dr Deidre Palmer [Uniting], and Archbishop Philip Wilson [Roman Catholic]. Preparation for this session is as described at 'B' on page 3.



Insights offered included Peace, including across the Middle East; Day of prayer and fasting; Young people: gathering for shared ecumenical experience; Women's role in the church; Role of scripture. Some of these will be developed further.

There were media Interviews and photos taken, including Jade Gailberger *The Advertiser*, Jenny Brinkworth, Director, Catholic Communications/ Editor, *The Southern Cross*.

The day concluded with thanks, and closing prayer, led by Jill Gallio, President of SA Council of Churches

As the WCC visitors made their way back to the airport, in the care of the Coptic Orthodox drivers, people were invited to visit the Coptic Gallery of SA, which describes in various ways the culture of Ancient Egypt and of Coptic Egypt.

SACC invites you to send through your own reflections from the day.

Geraldine Hawkes  
Ecumenical Facilitator  
SA Council of Churches

October 2016



**Letter of thanks** to *St Mary and Anba Bishoy Coptic Orthodox Church*, from Ms Jill Gallio, SACC President:

Dear Friends at St Mary and Anba Bishoy Coptic Orthodox Church

On behalf of the Member Churches of SA Council of Churches, I give thanks for all you contributed towards making the gathering of SACC Member Churches with Rev Dr Olav Fykse Tveit, General Secretary, World Council of Churches, on Friday 14 October, a time of prayerful, gracious and generous hospitality.

Through your hospitality, we were nourished in body, spirit and mind, while we took some steps together on the journey towards more visible signs of our unity in Christ.

As I reflect on the day and the many conversations, there were several moments of delight and many insights for follow up across the Church in SA – and perhaps all the way through to WCC! I look forward to being in touch with you again as we explore.

Meantime, may your faithfulness in Christ continue to be an inspiration to us all as we journey together in living more fully our love and unity in Christ - in, with, and for our world.

Peace,

Ms Jill Gallio  
President, SA Council of Churches

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

### **A: Participants in WCC and Church & Ecumenical Leaders Meeting**

1. Rev Dr Olav Fyske Tveit, General Secretary, WCC
2. Mrs Anna Fyske Tveit
3. Dr Katalina Tahaafe-Williams, Programme Executive Mission and Evangelism, WCC
4. Bishop Tim Harris, Administrator (Sede Vacante), Anglican Diocese of Adelaide
5. Dr Deidre Palmer, Moderator, Uniting Church in SA
6. Most Rev Philip Wilson, Archbishop, Catholic Archdiocese of Adelaide
7. H.G. Bishop Suriel, Coptic Orthodox Diocese of Melbourne & Affiliated Regions
8. Ms Jo Jordan, Presiding Clerk, Religious Society of Friends Australia
9. Rev Janet Woodlock, Federal Coordinator, Churches of Christ in Australia
10. Rev Doug Walladge, President, Churches of Christ SA & NT
11. The Rt Rev'd John Stead, Bishop, Anglican Diocese of Willochra
12. Rev Mike Mills, State Executive Minister, Baptist Churches of SA
13. Ms Jill Gallio, President, SA Council of Churches
14. Sr Elizabeth Delaney, General Secretary, National Council of Churches in Australia
15. Mr Frederik Mul, General Secretary, Tasmanian Council of Churches
16. Ms Geraldine Hawkes, Ecumenical Facilitator, SA Council of Churches



### **B: Preparation & Process for Panel Conversation: 1.30pm**

1.30pm: Panel Conversation: *Healing our Broken Life: Living More Fully our Love and Unity in Christ - in, with, and for our world*

With Rev Dr Olav Fyske Tveit, WCC General Secretary and SACC Member Church Leaders - Bishop Suriel [Coptic Orthodox], Bishop Tim Harris [Anglican], Dr Deidre Palmer [Uniting] and Archbishop Philip Wilson [Roman Catholic].

#### **Each panellist was invited to prepare before 14 October as follows:**

- a) In the life and mission of your local Church/experience of the ecumenical movement through WCC, consider and ponder on an aspect that you or others may describe as currently 'broken'.

This 'brokenness', may be like:

*A man who is paralysed, or deaf, or mute, or blind;*

*or*

*A girl who was dying, or a woman who is haemorrhaging, or who is crippled;*

*or*

*A withered hand, a lamp in a cellar, an unclean cup or a barren fig tree.*

- b) What gift might your church/ the ecumenical movement through WCC seek from your 'ecumenical other' that may lead to healing and to living more fully our love and unity in Christ?

**On 14 October**, each panellist has been invited to:

Describe briefly the feelings and the insights that you received as you considered the 'brokenness', and as you imagined the gift, with its potential for healing, and for greater flourishing together as a seamless sign of love and unity in Christ - in, with and for our world.